

**Minutes for COUNCIL MEETING of McMaster University Retirees Association  
February 11, 2009, 1:30PM  
Student Centre Room 220**

**Present:** Cliff Andrews, Helen Barton (chair), Beth Csordas, Helen Dietsche, Mike Hedden, Margaret Jenkins, Joe Laposa, Michele Leroux, Kathy Overholt, Joan Parker, Pam Penny, Wayne Rouse, Kathy Ryan, Anne Sinclair and Marianne Van der Wel

**Regrets:** Al Fraser and Geoff Evans

**1. Welcome & Regrets:**

Helen Barton expressed regrets from Al Fraser and Geoff Evans

**2. Minutes of Previous Meetings**

a) The following correction was made to the Council meeting minutes for January 14, 2009:

Page 3, under "Treasurer's Report, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph" change the original cost of the MURA note cards from "\$971.60" to "\$1735.12"

**MOTION**

- Mike Hedden **motioned** that the minutes be approved with the above correction.

-Joan Parker **seconded** the motion.

- **Carried** unanimously

**3. Business Arising**

(a)Scholarship Endowment Fund (Beth Csordas): Beth reported the endowment fund is now at \$25,828, about 80% of our goal of \$32,000. A meeting with the advancement office will be scheduled soon to plan the spring campaign.

(b)MURA Cards (Kathy Overholt): No report

(c)Volunteer Network (Helen Barton) The web site is up! It still needs some revision but it currently lists 19 volunteer positions with another one coming. Helen circulated a list of these positions, also available on the web site:

[http://www.mcmaster.ca/ua/alumni/networking\\_volunteer.html](http://www.mcmaster.ca/ua/alumni/networking_volunteer.html)

A letter announcing the Retiree Volunteer Network will be stuffed tomorrow and will be mailed to all members who do not have e-mail. The same information will be e-mailed to muramembs-l.

Helen mentioned that the advancement office has asked to insert an announcement for the 2009 Spring Open Doors event in the same mailing.

Since the advancement office is paying the postage, no one objected.

(d) "Sampler" Recreation Program (Joan Parker) The program has been well advertised through MURANews. We will soon send a reminder message through muramembs-1 regarding early registration to take advantage of a \$10 saving in the fee. Joan will check with Athletics and Recreation to find out how many people have signed up.

e) Telecommunications Online Directory (Helen Barton) - No Report

f) News on CARP (Pam Penny): Pam has checked with CARP. The one time membership fee reduction for new subscribers to CARP is effective until 2010. A one year subscription is reduced to \$15.95 and a 3 year to \$39.95. Pam will put a notice in the Spring MURANews to remind our members. If someone wishes to take advantage of this offer, provide the code MURA05 when subscribing.

#### **4. Correspondence**

- A representative from Waterloo Insurance had contacted Helen Barton through e-mail and phone about the CURAC group insurance. A lunch date will be set up soon with Helen Barton, Joan Parker, a 3<sup>rd</sup> member of Council and the Waterloo Insurance representative. This meeting will give us a chance to explore how good the rates are, the level of service and to what extent we want to make our members aware. Helen has mentioned the notice we put in MURANews regarding this insurance deal to the Waterloo Insurance representative and the company has had a few requests already for quotes.

- Helen Barton circulated a thank you letter from John Froud, our 2008 Book Prize winner. He also won the prize in 2005.

Helen did speak with the Scholarship office and hopefully, future correspondence from them will be correctly addressed before sending to us.

- Human Resources sent out letters regarding this year's pensions a week or two ago. We discussed the usefulness and timing of this letter since the same information is reported in MURANews and CIBC Mellon also sends a notice. Council felt that unless the Human Resources letters were mailed out much earlier (say December 1-15), their value has minimal impact. Hence council felt it was alright not to send these letters thus saving the University considerable effort and postage.

- Through muramembs-1, we notified our members of trips that required a quick response, two McMaster Employee Spirit Society (MESS) events that retirees were invited to, the CAW Bonspiel and the winter 2009 MURANews.

- Responses The History project in the MURANews has received no responses yet, six people have enquired for an account to see the financial educator website, and the golf survey, organized by John Harvey, has received 10 responses.

- Margaret Jenkins attended a "think tank" on volunteering and as a result we received information from a Niagara area volunteer group on mechanisms for promoting volunteering. Some of these ideas will be passed onto Laura Escalante, the person from the advancement office involved with our the Retiree Volunteer Network.

