



## **MCMaster UNIVERSITY RETIREES ASSOCIATION**

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Nora Gaskin, Secretary

### **Minutes for COUNCIL MEETING of McMaster University Retirees Association Wednesday, December 9, 2020, 1 PM (Zoom)**

#### **1. Welcome & Regrets**

**Present:** Denise Anderson, Cliff Andrews, Helen Barton (chair), Brian Beckberger, Barb Carpio, Nora Gaskin, Mary Gauld, John Horsman, Hank Jacek, Mahendra Joshi, Mary Law, Betty Ann Levy, Kathy Overholt

**Regrets:** Helen Ayre, Alison Forler, Heather Grigg, Debbie Weisensee

Helen welcomed Barb Carpio to her first meeting as a MURA councillor.

#### **2. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

##### **2.1 Council Meeting November 11, 2020 (for approval)**

**Moved** by Brian Beckberger, **seconded** by Cliff Andrews

*“that the minutes of November 11, 2020 be approved”*

**Carried.**

#### **3. Business Arising**

**4. Human Resources Report** (Alison Forler) – no report

**5. President’s Report** (Helen Barton)

Helen welcomed Denise Anderson, *MURAnews* production editor, to her first MURA meeting. Denise and Helen Ayre, News Editor, were invited to attend because newsletter committee chair position is vacant and previous Council decided that both the webmaster and the *MURAnews* editor should be included as ex officio members of Council if not elected members.

#### **MURA Auditor**

- Nancy Gray declared she was not qualified to do MURA 2019-20 audit since it is against the rules of her CPA certification.
- Beth Csordas is willing to do the audit of the 2019-20 MURA accounts.
- Beth taught accounting in the Faculty of Business during her years at McMaster; she was also MURA’s treasurer for 14 years, until May 2019.
- Beth’s appointment to replace Nancy requires Council approval.

**Moved** by Brian Beckberger, **seconded** by Cliff Andrews

*“that Beth Csordas be appointed auditor for 2019-20”*

**Carried.**

### **MURA Treasurer**

- Debbie Weisensee wishes to step down as MURA’s treasurer.
- Nancy Gray is willing to take on this role.
- Nancy is a Mac retiree as of July 1/2020, who has been at Mac since 2004 as Director of Finance. She is a Chartered Professional Accountant, and an avid cyclist. Nancy states that she would be honoured to serve MURA, following in the footsteps of former Finance department retirees Bob West and Debbie Weisensee.
- Nancy’s appointment to replace Debbie as treasurer as of January 1, 2021 requires Council approval.

**Moved** by Brian Beckberger, **seconded** by Kathy Overholt

*“that Nancy Gray be appointed Treasurer for the 2020-21 year as of Jan 1, 2021”*

**Carried.**

### **MURA Council Portfolio Roles**

- Council members were asked by email December 4 if they were willing to stay on in their present roles until the June 2021 AGM. Some responses have been received.
- The role of *MURAnews* Chair is vacant since Phyllis DeRosa Koetting has finished her Council term. This needs to be filled.
- Changes that are pending or confirmed:
  - Heather Grigg will step back from Scholarships and Condolence Cards as of January.
  - Barb Carpio will join Scholarships, and has tentatively agreed to take on Condolence Cards.
  - Mahendra Joshi has agreed take care of the incoming postal mail, taking over from Phyllis.
  - John Horsman, Brian Beckberger and Kathy Overholt have confirmed their current assignments.

### **Possible social event**

- Idea to offer a Zoom coffee gathering.
- Could use meeting rooms if too many people attend to comfortably interact on one screen.
- Could set a topic that will be discussed to provide focus.
- **Action:** will follow up via email.

### **Three-Year Funding**

This is still a pending item for the new Council/ next year:

- Budgeting to make up for the shortfall of approximately 20% of our budget (\$2,500) due to Unifor's decision to reduce their support.
- First invoices for the new agreement due in January 2021 for the calendar year.
- We will not be spending either the AGM or Christmas lunch budget allocations for the current year. (\$2500 & 375, respectively), so the impact will not be felt until the 2021-22 fiscal year.

