



## McMaster University Retirees Association

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### Minutes for COUNCIL MEETING of McMaster University Retirees Association Wednesday, January 13, 2021, 1 PM (Zoom)

#### 1. Welcome & Regrets

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

**Regrets:** Alison Forler, Kathy Overholt, Debbie Weisensee

Helen welcomed Nancy Gray, Treasurer, and Helen Ayre, *MURAnews* editor to Council.

#### 2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

##### 2.1 Council Meeting December 9, 2020 (for approval)

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

*“that the minutes of December 9, 2020 be approved”*

**Carried.**

#### 3. Business Arising

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

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

Human Resources Rep to MURA

- Helen will send Alison an email about having her rejoin our monthly meetings.

#### MURA Auditor

- Beth Csordas, appointed at the December Council meeting as Auditor for the 2019–20 fiscal year, cannot complete the audit, as she was Treasurer for the first two months of the fiscal year.
- Sue Speare, who acted as MURA Auditor for 2016–17, is willing to do the 2019–20 audit. Beth is willing to do the 2020–21 audit.

- Sue would do her work in early May, followed by Beth, so both audits would be completed in time to report to the AGM in June. The AGM should be held during or after the week of June 7 to allow time for the work to be completed.
- Sue’s appointment to replace Beth as Auditor of the 2019–20 MURA accounts requires Council approval.
- Beth’s appointment as Auditor of the 2020–21 accounts requires Council approval.

**Moved** by Brian Beckberger, **seconded** by Barb Carpio

*“that Sue Speare be appointed auditor for 2019-20”*

**Carried.**

**Moved** by Brian Beckberger, **seconded** by Mahendra Joshi

*“that Beth Csordas be appointed auditor for 2020-21”*

**Carried.**

### **MURA Council Portfolio Roles**

The role of *MURAnews* Chair has been vacant since Phyllis DeRosa Koetting finished her Council term. This needs to be filled.

### **Three-Year Funding Shortfall**

- 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, and lack of support from SEIU
- 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 as yet done no follow up to respond to Wanda’s offer to meet via Zoom or conference call to discuss it further.

### **Survey and Strategic Planning**

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

### **6. Treasurer’s Report (Nancy Gray)**

- Nancy got the books from Beth, and there are a couple of things that need to change in the 2019-20 statement:
  - catering expenses for AGM included in retirees lunch in error
  - approved contribution of \$5000 to the McMaster MURA Scholarship Fund was not made
  - audiovisual expenses incorrectly classified
- At the February meeting Nancy will have a new financial statement for us.

- **Financial software for Treasurer:** Beth Csordas had been using her own version of QuickBooks, Debbie Weisensee had been using Excel; this made consistent financial tracking difficult. Nancy requested a budget allocation for FreshBooks web-based accounting software, \$15 a month, which would allow ongoing maintenance and sharing of financial information. It also provides an interface with the bank, has the ability to accept credit cards, is cheaper than QuickBooks, and has better tracking than Excel. Would cost \$180 per annum without HST. Would allow easier transitioning between Treasurers, and transparency for the Executive. Nora noted that there might be discounts available. Nancy noted that more than one user should have access, and Brian recommended that the President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary should know the password, but only the Treasurer be able to make changes.

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

*“that Council approve a budget allocation for a subscription to FreshBooks”*

**Carried.**

## 7. Reports on Special Projects

### 7.1 Academic Awards Endowment (Helen Barton)

- We have received \$4850 in contributions, in addition to MURA’s \$5000, for a total of \$9,850 after the first 2 rounds of mailing via postal and email towards our goal of \$25,000
- as of yesterday, and they hadn’t finished processing all of the contributions so may be over \$10K by the time *MURAnews* goes 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)

- Council decided on a Zoom meeting and set the date at Wednesday June 16 at 1:30 pm.
- Need to start thinking about possible speakers:
  - new university president David Farrar on the relationship between the university and retirees

### 8.2 Christmas Lunch (Mary Gauld)

- tentative plans, just in case the lunch is possible
- Mary talked to the caterers and will request the following dates for December:
  - Tuesday Dec. 7
  - second choice: Wednesday Dec. 1

### 8.3 Communications (John Horsman) – no report

**8.3.1 Condolence cards** (Heather) – Heather is in the process of transferring to Barb, and will do a written report up to December.

### 8.3.2 Web site (Nora Gaskin)

- regular updates
- will tackle the new UTS web site after *MURAnews* has been published

### 8.4 Constitution and By-Laws (Brian Beckberger) – **Bylaw 3 regarding the status of the webmaster and MURAnews editors on MURA Council**

- Helen researched old Council meeting minutes regarding the status of *MURAnews* editor(s) and the MURA webmaster who are not members of Council, with a view to preserving the information for future practice.
  - Starting with the March 2003 Council meeting, at the end of Veronica Morrison’s second 3-year term as an elected Council member, she was willing to continue as *MURAnews* editor and attend Council meetings as a non-voting member, with Council’s agreement, thus setting a precedent.
  - In March 2009, Council passed a motion that the webmaster become a permanent ex-officio non-voting member of MURA Council, in parallel with the position of newsletter editor.
  - In January 2014, Marianne Van der Wel emailed Wayne Rouse about attending council meetings as news editor. Wayne would receive agendas, minutes and other documents, and said that he would attend meetings when he felt they would be useful to him.
  - In June 2014, Phyllis DeRosa-Koetting joined *MURAnews* as production editor, and as such, received the monthly Council agenda and accompanying documents with a standing invitation to attend any Council meeting that might be of interest, as an observer.
- Brian believes that the best way to not lose the will of previous Councils is to move that the current Council approve the following bylaw and said bylaw be added to the ‘Constitution and Bylaws’ document:

