

**Minutes for COUNCIL MEETING of McMaster University Retirees Association
Wednesday Oct. 8, 2008, 1:30PM
Student Centre Room 220**

Present: Cliff Andrews, Helen Barton (chair), Beth Csordas, Geoff Evans, Alan Fraser, Helen Dietsche, Mike Hedden, Margaret Jenkins, Joe Laposa, Allisan Noble, Kathy Overholt, Joan Parker, Pam Penny, Kathy Ryan, Anne Sinclair and Marianne Van der Wel

Regrets: Michele Leroux, Wayne Rouse

1. Welcome & Regrets:

Helen welcomed Joe Laposa and Al Fraser to our council and passed on regrets from Wayne Rouse, our newest councillor, and Michele Leroux.

Helen noted the need to have 2 more chairs in room 220 to accommodate all our councillors.

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings

a) The following corrections/changes need to be made to the council meeting minutes for September 10, 2008:

Page 2, first paragraph: Change "is able to" to "may"

Page 3, last paragraph: Change "Joe Lapona" to "Joe Laposa"

Page 4, section c): Change "GO B108" to "GB B108"

Page 5, section h), 2nd paragraph should read:

"Note that the Human Resources Committee of the Board of Governors (the Chair, the Vice-Chair and the Past Chair of the Board) evaluates the President's performance annually, and also negotiates the President's employment contract and any decision about salary increases. The Board delegates the negotiation of a contract to the Human Resources Committee at the time of the President's appointment."

Page 7, section I): should read section i) with the last line in the section reading: "enchancing Danube" instead of "enchanted Danube"

MOTION

- Geoff Evans **motioned** that the minutes be approved with the above corrections.

- Kathy Ryan **seconded** the motion.

- **Carried** unanimously

b) Record of September 22, 2008 business conducted by e-mail:

E-MOTION

- Joan Parker **motioned** that Alan Fraser be appointed to MURA council for a two year appointment to fill the vacancy left by Rod Phillips

- Pam Penny **seconded** the motion.

- **Carried** unanimously

c)Record of September 23, 2008 business conducted by e-mail:

E-MOTION

- Joan Parker **motioned** that Wayne Rouse be appointed to MURA council for a one year appointment.
- Marianne Van der Wel **seconded** the motion.
- **Carried** unanimously

3. Business Arising

(a)Scholarship Endowment Fund (Beth Csordas): The endowment fund amount as of October 1/08 remains unchanged from last month at \$19,555.

Beth and Helen Barton met with Karen McQuigge and Jenny Thomson from the Advancement Office to discuss the plan for promoting MURA's endowment campaign. For a fall mailing to all our members, the Advancement Office is suggesting we "piggy back" on their community campaign plans. The Advancement Office is sending letters on the theme "Why I give to McMaster" to staff and faculty from selected staff/faculty representatives, "ghost written" by a professional writer. In this letter, they will also be announcing a campus "Open Door" event, running later in the fall and another in the spring. The letter to retirees will follow this plan, and will focus on the MURA endowment fund. Helen Barton is contacting a retiree who hopefully will agree to participate as the letter writer.

(b)MURA Cards (Kathy Overholt): Kathy reported that she sold another 31 cards in September. Kathy also reported she spoke with staff from the university bookstore and they did not think selling them at Convocation was good idea as these events are crowded and also people are looking for items more related to graduation. However, the bookstore is interested in selling the cards in their store at a markup, likely for \$1.95 each plus tax. We have consulted with Stephanie Lisak, the artist of the reproduction on the card's front, who likes and approves this idea.

MOTION

- Helen Dietsche **motioned** that we sell the bookstore whatever quantity of cards they want for resale for \$1.50 each.
- Joan parker **seconded** the motion.
- **Carried** unanimously

Selling the cards through the bookstore will give us the opportunity to reach the general public while at the same time, we can continue to sell cards directly to our members or others at \$1.50 each.

(c)Volunteer Bureau (Helen Barton)

Joan Parker, Pam Penny and Helen Barton met with the Advancement Office on October 2/08. Two people from the Faculty of Science and the Chair of the History department joined in for parts of this meeting.

We hope to announce the projects for the pilot in late October at the earliest and mid November at the latest.

Some of the suggested projects that it's hoped will be available for the pilot are:

- *History*: a project at the Hamilton Military Institute Museum.
- *Science*: qualified judges and other help for The Hamilton & District Science Fair
- assisting graduate students with thesis writing
- providing external examiners for PHD examinations
- projects in the Benefits & Pensions section of Human Resources

We may need volunteers from council to help produce or proofread descriptive position write ups and short advertising write ups.

Council commented that the following items are important to consider for the volunteer organization:

- Confidentiality
- Police screening when working with the 'vulnerable'
- Are non-MURA members restricted from participating? We would likely not advertise outside the McMaster retiree community.
- the selection process

(d) Clinical Faculty Pension Surplus Distribution (Helen Barton):

Helen Barton and Les Robb met for a second time with the Chair of the Board of Governors and the Chair of the Board of Governors Finance Committee. The two Chairs had reviewed the university files regarding this matter and summarized their findings in a letter. The letter concludes with a statement of the Chair's belief that the University's earlier advice to direct the concerns to the Regional Medical Associates (RMA) is correct. Les and Helen will contact RMA next to do fact finding and ask questions.

