

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

Present: Al Fraser, Cliff Andrews, Helen Barton (chair), Beth Csordas, Helen Dietsche, Geoff Evans, Mike Hedden, Joe Laposa, Kathy Overholt, Joan Parker, and Marianne Van der Wel

Regrets: Margaret Jenkins, Michele Leroux, Kathy Ryan, Pam Penny, Wayne Rouse and Anne Sinclair

1. Welcome & Regrets:

Helen called the meeting to order at 1:30PM.

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings

a) The following corrections were made to the Council meeting minutes for February 11, 2009:

Page 2, 3rd paragraph at end of the sentence: "and sent to us" was changed to "before sending to us".

Page 2, last paragraph, first line: "through that" was changed to "as a result"

Geoff Evans objects to the decision made at the February 11 meeting that a letter regarding our annual pension from Human Resources is no longer necessary and that the letter from CIBC Mellon is sufficient notification. He feels strongly that retirees should receive a personal letter from Human Resources.

MOTION

- Mike Hedden **motioned** that the minutes be approved with the above corrections and comment.

-Geoff Evans **seconded** the motion.

- **Carried** unanimously

3. Business Arising

(a)Scholarship Endowment Fund (Beth Csordas): Beth reported the March figure for the endowment fund was \$500 lower than the February figure. She is investigating the discrepancy. Helen Barton and Beth will be meeting with the advancement office soon to plan the spring campaign.

Several council members reported receiving personal phone calls from the university thanking them for their contributions.

(b)MURA Cards (Kathy Overholt): We received two mail orders, one for 20 cards and one for 25. Kathy checked on the bookstore sales; they are selling them for \$2.25 per card, not the \$1.95 per card originally

reported. The bookstore was to pay us for the 150 cards they received at the time they were delivered. Beth Csordas will investigate why we have not yet received payment.

Kathy received an unsolicited e-mail from a colleague in Brussels, originally from Greece and McMaster graduate student in 1973-74, who commented favourably on the cards and asked about buying them. Kathy is going to send him several and also forwarded the e-mail to Karen McQuigge, director of Alumni Advancement to pique interest in having the alumni office provide a link from their web site to ours to promote the cards.

(c)Volunteer Network (Helen Barton)

The "Retiree Volunteer Network" has been launched. Laura from the advancement office reported that 8 or 9 people had volunteered for positions. An e-mail (via muramembs-1) was sent out specifically for the "Bay Area Science Fair"; as a result two faculty retirees volunteered to be judges and about six more volunteers for other duties.

Some feedback had indicated that the language used made the volunteer positions appear they required skills that weren't necessary. Hence we've simplified some of the language, particularly the titles.

Other feedback raised concerns that we were taking away jobs from employees. The advancement office is screening the positions to ensure they do not. Simplifying the titles (e.g. changing "coordinator" to) "volunteer" also helps alleviate the situation. Helen Barton and Kathy Overholt raised the issue with CAW, but they did not seem overly concerned. They did ask whether it would be possible to get prior notice of the volunteer positions to ensure there is no such conflict as they currently get such notice for the student work study program.

Even though Human Resources is exempt from CAW, Helen Dietsche commented that the Human Resources lunch time volunteer position appears to be something that should be handled by an employee.

We will continue working with the advancement office to solve the concerns of possible CAW conflicts as we add new volunteer positions (e.g. the scholarship office would like volunteers and we've also had a suggestion to establish a mentor program for new employees). We are also working on finding ways to promote the volunteer network and opportunities.

One faculty retiree sent a friendly note that he needs time to distance himself from his work life before considering any campus volunteering.

(d)"Sampler" Recreation Program (Joan Parker) Seven people registered and the program started March 3. The program will not be cancelled although we are well below the twenty needed to make the program a financial success. Late comers can join in at pro-rated rates.

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

f)2010 - 25th MURA Anniversary: Any plans requiring additional funding needs to be in the budget for next year.

