

**Minutes for COUNCIL MEETING of McMaster University Retirees Association
December 10, 2008, 1:30PM
Student Centre Room 220**

Present: Cliff Andrews, Helen Barton (chair), Beth Csordas, Geoff Evans, Helen Dietsche, Al Fraser, Mike Hedden, Margaret Jenkins, Joe Laposa, Michele Leroux, Kathy Overholt, Wayne Rouse, Kathy Ryan, and Marianne Van der Wel

Regrets: Joan Parker, Pam Penny, Anne Sinclair, Allisan Noble

1. Welcome & Regrets:

Helen Barton expressed regrets from Joan, Pam, Anne and Allisan. Helen also congratulated Geoff Evans for 50 years in the medical profession and presented him with a bottle of aspirin signifying his pioneering contribution to research showing the benefits of taking a daily dose of aspirin in the more senior half of the population. He also received a utility knife, signifying his career as a cardiovascular surgeon!

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings

a) The following correction was made to the Council meeting minutes for November 12, 2008:

Page 6, section k) Add a right bracket, ")", after .ca

MOTION

- Geoff Evans **motioned** that the minutes be approved with the above correction.
- Mike Hedden **seconded** the motion.
- **Carried** unanimously

3. Business Arising

(a)Scholarship Endowment Fund (Beth Csordas): Beth reported the endowment fund amount as of December 1/08 was \$20,270, a slight increase since the November report. Murlis Cooper wrote a letter for fundraising regarding "Why I give to McMaster", which was mailed to all retirees by the advancement office at the end of November. The letter was mailed a little later than desirable, delayed by activity caused by the Brandon Hall fire. Next fall, we'll aim for October.

(b)MURA Cards (Kathy Overholt): The Bryan Prince Bookstore in Westdale has taken 10 note cards on consignment. In addition, Kathy sold 20 cards through the mail and 36 at the Christmas luncheon.

(c)Volunteer Network (Helen Barton) The web site is currently being worked on by the advancement office. Fifteen volunteer roles have been

documented with 2-3 more coming from the new registrar. The announcement of the pilot project for the volunteer network will be made in January 2009. Helen has the job descriptions developed to date if anyone is interested in seeing them. She will bring copies or provide access to them for the next council meeting.

(d) Clinical Faculty Pension Surplus Distribution Helen Barton and Les Robb met with representatives of the Regional Medical Associates (RMA) and the Clinical Faculty Association. Helen and Les have now talked to both sides in this dispute and will now write a report of their findings and recommendations.

Geoff Evans thanked Helen and Les for their superb efforts in trying to find a resolution to this dispute.

The amount of money involved in this dispute between the university and retired clinical faculty who retired in 2000 or earlier could be as much as \$1 Million; the number of retirees involved is 88.

e) Prospective Mad Lappers Walking Program (Joan Parker) Helen Barton reported for Joan. A survey was sent out by Helen via muramembs-1 on December 7, 2008, to find out retirees' interest in a "sampler" program of athletic activities. To date we have received 37 responses with all but one indicating either a "yes" or a "maybe". Strength and Cardio fitness programs were the most popular; Tai Chi was a close second. Dance was less popular, but swing and Latin rated high in this group. At least 20 people need to participate to make this program viable.

f) Review of Recent Retirees Reception (Helen Barton) We had a good turnout and this year the reception went well.

e) Telecommunications Online Directory (Helen Barton) Helen has contacted Julia Kraveca of UTS, who has not yet had a chance to continue work on this project. We will continue to follow up.

4. Correspondence

- We had an enquiry from Anne Wynne, a retiree, asking about CARP discounts. Pam is investigating the current situation.

- Anne Wynne also provided a list of discounts available to seniors provided by her condo group. This list was passed to the MURAnews committee to investigate if some of it (and other similar information) can be passed onto MURA members as "tips for saving money".