A councillor commented that at least Helen and Les, as representatives for MURA, have established a communication channel, after there being none for 2 years and the Board now seems willing to answer questions.

A councillor asked if the university Ombudsperson should be involved. Helen and Les did discuss contacting the Ombudsperson earlier, but decided to approach the Board instead. This may be reconsidered if an impasse is reached.

e) Prospective Mad Lappers Walking Program (Joan Parker)

No progress has been made yet as we have not connected with Debbie Marinoff-Shupe (Athletics & Recreation) to discuss the enhancements we would like to make to the program.

f) CURAC Membership: We had a brief discussion describing CURAC (<http://www.curac.ca/>)

MOTION

- Kathy overholt **motioned** that we renew our annual membership with CURAC for \$300
- Helen Dietsche **seconded** the motion.
- **Carried** unanimously

4. Correspondence

- Marianne sent out personalized THANK YOU cards to John McCutcheon and Rod Phillips for their service to council.
- The transport wheel chair for Student Health Services has been bought for \$148.72, much less than anticipated, as Shoppers Drug Mart points were used to bring down the price. The plaque broke when being transferred to the new chair from the old which added another \$20 to the cost.
- We received the MUFA newsletter for September 2008. It contains an interesting article for faculty members approaching retirement. Even though post retirement conditions are spelled out in signed agreements, there is no established procedure to resolve conflicts should they arise after retirement since the Faculty General Grievance Procedure does not cover retired faculty. The question is: Is there a role for MURA to help establish such a procedure with MUFA? See Section 5. (This also connects to the idea of approaching MUFA about helping prospective retirees negotiate their post-retirement contracts. See Section 6.g.)

The MUFA Newsletter is at: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/mufa/newsSept08.pdf>

- Invitations: Our president and our MUFA Liaison have received an invitation to the Thursday November 6 lunch for retired Faculty and Librarians. This luncheon is jointly funded by MUFA and the university president's office.

The second invitation for our president is to attend "Celebrating the Portraiture of McMaster University Chancellors" on November 11.

- Comments for MURAnews readers: A few readers sent emails that they thought the MURAnews was great and the new "page-by-page" presentation excellent; two had trouble finding the physio article on page 7.
- Comments from MURA Web Site readers: One reader noticed the University Club link on the "Pension & Benefits" page didn't work. The link has been removed from our site until the newly designed University Club web site adds retiree information, which is currently missing.
- Daina Ives sent Veronica Morrison a thank you note for our help when Brian Ives died.

5. President's Report (Helen Barton) - Since we have committee/liaison vacancies, Helen hopes that our new councillors members will consider the following portfolios:

- Al Fraser - Hourly liaison & Xmas Lunch committee
- Joe Laposa - Pension & Benefits committee
- Wayne Rouse (or Joe Laposa) - MUFA liaison (with Geoff remaining as part of the "team");
one immediate task for this team would be to approach MUFA to work with MURA on establishing an official grievance procedure to cover retired faculty members.

6. Treasurer's Report: No report.

7. Information Reports From Committees

a) **AGM** (Pam Penny) - Pam was not able to connect with Joan Morris to do a handover as Joan was ill.

b) **Cards** (Helen Dietsche) - Helen Dietsche sent bereavement cards to the families of Colin Campbell (Electrical Engineering), Jenny Garber (Financial Services), Martin Johns (Physics) and Adam Bromke (Political Science).

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

d) **Membership** (Pam Penny) - We have seven new retirees as of Oct 1/08 for a new total of 1877 members. See <http://mura.mcmaster.ca/MURA.council.meeting.records/membership/membership.html>

Lunch Bunch: We now have 18 people regularly participating and people seem to enjoy the social aspect of this monthly event. The November lunch will be at East Side Mario's on October 31. Pam will investigate wearing Halloween costumes. If interested in joining the Lunch Bunch, contact Pam and she will add you to her e-mail list. The service and food had improved tremendously at the October lunch.

e) **MURAnews** (Joan Parker)

- *MURAnews* was mailed out today (October 8/08) via the post. For on-line readers, there is now a "page-by-page" format that has been well received.

We had considerable technical difficulties with this issue as Allisan and Marianne both obtained new computers and are now using VISTA. Since Veronica Morrison has so ably been our editor for 13 years, growing into the job, we are going to examine the tasks for producing *MURAnews*; we may need to find more people to be involved.