We discussed different ways to commemorate the 25th Anniversary and the passing of Stuart Winn, who had headed the original steering committee

that started MURA. After a motion by Joan Parker to make a one time donation to the "MURA Endowment Fund" that was later withdrawn, we discussed the possibility of making a one time special bursary donation, and the renaming the endowment fund. The discussion concluded with the following motion:

MOTION

- Helen Dietsche **motioned** that MURA will make a \$250 donation to the "MURA Endowment Fund" in 2010 in honour of MURA's 25th Anniversary. In addition, MURA will make a \$250 donation as soon as possible in 2009 to the "MURA Endowment Fund" in memory of Stuart Winn.
- Mike Hedden **seconded** the motion.
- **Carried** unanimously

Other non-monetary ideas for the 25th anniversary were to update the MURA history on the web site, which was provided by Averil Thomson and currently goes up to 2006. We can also put an article in MURAnews. For the web and MURAnews, we can consider adding a list of past presidents and mention Stuart Winn's unique contribution. To our knowledge, of our founding committee, only Dorothy Jacobs is still living. We can also announce our contributions to the "MURA Endowment Fund" and Stuart Winn's unique role in MURA at the appropriate AGM.

The 25th Anniversary and Stuart Winn's unique contribution to the university may also make a good topic for our spring campaign letter for the MURA Endowment fund.

g) CURAC/Waterloo Insurance (Joe Laposa/Joan Parker): Joe Laposa, Joan Parker and Helen Barton met with David Sweeney and Bruce Weaver from Waterloo Insurance. They discussed the history, company service, the fact that there is no penalty after the first claim, incentives and discounts. There's a 20% group discount, an additional 10% discount for insuring both car and property, plus a 5% discount if over 65 years of age. They do not charge extra for monthly payments and do not bill a month in advance as some insurance companies do.

Some council members have received quotes and, while not across the board, most would save substantially by switching to Waterloo Insurance.

We've decided not to endorse the insurance company but will make our membership aware. To this end, we will insert a short notice in *MURAnews* and include a brochure from Waterloo Insurance with our next mailing of *MURAnews*. Waterloo Insurance will pay for any extra postage. We will also have promotional material from Waterloo Insurance available at the AGM in May.

4. Correspondence

- We received several messages regarding Stuart Winn's death on Friday February 13, 2009. As mentioned in section 3f), MURA will be donating \$250 to the "MURA Endowment Fund" in his honour for the unique contributions Stuart made as prime founding father of MURA. A notification will be sent to his widow, Paula Winn. Paula has also invited all MURA members to attend a "Celebration of Life" St. George's

Cathedral, Kingston, Ontario on Friday, April 3, 2009 at 2:00 pm. If anyone is going, please let Helen Barton know as she is looking for a ride for one MURA member who has expressed interest in attending.

- Through muramembs-1, we notified our members of the University "Open Doors" event, the MURA golf survey, the need for volunteers for the "Bay Area Science Fair" and the "Athletics & Recreation Sampler Program".

- The University's February 2009 Update is out. Helen Barton circulated several printed copies at the council meeting. We have more printed copies if any MURA member wishes a copy. We will put a reminder message about the McMaster Update in the spring *MURAnews*.

- Erin Sterling contacted us about the "Hospital Elder Life" program which uses volunteers to advocate on behalf of senior patients while in hospital. This program has been running for about 1-2 years. We decided that we could run an article in *MURAnews* to ask for volunteers. We may also discuss the possibility of adding this program to the McMaster Retirees Volunteer Network with our advancement office advisors.

5. President's Report (Helen Barton)

Council Positions:

Helen Barton presented the nominating report (yellow sheet). Pam Penny and Marianne Walters were not present at the meeting. Joan Parker, Joe Laposa, Geoffrey Evans and Kathy Overholt left the room leaving council with six voting members (enough for a quorum).

Helen Barton gave a brief biography of Joe Laposa and Marianne Walters, both from the faculty ranks. She also pointed out that Geoff Evans is being nominated for a two year term, not three; Geoff has already served one year to fill a vacancy plus a three year term.

MOTION

- Helen Barton **motioned** that 2009 Nominating Committee Report be accepted as presented.
- Mike Hedden **seconded** the motion.
- **Carried** unanimously

Joan Parker, Joe Laposa, Geoffrey Evans and Kathy Overholt returned to the meeting.