- Some of us received a McMaster economic update. If you missed this, see the Daily News from February 5, 2009 at:  
<http://dailynews.mcmaster.ca/story.cfm?id=5938>

## **5. President's Report (Helen Barton)**

### Appointment of Secretary and Treasurer for next year:

- Marianne Van der Wel has asked to resign her secretary position to concentrate more of her time on the MURA web site and MURAnews. Wayne Rouse has agreed to take on the responsibility of secretary if appointed.

Appointment of Secretary and Treasurer for 2009-2010: While Beth Csordas and Wayne Rouse were out of the room, after a brief, positive discussion we made the following motion:

### **MOTION**

- Kathy Overholt **motioned** that for the academic year 2009-2010, Beth Csordas be appointed as treasurer and that Wayne Rouse be appointed as secretary,
- Margaret Jenkins **seconded** the motion.
- **Carried** unanimously

Council thanked Marianne for her service as secretary since September 2006 and very much appreciates her contribution!

### Human Resources News:

- With the departure of Murray Lapp from Labour Relations, budget cuts and a hiring freeze, Human Resources is being re-organized.
- Senior University Officials (President, Vice-Presidents) have voluntarily frozen their salaries at 2008 levels for 2009.
- The university is working with a one year budget instead of a three year one.

### Clinical Faculty Pension Supplementary Pension Surplus Distribution:

- Les Robb and Helen Barton received a report and copies of many useful documents from John Gately, who was the clinical faculty member responsible for negotiating the supplementary distribution with the university.
- Helen and Les will be writing their own report and recommendations soon.

### Parking:

- Helen Barton and Joan Parker met with Parking on January 22, 2009.

- Parking on west campus is free to retirees all day, all year and will continue to be free.
- Parking on the main campus will be free all day until September 2009.
- Parking on the main campus will continue to be free all day from May 1 to August 30<sup>th</sup> each year.
- After September 2009, retirees with transponders will have free parking on the main campus only after 12:30pm from September 1 until April 30<sup>th</sup> each year.

Retirees with transponders wishing to park on the main campus before 12:30pm and still take advantage of the free rate that starts at 12:30pm will need to obtain a special card from parking to use in conjunction with their transponder. This card will allow a retiree to be charged only for the hours before 12:30pm. Without the special card, retirees parking before 12:30pm will pay for the entire time on campus including any time after 12:30pm. The only way around this would be to leave campus before 12:30pm, paying for the used hours, and then returning after 12:30pm. The special card will allow payment by cash or credit card.

When entering before 12:30PM, a retiree will be considered a visitor for purposes of acquiring a parking spot, rather than a transponder parker.

We will put this information in the Spring MURAnews.

#### 2010 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary:

There are a series of dates that we can consider as THE anniversary date: when people first met to discuss the idea, when the constitution was drafted, the first meeting, etc. August could be considered as the month MURA started. Council was asked to read the history on our web site at: <http://www.macra.ca> under "Who We Are" or go directly to: <http://mura.mcmaster.ca/Pages/History.html> and think of ideas for celebrating this milestone.

- Stuart Winn, one of our founding fathers who received honorary membership at the 2007 AGM, had a bad fall and is currently not doing well. Please send positive thoughts and wishes his way!

#### **6. Treasurer's Report:** (Beth Csordas)

Beth is revising the budget figures after we submitted our latest amounts at or since the January 2009 meeting. Beth will bring the resultant revised budget for discussion to the March council meeting.

At the next meeting, we will also discuss and determine our auditor for this (2008-2009) year.

#### **7. Information Reports From Committees**

##### a) **AGM** (Pam Penny) -

##### Room/Food arrangements:

- Pam mentioned she got the folder regarding the past AGM room and food services arrangements from Joan Morris, the previous committee chair.

- Convocation Hall needs to be booked from 10AM to 3PM on Wednesday May 27 for approximately 150 people.

- To better order the amount of food needed, we can ask people to RSVP for the lunch portion of the AGM. We can also order a simpler lunch (ordinary sandwiches instead of fancy wraps) to stay within budget.

##### Speaker:

We discussed getting a speaker for the "Overview of Health Care Services", our most preferred topic at the January meeting. We felt it best to concentrate on local services available since most retirees attending are from the Golden Horseshoe and Halton area. A suggested speaker was J. Briel from the city Senior Community Centres or we can ask Ellen Ryan to suggest a suitable speaker.

Later in the meeting when we discussed "Special Events", Wayne Rouse suggested a new topic that might also be suitable for this year's AGM. Jim Waddington has slide show on the "Group of Seven" artists that he can present if we book him now. Jim may soon be going into partnership with someone to make these presentations and when he does he can no longer make independent presentations but would be able to still honour commitments made prior to such a partnership. Council reacted enthusiastically to this idea and we should investigate.