### **Definition of a Retiree and Retiree Supplemental Benefits**

Still pending. No action since the spring by the University due to pandemic priorities. We have done no follow-up to respond to Wanda's offer to meet via Zoom or conference call to discuss it further.

### **Missing Faculty Retirees**

- MURA has not received information on almost half of the new faculty retirees reported in MUFA's annual list of retirees.
- **Pending Action from October meeting:** Kathy and Helen, possibly with Hank and/or Mary Law's involvement, will draft an email of inquiry/welcome to send to them.

### **Survey and Strategic Planning**

A final report on the survey results and planning for a strategic planning exercise are still pending.

### **HR Retirement Planning Meetings**

Nora attended the Retirement Planning Zoom meeting held by HR on November 17.

**6. Treasurer's Report** (Debbie Weisensee) – no report – Debbie will transfer the books to Beth

### **7. Reports on Special Projects**

- 7.1 Academic Awards Endowment** (Helen Barton) – email appeal has gone out
- 7.2 Archives** (Mary Johnston) – no report
- 7.3 Fundraising – MURA Cards** – no report

### **8. Information Reports from Committees**

#### **8.1 AGM** (Mary Gauld)

- Thursday, November 26 1:30 pm on Zoom
- 53 attended of 71 registrations
- The general consensus was that the meeting went well, and there was positive feedback from attendees.
- When we get back to doing in-person AGMs, look for ways to include out-of-province people virtually
- Technical notes for future meetings
  - Note that if there are co-hosts for the meeting, Zoom will record the meeting to the computer of the first co-host who logs in

- Set to record chat so that voting, questions and comments will be captured.  
Note: private chat will not be recorded
- Set to “no sound on entry” to avoid background noise interference during the meeting
- Do not put people in waiting room since people come in at random times and host is busy managing the meeting
- Request that people sending an email request to attend use a specific subject line, e.g. "MURA AGM"

**8.2 Christmas Lunch** (Mary Gauld)

Betty Ann drafted a holiday greeting that we can send out to the membership via email.

**8.3 Communications** (John Horsman)

CURAC sent an offer from their affinity partner, Economical auto and home insurance, for a contest open to new customers, asking us to pass it along to our members. **Decision:** We will post the offer on the web, but not send an email. Council members questioned whether discounts and affinity benefits apply to MURA members who already have insurance with CURAC affinity partners, or who get their insurance through brokers.

**8.3.1 Condolence cards** (Heather Grigg) – no report

**8.3.2 Web site** (Nora Gaskin)

- Keeping up with website updates, e.g. new MURA Council
- New UTS web site work still pending

**8.4 Constitution and By-Laws** (Brian Beckberger) – We are still waiting for the Definition of a Retiree policy

**8.5 Membership** (Kathy Overholt) – no report

**8.6 MURAnews** (Helen Barton in lieu of Chair)

- This committee needs a Chairperson!
- The Winter 2021 (January) issue is underway; Denise Anderson is organizing a planning meeting in lieu of a Chair, and will handle layout. Helen Ayre has agreed to be news editor for this issue.
- Winter 2021 issue tentative dates:
  - Submission deadline Friday, January 15
  - Distribution date: January 27
- Question of whether to send issues by postal mail during the pandemic
  - The Spring 2019 and Summer 2019 issues were not mailed due to COVID; the Fall issue was printed and mailed because of the requirement for AGM notification, but the costs are much higher than a typical mailing. MURA volunteers are not able to do the folding and envelope stuffing, and McMaster’s printing department cannot do this, so we had to use an outside printing company that does stuffing.