MOTION

- Kathy Overholt **motioned** that the MURA webmaster position become a permanent ex-officio non-voting member of MURA Council, in parallel with the position for the Newsletter Editor.
- Helen Dietsche **seconded** the motion.
- **Carried** unanimously

United Way: Pam Penny will be serving on the university's United Way committee. The committee will be preparing an article for *MURAnews* thanking McMaster retirees for their support of the United Way. The

United Way committee is considering ways to directly thank retirees who donated. Participation by retirees is slightly higher, proportionally, than that of McMaster employees.

Clinical Faculty Pension Supplementary Pension Surplus Distribution:

Helen Barton just received the last of the reports from the John Gately, Clinical Faculty, and the University. Helen and Les Robb will now write their report with recommendations.

6. Treasurer's Report: (Beth Csordas)

Beth presented a proposed budget for 2009/2010 (green sheets). She explained that interest earnings were lowered since rates have fallen. She has separated out MURA greeting cards revenue and expenses. The projected Xmas lunch expenses adds \$250 to the \$400 budgeted for 2008/2009 in case more than 125 people attend. The university president's office is providing a subsidy of \$1,250; if attendance is higher we will have to subsidize the additional people at \$10 per person. The projected cost of MURAnews has been revised to reflect only four issues whereas the original estimate was for five. Not as many people are opting out of the printed copies as had hoped - we currently print 1450 copies with 1400 actually being sent out via the post. Beth is investigating what mail services charges for GST on postage as we don't understand their calculations. The miscellaneous expense of \$168 noted for 2008/2009 was for the transport wheelchair donated to Campus Health Services. We will need to revise the projected "Net Revenue over Expenses" for the 2008/2009 year to -\$855, and to \$455 for the Revised 2009/2010 budget, to account for the donations to the "MURA Endowment Fund" we have earmarked in honour of Stuart Winn and the 25th MURA Anniversary.

Beth will submit a final budget at the April council meeting for our approval.

[Secretary's Comment on Draft 5 of the budget: "Web Upgrades": Note 8 should read Note 11; "Office Adm/Membership Supplies": Note 11 should read Note 12; "Miscellaneous": Note 12 should be Note 13]

MOTION

- Beth Csordas **motioned** that Eleanor Gow, who audited our books last year, be appointed the auditor for the 2008-2009 budget year.
- Joan Parker **seconded** the motion.
- **Carried** unanimously

7. Information Reports From Committees

a) AGM (Pam Penny) -

AGM SPEAKER(S):

Helen Barton reported that Jim Waddington is not able to give the "Group of Seven" presentation on the date of the May AGM. This is now scheduled for November as a special event to follow the annual luncheon for retired faculty and librarians. The "Group of Seven" event will be staged close enough in time and location to hopefully entice most of the luncheon attendees to attend. All MURA members will be invited as well.

Thanks to Ellen Ryan, we have arranged an excellent panel for the AGM consisting of Margaret Denton (McMaster Gerontology Director), Debbie Christie (Executive Director of the Hamilton Council on Aging) and Deirdre Pike (Social Planner from the Social Planning Research Council of Hamilton) to give us an "Overview of Services for Seniors in the Hamilton Area". They have a couple of recent publications, including a directory of services, which they will make available to attendees.

ROOM/FOOD ARRANGEMENTS:

While investigating the Xmas lunch location, Helen Barton, Pam Penny and Joan Parker discovered that if we book "Celebration Hall" in KTH for the AGM, we may potentially save a lot of money on set up costs and audio visual fees. In addition Hospitality Services is willing to work with us to reduce the cost of the lunch. We could potentially save \$600.

