

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

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

Regrets: Beth Csordas, Michele Leroux

1. Welcome & Regrets:

Helen Barton welcomed everyone back from the summer break. She explained that Rod Phillips had retired from MURA council and John McCutcheon had resigned. That leaves 2 vacant positions, each with 2 years remaining. Our constitution allows us to appoint suitable candidates to fill these vacancies.

Our secretary, Marianne, will mail a note to both Rod and John to thank them for their services.

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings

The date at the top of the council meeting minutes for June 11, 2008 needs to be changed from "June 11, 2007" to "June 11, 2008".

MOTION

- Geoff Evans **motioned** that the June 11, 2008 minutes be approved with the above correction.
- Joan Parker **seconded** the motion.
- **Carried** unanimously

3. Business Arising

(a) Scholarship Endowment Fund (Beth Csordas/Helen Barton): A letter to retirees, our second request for donations, was sent late June 2008. The response was great as we had \$6,810 in donations over the summer and our total is now \$19,555. We're approximately at 61% of our goal. Beth and Helen B. are planning a meeting in a couple of weeks with University Advancement to plan the fall campaign.

Over the summer, one retiree was contacted by a McMaster student tele-marketer" on the phone and as a result donated to a fund other than MURA's without realizing it until he got his receipt. Helen Barton will

mention, in President`s Corner of the fall MURAnews, that retirees need to always explicitly specify their donation is to go to MURA if that is their wish. Fortunately, the individual may change the donation from the other fund to MURA`s.

(b)MURA Cards (Kathy Overholt): Kathy reported that we have sold 649 cards which includes the 300 sold to Human Resources. Kathy sold 24 cards on the June `08 Coach trip. Kathy sold 6 orders of 10 cards to our general members over the summer. A few departments such as Nursing and Graduate Studies have bought cards that they intend to use as `Thank You`notes or to accompany Honorariums.

Suggestions for future sales:

- Kathy O. asked that each councillor go back to their previous departments and see if they would like to order our cards.
- Contact the McMaster`s Women`s Club
- A note in the fall MURAnews to encourage our membership to buy more.
- One member phoned asking if we had more. She liked them so much that she`s ordering more for Xmas gifts.
- We can advertise or sell at our special events and trips.
- Kathy will seek permission to sell the cards at the Fall Convocation in November (contact: the Bookstore).
- We could approach the Alumni Association (contact Anne-Marie Middel) to ask if they would add a link for our MURA cards on their web site.

(c)Volunteer Bureau (Helen Barton)

- The advancement office is supplying the staff, money, database, physical location for volunteers and a web site to promote volunteering by retirees on campus.

- Pilot Project: We`ve had good responses from the Faculty of Science, History and the Registrar`s Office. We`re in the process of identifying 1-2 opportunities to try in these departments to see how well they work. Ellen Ryan is helping to identify opportunities that will specifically appeal to retired faculty.

- Web site: The advancement office has a web design in the works.

(d) Portfolio (committees & liaisons)(Helen Barton)- Currently we have:

COMMITTEES

AGM: Pam Penny (Chair), Beth Csordas

Cards: Helen Dietsche (Chair), Helen Barton (backup)

Constitution & By Laws: Chair is vacant; Joan Morris (consultant)

Membership: Pam Penny (Chair), Marianne Van der Wel

MURAnews: Joan Parker (Chair), Allisan Noble (Editor), Marianne Van der Wel

Nominating: Vacant

Pensions & Benefits: Geoff Evans (Co-chair), Kathy Overholt, Kathy Ryan, Mike Hedden. One position vacant, which could be a co-chair, and should likely be held for a retiree from the hourly group.

Special Events: Marg Jenkins (Chair), Geoff Evans

Trips: Joan Parker (Chair), Anne Sinclair (Organizer)

Xmas Lunch: Pam penny (Chair), one position vacant

Web Site: Marianne Van der Wel (Chair), Helen Barton

LIAISONS

University Board of Governors: Lorraine Allan

CURAC: Helen Barton, Joan Parker (backup)

MUFA: Geoff Evans

CAW: Kathy Overholt

Hourly Staff: Vacant

As mentioned under section '1) Welcome', we have two vacant positions. Please let Helen Barton know of any changes/additions you would like to undertake.

e) Clinical Faculty Pension Surplus Distribution (Helen Barton, Les Robb)
After sending a letter to Les King asking for his input, Helen Barton and Les Robb met in July with the Chair of the Board of Governors and the Chair of the Board of Governors Finance Committee. The information presented was very well received and provided the Board representatives with a more balanced picture. Our concerns are being taken seriously but there won't be any quick fixes.

f) Prospective Mad Lappers Walking Program (Joan Parker)

We need to develop a more attractive program with a variety of activities; e.g. samples of yoga, tai chi, squash, etc. We may also want to add more of a social component. This would not be organized before the winter. Note that price may be a deterrent as the 'Y' offers courses for as low as \$15 for 10 weeks. [Secretary's note: Our last walking program cost \$45 (for Mac gym members) and \$55 for non-members for 9 sessions.]