- We received an enquiry from a faculty member about carrying professional development funds into retirement. Helen referred him to the policy statement on the University web site, as well as to his former department chair, Dean and MUFA for more information and help.

- Academics for Higher Education & Development (AHED) contacted us. They are looking for volunteer(s) at McMaster to act as a liaison to assist in finding volunteers for their projects in Canada and abroad. (See <http://www.ahed-upesed.org/> for more information on AHED). Council suggested contacting Richard Stubbs (MUFA president) and UTS.

- The October/November MUFA newsletter is now available. Helen Barton has a copy or you can see it online on the MUFA web site at

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/mufa/Newsletters.html>

- We received a nice thank you card from Alison Christie, our 2008 Scholarship winner.

- Geoff Evans mentioned that a retiree had enquired about research grants that some retired faculty continue to obtain. The university invests the grant money and earns interest which the university keeps. However the university then charges transaction fees when the grant money is used. Is this double dipping? As liaison with MUFA, Geoff and Wayne will discuss this with Richard Stubbs, MUFA's president.

5. President's Report (Helen Barton) -

Portfolios: All positions are now filled. Our private web site has been updated. Please check the navigational tab "Contact Council Members" for this updated information.

The Dec. 3/08 Pre-Retirement Seminar Provided by Human Resources: Helen Barton attended and found this seminar dynamic and excellent! The seminar leader, Mr. Greydon did a great job providing both lifestyle and financial information for preparing for retirement. His company, not affiliated with any financial institution, provides a web site full of excellent financial advice that is available to the seminar participants and may be able to be made available to MURA members upon request. The university pays an annual fee for each person registered for the site. Council was given an ID and password to access the site.

Parking: Parking has not yet put in the mechanism to charge retirees with parking permits for parking before 12:30pm, so this is still free. Parking will notify us when charging before 12:30pm starts.

6. Treasurer's Report: (Beth Csordas)

The reported Christmas lunch expenses to date were under \$300 with \$114 spent on guests' lunches, which is well within our budget. We have moved money from our ING Direct account to our credit union account to cover current expenses as the year's funding from our supporting groups hasn't come in yet, leaving a balance of \$24,000 in the ING Direct account. Invoices are sent to our supporting groups (MUFA, CAW Local 555 and the President's Office) in January.

7. Information Reports From Committees

a) **AGM** (Pam Penny) - no report

b) **Cards** (Helen Dietsche) - There were no reported deaths hence no cards were sent out. The two deaths reported last month six months late were because Human Resources received the notices six months late.

c) **Constitution** (Chair: Vacant, Joan Morris Consultant) - no report

d) **Membership** (Pam Penny) - Helen Barton reported for Pam.

Membership figures: We have five new members for a total of 1877. See

membership reports at:

<http://mura.mcmaster.ca/justcouncil/reports/membership/membership.html>

Lunch Bunch: The next lunch is January 9, 2009. Each lunch is attended by about 15-20 people. Marianne will feature the lunch bunch on the web site for January and will add it to 'features' on a regular basis.

e) **MURAnews** (Joan Parker) Helen Barton reported for Joan.

- The committee met December 5, 2008 at Joan's home to plan the next issue
- The committee has revised the portfolio statement to include a lot less detail than what was there in the past. (A "tasks" document has been written to document the details.) The revised portfolio statement will be reviewed at the 2009 January Council meeting.
- The committee has also made suggested revisions to the MURAnews Policy and Guidelines, which will be submitted for review and approval to Council in January.
- Allisan Noble, MURAnews editor, will be contacting council members and other writers to encourage them to submit their articles for the Winter 2009 issue by January 14, 2009 (our next council meeting).

f) **Nominating** (vacant) - no report

g) **Pension & Benefits** (Geoff Evans)

The committee held a meeting at Geoff's home on Dec 2, 2008. For new members, they reviewed what has been worked on in the past, the committee mandate and their liaisons with other committees and people. The prime mandate is to keep the MURA membership informed about Pensions and Benefits and any changes that affect members and/or future members. The committee also wants to be proactive on matters dealing with benefits and perks as well as helping resolve any disputes or short comings that may arise from time to time.