Whatever topic we choose for the AGM, the length of presentation needs to be about ½ hour. We can also investigate if it's feasible to distribute a booklet to the attendees containing information on local senior health care services.

Concern:

If we to proceed with the "Group of Seven" slide show, we need to investigate whether Convocation Hall is dark enough.

b) **Cards** (Helen Dietsche) - Helen Dietsche sent Bereavement cards to the families of Barry Laffier (Building Operations), Mary Stephenson (Physical Plant), Daniel Geagan (History) and Harry Penny (Continuing Education).

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

d) **Membership** (Pam Penny) - Our membership now totals 1884. For details see the membership reports at:

<http://mura.mcmaster.ca/MURA.council.meeting.records/membership/membership.html>

e) **MURAnews** (Joan Parker)

The winter MURAnews was mailed out January 29, 2009. Since Allisan Noble is no longer involved with MURAnews, Marianne Van der Wel and Helen Barton will take on the role of editor for the next issue.

f) **Nominating** (Helen Barton)

The Nominating committee (Lorraine Allan, Helen Dietsche, Mike Hedden, Lynne Hopkinson and Helen Barton as Chair ) met February 10, 2009 and will present a report at the March council meeting.

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

Helen Barton received an e-mail from John Berlinsky, MUFA Vice-President, regarding proposed pension legislation. In light of the

current difficult financial times, the proposed legislation will allow organizations to spread out their pension contribution shortfall payments over ten years instead of five to give them more time to meet their "solvency amortization" commitments. This change requires the approval of the active and retired members and could affect the health of pension plans in the future, particularly private company plans.

MUFA is also asking if MURA will join them in a joint position statement regarding the University's dealing with the current economic crisis. Helen Barton will follow up on this.

#### **h) Special Events (Margaret Jenkins)** Helen Barton reported for Margaret.

The RBG "Glass Under Glass" event with lunch at the RBG on February 10, 2009 was well attended with 46 participants. There will be a special showing for MURA members and friends of the newly opened, renovated McMaster Planetarium, followed by an afternoon tea at the university club, on March 31, 2009. We already have 25 people signed up for the 35 available seats.

Margaret asked for ideas for special events for May, June and October. Wayne Rouse then suggested the "Group of Seven" slide show by Jim Waddington. See section 7a) under the AGM report. If this slide show is not used for the AGM, it could be a special event provided we book soon. This will possibly be a joint MUFA/MURA special event in November, on the same day as the annual President's/MUFA luncheon for retired faculty and librarians.

#### **I) Trips (Joan Parker) -**

- All trips are filling up well, including the November Mediterranean cruise. Anne is planning to add a train trip for late summer or early fall and is yet to plan the Xmas trip.

- Anne will give MURA a cheque for \$500 from the trips account in March.

#### **j) Christmas Lunch (Pam Penny)**

- The president's office has offered a one time donation of \$1250 to supplement our Christmas lunch so that we have the event on campus in 2009. This is a fixed amount and would be a \$10 supplement for 125 people attending. With the supplement, we can afford to order lunches for approximately \$23.00 each, including taxes and gratuities to stay within the same price range retirees have paid in the past.

Pam will contact Paradise Catering and the University Club manager for quotes.

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

- The MURA web site was updated using the new re-organization discussed at the January council meeting. This update went smoothly with little problem. We've received quite a few positive comments from our members.

- CIRA: Marianne will resume work with Nicholas Solntseff to change the registration/ownership to MURA as we still do not have sufficient information to make the change.

## **8. Information Reports from Liaisons**

a) **University Board of Governors** (Lorraine Allan): No Report

b) **Colleges & Universities Retirees Associations of Canada (CURAC)** (Helen Barton) - No Report

c) **MUFA** (Geoff Evans) - No Report except that Geoff Evans did meet with Richard Stubbs, MUFA President, for lunch.

d) **CAW** (Kathy Overholt) - No report

e) **Hourly Staff Liaison** (Al Fraser) - No report

**10. Other Business** - There has been a news report that ING is in financial trouble, but that referred to their insurance division. Since MURA funds (other than funds for immediate needs which are kept with the McMaster Credit Union) are in an INGDirect savings account, this report caused some concern. The INGDirect account is covered by the federal CDIC insurance for up to \$100,000.

## **11. Next meeting**

Wednesday March 11, 2009 at 1:30PM in the Student Centre, Room 220

## **12. Adjournment**

Helen Dietsche motioned to adjourn the meeting at 3:10PM