4. Correspondence

a) Vacant Council Positions: Our constitution allows council to appoint retirees to positions vacated mid term.

Motion

Helen Dietsche motioned that we should proceed with filling the 2 vacant council positions each with 2 years remaining.

Joan Parker seconded the motion.

Carried unanimously.

Names collected for the prize 'draw' at the May 2008 AGM were used to get ideas of who might be interested and serve well. (Aside: We want to repeat a similar process at next year's AGM to find out who attends.) Two names became prominent from this review and other discussions.

Dr. Joe Laposa, retired in 1992 as a faculty member from Chemistry. He has been active with the Knights of Columbus and would like to serve on MURA's council.

Motion

Joan Parker motioned that we appoint Dr. Joe Laposa for a 2 year term to MURA council to fill the vacancy left by John McCutcheon.

Kathy Overholt seconded the motion.

Carried unanimously.

The other AGM attendee that may consider sitting on council is Mr. Al Fraser, a retiree from the hourly group. Helen Barton will speak with Al Fraser; if he's interested we can have an electronic motion/vote to appoint him to council to replace Rod Phillips. If Mr. Fraser is not interested, Helen and Cliff will continue to look for a representative from the hourly group.

b)Recent Retirees Reception is scheduled for Monday, November 17, 2008. This reception is for people who retired from McMaster in the past year and is hosted by the university president's office.

- Helen Barton has clarified with President Peter George that all MURA council members are to be invited, not just the executive.

- Two MURA council members will be asked to greet people at the start, one for each entrance, as well as two to say good evening at the end as people start to leave.

- We have suggested that the President's office should encourage administrators who attend to mingle more with the retirees.

- We have asked the President's office to have the president's speech concentrate more on the retirees, especially those who attend, and less on fundraising. One suggestion was to read out the names the new retirees, particularly those attending. Dave Fraser from the President's office will pass these ideas forward to the speech writers.

c)Our MURA office in GB B108 now has a working PC (a Dell) donated free by Research and High Performance Computing Services (RHPCS) as they no longer needed it. It uses LINUX as the operating system which gives us access to the web and e-mail. Instructions are available from Marianne Van der Wel. MURA will send a "Thank You" card to Patricia Monger, RHPCS's technical director.

d)United Way Campaign Letter: Each year the United Way sends a letter to McMaster retirees. This letter is usually signed by an individual MURA member (not MURA council). For the past two years, Pam Penny has been the signer. Pam circulated a letter written by the United Way along with a revision Pam wrote. Council made some suggestions to improve Pam's version which she will incorporate and then send her final version to the United Way to be sent out to retirees soon.

e)OHIP supported physiotherapy: Helen Barton received an enquiry about our retiree insurance coverage for physiotherapy. Geoff Evans and Marianne Van der Wel will write an article about the availability of OHIP coverage for physio, the varying rates, who is covered and at which clinics, for the fall MURAnews.

f)Wheelchair for Student Health Services: Many years ago, MURA donated a wheel chair to Student Health Services. This chair needed to be replaced recently for the cost of \$240. We were asked if we would cover the bill thus donating the replacement chair. If yes, the plaque

acknowledging our gift would be transferred from the old chair to the new.

Motion

Marg Jenkins **motioned** that MURA pay the \$240 for the replacement wheel chair for Student Health Services.

Kathy Ryan **seconded** the motion.

Carried unanimously.

We may be able to borrow this chair when we need one, e.g. for the AGM.

h) **President's Employment Contract**: A retired faculty member contacted Helen Barton with his concerns about the contract. After some discussion, council felt it was not appropriate to take a public stand on the contract as we represent the entire membership. Some in the membership are not concerned, others are concerned about the amount, others still are unhappy about the way the contract came about. While Council will not take a stand, individuals are encouraged to express their views to the Board of Governors. It was suggested that the faculty member who wrote us could write a "letter to the editor" of MURAnews to encourage individuals to express their views to the Board. Helen Barton will communicate this suggestion.

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.

i) Helen Barton received the **MUFA Annual Budget Advisory Committee Report**. She will be happy to lend or e-mail it to anyone on council who wishes to see it.

j) We received a nice thank you from Susan Farley's husband to the sympathy card we sent. [Secretary's note: Susan's story is on our public web site under "Endowment Campaign"].

k) CURAC's request for our annual membership fee has come in. We will deal with it at the October council meeting.

6. President's Report (Helen Barton) - No report except that Helen Barton will concentrate on getting the vacancies filled, the committees staffed and predicts a busy year ahead.

7. Treasurer's Report: Since Beth Csordas was away, Helen Barton circulated the current financial statement (green sheet), sent by e-mail before the meeting. The figures look unrealistic at the moment as our income from the supporting groups hasn't come in yet. Also the AGM figure is \$813 over budget since we had to order more food than expected because of the unexpected higher attendance.