The committee will meet again in March after Les Robb's report from the next Salaried Pension Trust Committee meeting.

Michele Leroux is writing an article for the next MURAnews on the security of our pensions in light of the recent difficult financial times.

h) **Special Events** (Margaret Jenkins)

February 10, 2009 will be the RBG "Glass Under Glass" event with lunch at the RBG. We will publicize this event again in MURAnews if it's published earlier than Jan 26. Margaret will publicize via muramembs-1 as well.

A Planetarium visit with afternoon tea at the University Club is scheduled for March 31, 2009. The showing is for just MURA and friends.

Please send ideas for special events to Margaret!

i) **Trips** (Joan Parker) - no report

j) **Christmas Lunch** (Pam Penny) - report deferred to the February council meeting since Pam will be away until then.

Council did make the following comments:

- service was good; food was hot; East Side Mario's doesn't take cheques, even from MURA for our guests' lunches
- while the larger room was far less confining than the room last year, the atmosphere wasn't cozy. The booths with coats hanging at the sides felt isolating.
- for next year, we should look for a different location and consider Peter George's offer from last year of subsidizing an on-campus lunch. If on campus, we may need to consider a buffet style lunch.
- Peter George's and Allisan Barrett's daughter, Jiao Jiao, stole the show.

k) **Web Site** (Marianne Van der Wel)

- CIRA: Helen and Marianne are working with Nicholas Solntseff to change the registration to MURA. Nicholas has been the administrator of record, and supporting the site financially to this point.

- Marianne will be working on stage 1 of our web site redesign over Christmas. Council, please help check it when you receive an e-mail from her.

8. Information Reports from Liaisons

a) **University Board of Governors** (Lorraine Allan): Lorraine Allan alerted us to a new monthly publication called "McMaster Update". It will be distributed to all McMaster employees. It contains university news items of interest to McMaster people. Copies of the first issue were distributed to Council (blue paper). Helen Barton pointed out the article in this first issue stating that the university plans to make executive compensation contracts more transparent. Helen will also enquire about a link for this publication on the McMaster web site to distribute to our on-line members. We may also feature some articles or summaries of articles in MURAnews.

The next Board of Governors meeting is next week hence no new report at this time.

b) **Colleges & Universities Retirees Associations of Canada (CURAC)** (Helen Barton) -

As in the November minutes, the CURAC Board has negotiated with "Waterloo Insurance" to offer home and car insurance at group rates, with potentially substantial savings, for members of CURAC member associations. CURAC investigated for two years before accepting Waterloo Insurance.

We have received information from Waterloo Insurance but it is very general without any specifics. The information also arrived just before a deadline for entering a contest to entice new customers. Helen Barton will ask CURAC if they have any type of information comparing Waterloo Insurance with other insurance companies, comparing not just rates but also service when a claim is made and what happens to fees after a claim is made. No decision was made about passing information about this program to our members.

c) **MUFA** (Geoff Evans) - Geoff spoke to Richard Stubbs, MUFA president, at the Christmas lunch, and since then has requested a meeting to discuss items such as finding a dispute resolution process for retired faculty and the transaction fee for grants.

d) **CAW** (Kathy Overholt) - Kathy will request a meeting in the new year.

e) **Hourly Staff Liaison** (Al Fraser) - Al requested we send a thank you to "John Hemmer and Sam Scime from the maintenance department, for providing a sound system for the Christmas lunch, saving us \$250. We all agreed. Helen/Marianne/Pam will take care of this.

10. Other Business - none

11. Next meeting

Wednesday January 14, 2009 at 1:30PM in the Student Centre, Room 220

12. Adjournment

Mike Hedden motioned to adjourn the meeting at 3:16PM