#### **Bylaw 3 regarding the status of the webmaster and MURAnews editors on MURA Council**

In the event that the positions of webmaster and/or *MURAnews* editors are held by individual(s) not otherwise member(s) of MURA Council, said individual(s) shall be deemed ex-officio non-voting member(s) of Council and allowed participation in all discussions at council meetings.

- This action will raise the profile of a long-standing practice of Council. A future Council can easily rescind this bylaw should it decide it is not necessary. You should note that this bylaw elevates these positions from “observer” to “participating” status.

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

*“that MURA Council approve Bylaw 3 regarding the status of webmaster and MURAnews editors on MURA Council”*

**Carried.**

- 8.5 Membership** (Helen Barton for Kathy Overholt)  
First written membership report since March; up 50 members net since last report.
- 8.6 MURAnews** (Helen Ayre) – *MURAnews* is currently in process, deadline is Jan. 22, hoping to have it out by Jan 29. Will provide a printed copy with a limit of 8 pages. It’s possible that we will not be able to do a print version this time in light of the latest lockdown measures. We will look for further clarification, both about the lockdown regulations, the printing company, and McMaster mail services. Possibilities: mail the printed copies after the lockdown ends in mid-February, or possibly combine the Winter and Spring issues into one.
- 8.7 Nominating** (Heather Grigg) – The main priority is to constitute the Nominating Committee. Members so far are John McKay, Mary Law, and need one more member from Council and one from the retiree community to work on this until March. Involves emails and a Zoom meeting or two. Looking for people who have retired within the last year or so. Anybody else from Council is invited to let Heather know if they are willing to join the committee, or if they know someone not on Council who would be a good fit. Heather will have a piece for insertion into *MURAnews* as soon as the committee is constituted.
- 8.8 Pensions and Benefits** (Brian Beckberger & Mary Law)
- There was one question about whether a prescription is needed for massage therapy.
  - Benefits issue regarding administrative practices, such as changes in who can dispense orthotics, or changes in the drug formulary. Brian wants clarification from Alison Forler, MURA HR rep, about this because none of these changes are documented. Perhaps it is time to involve Wanda McKenna, VP HR in the communication as well. **Action:** Brian will include Wanda, and all the members of the Pension and Benefits Committee in his next email on the topic. Brian suggested it might be necessary to advise that members get a predetermination of coverage for some of these types of claims. Brian noted that this is the insurance companies pushing policies to their clients, not clients pushing to insurance companies. **Action:** Hank will interact with the MUFA President about this.
- 8.9 Trips & Special Events** (Mary Gauld)
- New Retiree luncheon**  
Since August 2019 there have been about 110 people who have retired. In the past we had about a 30% participation rate. The plan is to do it on Zoom, in February or March. **Actions:** Mary Gauld will convene a sub-committee that will come back to the meeting next month with a plan and see if Anne Plessl is still interested. Heather will also send an idea to Mary.

**8.10 Volunteering** (Betty Ann Levy)

Any volunteer opportunities are coming in and going out by email, and are mostly not at McMaster. Betty Ann questions if the Volunteer committee really has a function anymore. **Actions:** Helen thinks we need to get a discussion going at the very highest levels of the university to see if there is anything that can be done to encourage opportunities for retiree volunteers on campus. Betty Ann recommends that we review the portfolio with a view to whether it is still needed.

**9. Information Reports from Liaisons****9.1 University Board of Governors** (Betty Ann Levy) – written report

Betty Ann noted that the university is planning for a virtual spring and summer term, and an in-person fall term.

**9.2 Community Engagement Committee** (Betty Ann Levy) – no report**9.3 CURAC** (Helen Barton)

- The CURAC Later Life Learning Project is looking for representatives from each university. Barb Carpio volunteered to be our representative. **Action:** Helen or Nora will notify them.
- Helen sent a notice to Council about an upcoming AROHE webinar in which the University of Wisconsin-Madison Retirement Association (UWRA) and the Retirement Association of Portland State (RAPS) will share some of the successful programs and practices that have helped them to thrive during the pandemic.

**9.4 MUFA** (Hank Jacek) – no report**9.5 Unifor** (Mahendra Joshi) – no report**9.6 Hourly Staff Liaison** (Cliff Andrews) – no report**9.7 Hourly Pension Committee** (Cliff Andrews) – no report**9.8 Salaried Pension Committee** (Brian Beckberger)

Most people have received their biennial pension statements. There will be another working group meeting on Feb. 8 and a PTC meeting some time in March.

**9.9 Age-Friendly University Committee** (Mary Gauld) – no report**10. Other Business** – Hank: Only 4 death notices in December but no flag half-staff

**Moved** by Mahendra Joshi at 2:30 pm

*“that the meeting be adjourned”*

**Carried.**