8. Information Reports From Committees

a) **AGM** (vacant) - Pam Penny is now the chair and will contact Joan Morris for her notes as well as review the comments on this year's AGM in the June 11, 2008 minutes.

b) **Cards** (Helen Dietsche) - Helen Barton & Helen Dietsche sent bereavement cards to the families of Edmund J. Crawley (Audio Visual Services), Suzanne Withers (Hospitality Services), Bharat Jason (Education Services) and Dr. Warren Tresidder (School of Art, Drama and Music).

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

d) **Membership** (Pam Penny) - We now have 1872 members, with 56 new retirees during July 1 to September 1, 2008. The details are available upon request. The MURA Data Base is current. **For private add web site back**

The number of retirees with unknown e-mail addresses is down to 27 because some responded to the letter we enclosed with the summer MURAnews for these people. We may do this again as the results were positive.

Of the 1872 members, 1424 retirees receive the MURAnews via the post. Pam has eliminated duplicate copies sent to the same address as much as possible. We will continue to remind retirees to switch to the web version of MURAnews.

e) **MURAnews** (Joan Parker)

- Allisan Noble asked articles for the MURAnews be submitted by Wed. September 17, 2008. While MURA council needs to remain neutral on issues, there's no reason individual members cannot express themselves. Hence, letters to the editor are welcome.

- Joan asked for volunteers to help stuff the MURAnews most likely the last week of September.

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

g) **Pension & Benefits** (Geoff Evans) - Geoff Evans circulated the tables of "Cost of Living Increases" for the Hourly and Salaried Pension Plans for the past ten years (yellow sheet) which were prepared by Benefits & Pensions. We discussed some of the reasons for the difference between the annual increases for the two plans, such as plan performance and indexing formulae. Cliff Andrews and Helen Barton will prepare a foreword to be published with these tables in MURAnews. Hopefully getting this information out to the membership will be a catalyst for improvements, especially in the hourly plan.

As stated earlier, Geoff and Marianne will submit an article for the fall MURAnews describing variations in Physio fees, facilities and conditions under which OHIP covers.

h) Special Events (Margaret Jenkins) - Marg reported that not many have signed up for the fall special events (Gary Warner's dinner and the Arts Bus Tour). The early fall events are more difficult to advertise as the announcements go out in the summer MURAnews and people are distracted by summer events. The fall newsletter doesn't go out until late September/early October, too late for these events.

Marg will send an e-mail for the two fall special events soon to remind people. She will also prepare a flyer to announce the Gary Warner dinner for Anne Sinclair to distribute to her coach passengers on the Oct. 9 trip.

Marg is still trying to organize a trip to the renovated planetarium even though alumni is offering one. She welcomes ideas for other events.

i) Trips (Joan Parker) - Anne Sinclair reported she has \$3035.07 in the general account and \$2707.03 in GICs.

The report on Future trips includes:

- The sold out "October 9" trip to Niagara on the Lake and the Shaw Festival to see "An Inspector Calls" is sold out.
- "Oh Canada Eh" on December 2/08 is 2/3 full.
- "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" on January 2/09 has only 8 seats left.
- "The Brit Show" on February 18/09 is half full.
- The Sept.- Oct. 2009 River Boat Cruise in Provence/Burgundy, France is virtually full. Anne is organizing an optional, extra 3 day stay in Paris for this trip.
- Anne is planning spring trips and for 2010, she is planning a 9 day trip down the enchanting Danube.

j) Xmas Lunch (Pam Penny) - East Side Mario's has new management. The food and service for the lunch bunch has been bad for August and September. While we have the entire restaurant for our Xmas lunch, Pam will decide if Eastside Mario's can deliver good food and service for our Xmas luncheon, on September 22 after a lunch there with Anne's travellers. Pam must get an article into the fall MURAnews if the event is to be moved!

k) Web Site (Marianne Van der Wel):

Council generally liked the new on-line presentation of MURAnews available on a test page circulated to council by e-mail. Marianne will make this the new MURAnews page on our public web site when the fall MURAnews is sent out along with a short article for MURAnews announcing the revision.

9. Information Reports from Liaisons

a) University Board of Governors (Vacant): No report as the board doesn't meet until October 24, 2008.

b) Colleges & Universities Retirees Associations of Canada (CURAC) (Helen Barton) - CURAC is working on developing a 'deal' on group house/vehicle insurance for members of associations in CURAC.

c) **MURA** (Geoff Evans) - No report except that Geoff received a letter from Richard Stubbs and there's a Faculty retirees lunch in November 2008.

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

e) **Hourly Staff Liaison** (Rod Phillips) - No Report

10. Other Business - none

11. Next meeting

Wednesday October 8, 2008 at 1:30PM in the Student Centre, Room 220

12. Adjournment

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