- A “usual” mailing costs approx. \$880 for printing, stuffing and postage (\$1.50 per piece); the Fall mailing cost approx. \$1,500 (\$2.50 per piece). This could be cut to approx. \$1300 by sending fewer pages (8 instead of 10).
- We are currently approximately \$900 under budget for *MURAnews* for the year because the Summer 2019 issue was not mailed.
- Historically the newsletters before and after the AGM were mailed to non-members and other newsletters were sent only to paying members.
- There was a consensus that both the Winter 2021 and the Spring 2021 newsletters should be send by postal mail to the approx. 600 retirees who do not receive it by email, as they are the issues immediately after and before the next AGM.
- In the upcoming issue, we will stress that we need to reduce the number of newsletters being printed and mailed, and mention that we’re taking a 20% budget cut.
- We will restrict the issue to 8 pages printed, even if the digital version is longer.
- **Ideas:** Have a phone campaign for people for whom we have a phone number but no email address; indicate in the printed issue that only 8 pages are included in the printed issue though there are more in the online issue due to cost constraints.
- In the planning of the issue, we will designate which articles are to be omitted from the print version ahead of time to make layout easier.

### 8.7 Nominating (Heather Grigg) – see MURA Treasurer above

### 8.8 Pensions and Benefits (Brian Beckberger & Mary Law)

- Questions from members:
  - a question about the pension increase, to which no answer could be given as the Board of Governors had not yet met
  - a question about Microsoft Office 365 discounts available to McMaster retirees (there are none); the member was advised by UTS to ask MURA or the Campus Store about discounts; we sent a request to UTS to inform Help Desk staffers that there are no discounts
  - a question about whether the tuition benefit is available to retirees under the age of 65
- A question Brian would have had for Alison, and will bring up with HR in future:
  - Orthotics have to be dispensed by a certain type of provider; in 2019 Sun Life changed who could dispense orthotics by removing physiotherapists, so even though your benefits haven’t changed, who can provide them has changed. This is called an “administrative practice” change. Brian thinks the plan should be updated and it should be brought to everyone’s attention. This is not the only instance of benefits changing after retirement, for example the reduction in drug coverage after age 65 for a retiree living in Quebec who is not a member of the Quebec drug plan.

### 8.9 Trips & Special Events (Mary Gauld)

Mary asked how many recent retirees there are for purposes of having a Zoom meeting with them. Helen reported that there are about 100 from August 2019 to September 2020. A few people have heard that there has been a recent spate of buyouts in October and November. Once we hear how many new retirees there are in the January report, it will be a good time to start planning a New Retiree Zoom event.

#### **8.10 Volunteering** (Betty Ann Levy) – no report

### **9. Information Reports from Liaisons**

**9.1 University Board of Governors** (Betty Ann Levy) – no report

**9.2 Community Engagement Committee** (Betty Ann Levy) – no report

**9.3 CURAC** (Helen Barton) – no report

**9.4 MUFA** (Hank Jacek)

- Hank will talk to MUFA about the administrative practice changes in benefits initiated by the insurance company. There should be communication to employees and retirees, as well as discussion at the Joint Committee, about these changes.
- MUFA has formed a retiree benefits sub-committee, and Hank will suggest to MUFA that he should be involved in that committee. **Action:** Helen will re-forward the info to Hank.

**9.5 Unifor** (Mahendra Joshi) – The retirees chapter had their AGM recently via Zoom; about 22 people attended; there was no discussion of financial support from Unifor.

**9.6 Hourly Staff Liaison** (Cliff Andrews) – no report

**9.7 Hourly Pension Committee** (Cliff Andrews) – no information on pension increases until Dec. 17 BoG meeting

**9.8 Salaried Pension Committee** (Brian Beckberger) – working group meeting that was supposed to be tomorrow was cancelled

**9.9 Age-Friendly University Committee** (Mary Gauld) – minutes will be circulated

### **10. Other Business**

- Jessie Dunlop, a former long-time Treasurer of MURA, passed away on Friday at 92.
- Hank: In November there were 4 death notices mentioning McMaster, but only 1 that would have necessitated the lowering of the flag to half-staff.

**Moved** by Brian Beckberger at 2:39 pm

*“that the meeting be adjourned”*

**Carried.**