



MCMASTER UNIVERSITY RETIREES ASSOCIATION

1280 Main Street West
Hamilton, ON, L8S 4L8, Canada
Tel: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23171
E-mail: mura@mcmaster.ca
<http://www.mcmaster-retirees.ca>
Kathy Overholt, Secretary
overhol@mcmaster.ca
Home: (905) 521-0303

Minutes for COUNCIL MEETING of McMaster University Retirees Association Wednesday, January 14, 2015, 1:30 pm in MUSC-220

1. Welcome & Regrets

Present: Cliff Andrews, Brian Beckberger, Dianne Coventry, Heather Grigg, Linda Grocott, Mary Johnston (chair), Michele Leroux, Betty Ann Levy, Shari Mercer, Kathy Overholt, Pam Penny, Peter Sutherland, Marianne Van Der Wel

Regrets: Helen Barton, Dianne Bird, Beth Csordas, Marianne Walters, Bob West

2. Additions to the Agenda

Marianne Van Der Wel explained to Council members that she has had some major health issues recently and needs to conserve her energies. She will not be attending Council meetings for the remainder of 2015 but will continue to maintain the web site from home until a new one is in place. She will coordinate her efforts with Helen Barton.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of December 10, 2014 (for approval)

Moved by Dianne Coventry, **seconded** by Betty Ann Levy

"that the minutes be approved as amended"

Carried.

4. Human Resources Report (Michele Leroux)

4.1 Implementation of new HR system – developments affecting retirees

The component of the new HR system related to pensions has been delayed again.

4.2 Plans for audit of agreement between MURA and HR databases

Michele said that they are still trying to get the new PeopleSoft system working correctly. She expects that HR will be able to conduct the audit during this coming summer.

4.3 Update on arbitration – Building Union of Canada

The arbitration process is now completed. The arbitrator essentially accepted the University's position on the two issues related to wages and benefits not covered in the negotiated agreement.

4.4 Tuition assistance for retirees

Michele reported that retirees are eligible for tuition assistance for courses with a minimum of 18 hours of instruction. Courses which are offered free by HR to University employees are not available to retirees.

Pam wondered if HR could look into applying for a grant through Forward with Integrity to hire students to teach computer upgrading skills to MURA members. Heather suggested that student computer labs could probably be made available for retiree classes offered during the May to August period.

4.5 Check box on release form

Michele gave Mary a copy of the draft *Retiree Personal Information Release* form with wording that HR would agree to put on the form along with a check box that would indicate the retiree's agreement to have their retirement announced in the MURA newsletter. Mary will discuss this with the Membership Database Committee.

Michele said that she cannot give us names of people who opt out but she can provide an annual number of people who do.

5. Reports from Liaisons

5.1 University Board of Governors (Betty Ann Levy)

This was a very low key meeting but, most importantly, the pension increases were approved.

5.2 CURAC (Mary Johnston)

Mary reported that MURA has finally been able to get the figures to determine the proceeds from the 2014 conference hosted by MURA and RAMC. The surplus worked out to \$16,869.04. Registration fees covered the catering costs. The other expenses and surplus came from the very generous sponsorships which Joe Laposa and Marianne Walters were able to raise.

MURA's share of the surplus is \$5,317.26. We will decide around budget time how to spend this money.

Mary told Council members that occasionally CURAC produces position papers on topics affecting its members. These papers are sent to member organizations with a request for comments. Recently, a paper on home care was produced and Mary forwarded it to Council for their feedback.

5.3 MUFA (Betty Ann Levy)

All is well.

5.4 UNIFOR (CAW/MUSA) (Dianne Bird)

No report.

5.5 Hourly Staff Liaison (Dianne Coventry)

Dianne will contact BUC to seek their financial support for MURA. Mary asked her to let us know if she needs support for her lobbying endeavours.

5.6 Hourly Pension Committee (Cliff Andrews)

Cliff has submitted an article about pension increases for the newsletter.

5.7 Salaried Pension Committee (Bob West)

No report. Bob will submit an article about pension increases to *MURAnews*.

5.8 Liaison with MUALA

Betty Ann wrote to the MUALA president after the last meeting but has not yet received a response.

6. Correspondence (Mary Johnston)

No report.

7. Reports from Committees

7.1 AGM (Pam Penny)

Pam reported that she has been in contact with the information coordinator for the Optimal Aging Portal. They will provide a list of available speakers but have asked for more information so they can tailor their response. Pam will have more to report at the February meeting.