Council agreed that we should consider the change in venue. Concerns raised about the potential change were:

- Will the room comfortably accommodate 150 people throughout the whole meeting - at lunch, the speakers' presentation and the business portion of the AGM. Will we have enough room to mingle?
- Since the room will be set up with individual tables/chairs for lunch, we would forgo the row type seating for the speaker/business portion. People would listen from the tables they had lunch at. Most did not see this as a problem.
- Will there be a place for our guest speaker panel to make their presentation?
- We agreed that having UTS on hand to provide Mac Photo ID Card service would be desirable, but we need the service to stop when the speakers start their presentation. We will also investigate if it's feasible to have UTS set up adjacent to but outside of Celebration Hall.
- Parking will again provide free parking but we will need to improve our signage to direct people (especially those needing wheelchair access).
- We will consider asking people to RSVP for the lunch portion of the AGM to better order the correct amount of food.

b) Cards (Helen Dietsche) -

Helen Dietsche sent bereavement cards to the families of Elzamina Kieraszewicz (Biology), Stuart Winn (Education Services), Gwendolyn Crossan (Centre for Continuing Education) and William Hurst (Physical Plant).

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

d) Membership (Pam Penny) - No report

e) MURAnews (Joan Parker) -

We are getting good feedback from our readers. The deadline for submission of articles for the April newsletter is Wednesday April 8, 2009, our next MURA council meeting.

f) Nominating (Helen Barton) - See section 5, the President's Report, Council Positions

g) Pension & Benefits (Geoff Evans)

Geoff has reviewed Les Robb's report from the February 2009 Pension Trust Committee meeting. Pension plans throughout the country are facing serious difficulties. The McMaster Salaried plan is performing above the average of the benchmarks, but the benchmarks are very low.

We are following the move by the provincial government to give organizations more time to make up any shortfalls to their pension plan funds. Currently organizations are required to make up shortfalls within five years. The government is considering extending this to ten years which, has the potential to weaken the plans.

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

The "Group of Seven" presentation by Jim Waddington will be scheduled for November to follow the annual retired faculty and librarians lunch. See section 7a) AGM.

Thirty people responded to the survey on the golf special event. It will be scheduled for Thursday June 18, 2009 and there may be a provision for people to attend just the lunch portion.

i) Trips (Joan Parker/Anne Sinclair) -

Anne has asked that we publicize the autumn River Boat Cruise in the spring MURAnews as there have been a few cancellations.

j) Christmas Lunch (Pam Penny)

Joan Parker, Pam Penny and Helen Barton met with the University Club and Hospitality Services. The University Club menu was limited, cost \$22 per person and they could likely not accommodate 150 people. If we use Celebration Hall in KTH, Hospitality Services offers a great variety in a buffet style for \$21.24 per person including gratuities, set up and clean up, and microphone fees. With the \$10 subsidy from the university that would mean \$11.24 per person attending, on par with the cost in previous years. If attendance is over 125, MURA will have to pay the subsidy overage. By moving the date to Monday December 7, 2009, parking can provide us with free parking as classes finish on December 4 and exams do not start until December 8. We have to double check that Celebration Hall can accommodate 150 people. We will ask people to RSVP, as we did for the 2008 Xmas lunch. Council agreed to use Celebration Hall and Hospitality Services for the Christmas 2009 lunch.

k) Web Site (Marianne Van der Wel)

CIRA Ownership: The change over of ownership to MURA is still outstanding.

WordPress: Marianne has bought "WordPress for Dummies" for her to read to start the investigation whether WordPress is feasible software for our MURA web site in future. Currently we use basic HTML.

8. Information Reports from Liaisons

a) **University Board of Governors** (Lorraine Allan): Since Lorraine Allan is away, her report on the last Board of Governors meeting will be presented in April.

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

c) **MUFA** (Geoff Evans) -
Geoff Evans met with Richard Stubbs, MUFA President, for lunch. Richard promised to work on improved continuity for retired faculty with their departments.

d) **CAW** (Kathy Overholt) -
Kathy Overholt and Helen Barton met with the CAW local 555 executive for lunch. The university is working toward reducing the cost of benefits for future retirees. The question of the legality of CAW or any other active employee group negotiating on behalf of current retirees was also discussed. Also see section 3c `Volunteer Network` for the discussion on potential conflict with CAW and volunteer positions.

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

10. Other Business - None

11. Next meeting

Wednesday April 8, 2009 at 1:30PM in the Student Centre, Room 220

12. Adjournment

Geoff Evans motioned to adjourn the meeting at 3:50PM