Ideas for next issue include:

- Health: new funding for insulin pumps
- Health: long term care insurance. Is it too late once you're retired?
- Survey membership to find out who may be interested in participating in a golf tournament suggested by John Harvey (Nuclear Reactor retiree). For such events, we want to stress that they are for having fun and that experience is not necessary.
- One MURA member suggested an article on SOPHOS, including the need to update it regularly (SOPHOS is an anti-virus software supplied free to the McMaster University community)
- Periodic reminders to update one's beneficiary information with Human Resources.
- Retiree profiles; please make suggestions.

f) **Nominating** (vacant) - No Report

g) Pension & Benefits (Geoff Evans) -

Geoff reported that part of the committee's work should be to contact MUFA, along with our MUFA liaison team, to suggest that MUFA set up a process to help upcoming faculty retirees negotiate their post-retirement contracts with the university. (This connects to the idea of working on a grievance procedure for retired faculty. See Section 4.)

Les Robb sent a report on the Salaried Trust Committee meeting held September 19, 2008. One of the items was the CAUBO (Canadian Association of University Business Officers) annual report comparing the McMaster salaried pension plan fund return to other university funds in Canada for the period ending December 31, 2007. This comparison can be found at

<http://www.workingatmcmaster.ca/link.php?link=ewlss:CAUBO-Oct08>

(Secretary's Note: Currently this link does not work for all versions of Mozilla's Browser: Firefox; use an alternative such as MicrSoft Explorer)

h) Special Events (Margaret Jenkins) - The "Art Crawl" with the Magical Bus Tour went very well. The event was well attended by both MURA members and the general public: 19 MURA members participated with 90 people overall (requiring two "magical" busses).

- The Gary Warner dinner is slowly filling up but we could use more people attending. Margaret will send out an e-mail reminding MURA members.
- There is an event scheduled to see the "Glass under Glass" exhibition at the RBG preceded by lunch at their Pepperwood Café on February 10/09
- The visit to McMaster's newly renovated planetarium is scheduled for March 31/09 with Afternoon tea at the University Club.
- Al Fraser will working with Margaret to see if setting up a "fun", no-experience-required, curling event is feasible.
- Other suggestions for special events include:
 - From Pam Penny: participate in a fund-raiser at Theatre Aquarius. Tickets would be \$40 with a silent auction and wine & cheese. Margaret is investigating.
 - A fun "Lawn Bowling" session.

Please send additional suggestions to Margaret.

i) Trips (Joan Parker) - Anne Sinclair reported that the Trips fund has donated \$100 to the Xmas lunch for door prizes.

The Xmas, January and February 2009 events are well booked. Anne is considering a July 14-16 trip, via Canada Coach, to see Camelot. ON October 9, 2009 we're planning to see "Brigadoon" in Drayton,

j) Xmas Lunch (Pam Penny)

- Special guests to be invited by Helen Barton, our president, are:
 - Art Bourns - Honorary President
 - Peter George - University President, and his wife, Allison Barrett
 - Red Wilson - University Chancellor, and his wife Brenda
 - MURA Scholarship and Prize Winners
 - President of CAW 555

- President of MUFA
- Secretary-Treasurer of SEIU
- Business Manager of IUOE

After discussion, we felt that the MURA newsletter was sufficient to inform our former chancellors, so no specific invitation is to be sent.

- Pam reported that the food/service was much better at recent visits to East Side Marios (University Plaza in Dundas).
 - The menu will include a seniors menu at \$9.99 that includes ice cream
 - We need to order a sound system as the one the restaurant owns will broadcast to all patrons in the restaurant.
 - We will be served in the main restaurant; "off the street" patrons will be served in the side room.
 - This year we will have each person tip individually
 - Candy mints will be provided by the restaurant.
 - Council felt that gift certificates for door prizes were well received last year and should be repeated again this year.
 - Pam will request chocolates from the University President's office.
 - Marianne will provide the name tags and head gear for council members and Pam will provide name tags for regular MURA members
 - Last year, our expenses were approximately \$365 plus \$100 donated by Trips. We expect about the same expenditure this year.
 - Help: Anne will handle the draw tickets; Helen Barton will host. What would other councillors like to do? Please let Pam know.

k) **Web Site** (Marianne Van der Wel): Helen Barton and Marianne are starting to investigate a new host site. The Material Science server was down last weekend and a few times over the summer. Also, the administrator has not responded to our requests to meet with him over the summer. [Post-meeting note: Of his own volition, on Oct 10/08, the administrator contacted us explaining why he was unable to respond to our previous requests...A fire early in the summer had caused great havoc with the computer equipment in Material Science where our web site is hosted and he was over-extended.]

8. Information Reports from Liaisons

a) **University Board of Governors** (Lorraine Allan): No report. The board's first meeting of the year is October 24, 2008.

b) **Colleges & Universities Retirees Associations of Canada (CURAC)** (Helen Barton) - A new web design is in the works for <http://www.curac.ca/>

c) **MUFA** (Geoff Evans) - No report

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

e) **Hourly Staff Liaison** (Vacant) - No Report

10. Other Business -

The question was raised: Should MURA become involved with the issue of closing the McMaster Emergency department to adults? Council decided that this is not an issue MURA should get involved in.

11. Next meeting

Wednesday November 12, 2008 at 1:30PM in the Student Centre, Room 220

12. Adjournment

Geoff Evans motioned to adjourn the meeting at 3:30PM