7.2 Cards (Shari Mercer)

Only 1 card was sent since the last meeting:

Bruno Mueller	October 22, 2014	Math & Stats	MUFA
---------------	------------------	--------------	------

7.3 Christmas Lunch (Pam Penny)

Pam will book the room as soon as she knows when classes will be over in December.

7.4 Communications (Heather Grigg)

Heather reminded us that an email appeal for interested MURA members to join the committee was send in December. The appeal has yielded 3 responses. The first job to tackle will be to find a web site product which will be easier to maintain.

Mary mentioned that guidelines for acceptable material for publication in the newsletter and distributed by email are the responsibility of the communications committee. As we have received some material which generated dialogue among Council members, it may

be time to review and possibly revise the guidelines. It was suggested that we should use a disclaimer when disseminating notices of non-MURA events.

7.5 Constitution and By-laws (Dianne Coventry)

Dianne wants to find out exactly how HR define “a retiree”. There are people who are retired but not pensioned.

7.6 Membership (Linda Grocott)

The current membership is 2260, which is an increase of 5.

There are currently 323 associate members: 322 survivors of Mac retirees and one associate membership bestowed by Council on the holder of a pension from another University (Bob McNutt).

There are also three honorary members (defined in the MURA constitution as “Any person upon whom the Council confers honorary membership as a signal honor for unusual contribution to the Association”): Jack Evans, Mel Hawkrigg, Averil Thompson.

7.7 *MURAnews* (Kathy Overholt)

Work on the newsletter is well in hand.

7.8 Nominating Committee (Marianne Walters)

Marianne reported that the final composition of the Nominating Committee is:

Marianne Walters (Chair), Helen Barton, Eleanor Frank, David Hitchcock and Kathy Overholt.

Moved by Heather Grigg, **seconded** by Brian Beckberger

“that the Nominating Committee for 2015 consist of Marianne Walters (chair), Helen Barton, Eleanor Frank, David Hitchcock and Kathy Overholt”

Carried.

7.9 Pensions and Benefits (Peter Sutherland)

Peter reported by email to Council that the committee members do not see any likelihood that MURA could impact contract negotiations or get the university to move toward one pension plan for all retirees.

Mary will draft a reply to the MURA member who suggested that MURA get involved in re-negotiating post-retirement benefits. The reply will incorporate Peter’s report on behalf of the P&B Committee as well as Brian’s comment that MURA will continue to advocate for individual retirees and obtain answers to their questions about benefits. Mary will send the draft to Peter for his input.

Betty Ann suggested that MURA could accrue a list of difficulties with pensions & benefits and present it to the VP (Administration). Mary and Betty Ann can meet with Roger Couldrey or Patrick Deane and remind them of the problems.

Betty Ann suggested that Mary tabulate the major benefits across all plans.

7.10 Trips & Special Events (Shari Mercer)

Sheri said that her committee has not come up with any suggestions for trips. There may be some special events this year. She needs help to organize things. She said that since the 2014 trips were cancelled, there has been no feedback from the membership. It was suggested that there may be volunteers who are willing to help organize trips and events.

7.11 Volunteering (Betty Ann Levy)

Betty Ann said her committee had met in December. In their planning for the survey of members, they were reminded that asking individuals for personal information must be approved by the university's ethics committee. So, the committee proposes to send a short anonymous survey to ask members about their interests. Those who choose to provide their contact information will be contacted with information on specific volunteer opportunities.

7.12 Web Site (Marianne Van Der Wel)

Marianne continues to update the website as necessary.

8. Treasurer's Report (Beth Csordas)

No report.

9. President's Report (Mary Johnston)

Mary had nothing to add to her written report.

10. Reports on Special Projects

10.1 Academic Awards Endowment (Beth Csordas)

The fund goal was established at \$65,000. The total is now \$67,908, which is up by \$2,410.

10.2 Archives (Mary Johnston)

No report.

10.3 Fundraising – MURA Cards (Dianne Bird)

Dianne reported via email that \$108.25 (72 cards) was raised at the Christmas Lunch.

11. Business arising from Council meeting in October not covered above

No other business.

12. Other Business

None.

Moved by Brian Beckberger at 2:49 pm

"that the meeting be adjourned"

Carried.