



McMaster University Retirees Association

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Minutes for COUNCIL MEETING of McMaster University Retirees Association Wednesday, June 9, 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, Betty Ann Levy, Kathy Overholt

Regrets: Michelle Jubinville, Mary Law, Debbie Weisensee

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

2.1 Council Meeting May 12, 2021 (for approval)

Moved by Brian Beckberger, **seconded** by Mary Gauld

“that the minutes of May 12, 2021 be approved”

Carried.

3. Business Arising

4. Human Resources Report (Michelle Jubinville) – Still outstanding: eye surgery question, as well as Sun Life changes in administrative practices for Summer *MURAnews*, HR web pages on Tuition Assistance/Tuition Waiver. **Action:** Nora/Helen will send Michelle an email.

5. President’s Report (Helen Barton)

Last meeting of the year - and thank you

It’s the last Council meeting of the 2020 – 2021 year, and also for three Council members whose terms are expiring and one past president who will become past-president on June 23. Thank you to Heather Grigg, Mary Law, Mahendra Joshi and Debbie Weisensee for your service. We will miss you on Council, and hope you remain involved with MURA’s mission.

Salaried Pension Plan Administrative Expenses

Summary of issue: The university administration gave notice earlier in the year that they want to replace the existing 1998 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on pension plan administrative expenses with a policy.

The issues are:

- who has the authority to make this change
- the loss of oversight of the plan by the member organizations that would result
- the content of the new policy

The administration also gave notice of proposed substantial increases to the administrative expenses to be charged to the salaried pension plans, including a large retroactive amount for the purchase and ongoing fees for the pension administration computer system PenProPlus.

The motions were to be voted on by PTC on May 13, but as a result of various discussions the process has been delayed. No new date has been set.

Members of the MURA executive and Brian Beckberger (our rep on PTC) met with representatives of MUFA, Unifor 5555, and the Clinical Faculty Association for the second time on June 3. Those present agree that the MoU and the additional expenses should be dealt with as separate issues with the MoU/policy issue resolved by joint discussions between the groups and administration, not by PTC. The member group representatives will be submitting a joint response to the administration.

MUFA received additional information on both topics about a week ago. MURA received what is believed to be the same memo this week (Monday, June 7). A joint meeting between administration and all groups involved has been requested, but has not yet been agreed to by the administration.

Discussion: Council discussed the situation and the direction that the administration appears to want to go in, and agreed that our collegial model appears to be under threat. There's some strength in being well prepared, and getting a lawyer to look at our position would be a good idea. MURA has deliberately kept a reserve fund in case of situations like this, but anything we do would be in conjunction with MUFA and Unifor.

Definition of a Retiree and Retiree Supplemental Benefits

Summary of issue: Under a new proposed policy, those retiring under age 65 with RRSP, regardless of years of service, will not be considered Mac retirees and will not receive even supplementary retiree benefits (e.g. parking, library privileges, tuition assistance).

Wanda McKenna informed us on May 18 that the proposed new policy would not be presented to PVP (the President and Vice-Presidents committee) at their May 25 meeting, as previously indicated. They were hoping to set a June meeting date, and Wanda will let us know in time to submit a response. Wanda also stated that HR is

reviewing the list of current supplementary benefits missing from the draft policy (e.g. photo ID card, a MAC ID, meal plans)

Action: We need to formally communicate our concerns about the policy's impact on the University in time for the members of PVP to consider before they meet.

Retiree Tuition Assistance/Tuition Waiver for 65+

The review of the new HR website information on tuition assistance and waivers is still not completed. Nora has written a draft response, which still needs input and finalizing.

CURAC

Mary Johnston has agreed to be MURA's delegate to the June 23 CURAC AGM. A strategic planning session will be held sometime before the end of June with a consultant who has been engaged by CURAC to help guide a new strategic plan. A request has been received for a representative of each member organization to participate. Any Council member who would like to represent MURA is invited to let Helen know.

Volunteering

What is Council's advice/wisdom on resuming promotion of in-person volunteering opportunities (e.g. driving for the Cancer Assistance Program; helping at food banks)? We have promoted only virtual opportunities to date during the pandemic.

Decision: Council agreed we should err on the side of caution while second dose vaccinations are still proceeding and their effectiveness on new variants is still unknown, and not promote in-person volunteering opportunities yet.

UTS Retiree Services

A definition of the level of phone and walk-in support for McMaster email to be provided to retirees by the Help Desk is still not finalized. Heather, Nora and Helen last met with Sue McKinlay of UTS on March 18.

Carry-Over Items

MURA Council Portfolio Roles

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

Survey and Strategic Planning

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

Donation

Mel and Marilyn Hawkrigg sent \$150 to cover *MURAnews* mailings, but Helen, with Marilyn's permission, would like to donate the funds to the new graduate scholarship.

Moved by Cliff Andrews, **seconded** by Mahendra Joshi

“that the funds donated by the Hawkriggs be donated to the graduate scholarship”

Carried.

6. Treasurer’s Report (Nancy Gray)

Nancy has met with Beth Csordas and Sue Speare virtually regarding all the financials, which are now in the cloud. Both years have been audited and thanks are due to Beth and Sue for their work on this.

Moved by Nancy Gray, **seconded** by Brian Beckberger

“that Council recommend that the audited financial statements be presented to the membership at the Annual General Meeting”

Carried.

7. Reports on Special Projects

7.1 Academic Awards Endowment (Helen Barton)

Alumni Advancement sent out some emails to past contributors who had not yet donated to the new fund, and passed along to us names of people for whom they had no email addresses. **Action:** Helen will pass along the Hawkriggs’ info to Barb so she can send a card.

7.2 Archives (Mary Johnston)

Mary is considering writing a piece for *MURAnews* on MURA history and the archives that are available on the MURA web site.

7.3 Fundraising – MURA Cards (no report)

8. Information Reports from Committees

8.1 AGM (Mary Gauld)

Brenda Vrkljan is on board and excited. There are 44 attendees so far including Council members. Brian and Cliff will submit reports ahead of time and then Brian will speak briefly about the high points. As regards any mention of the UPP and the Laurentian situation, the consensus was to leave those out, and possibly address them in a future *MURAnews* article.

8.2 Christmas Lunch (Mary Gauld) – Dec. 7 is on hold awaiting developments; a “save the date” will be published in the Summer *MURAnews*.

8.3 Communications (John Horsman) – no report

8.3.1 Condolence cards (Barb Carpio)

Although there have been 3 known deaths since the last meeting, there has been no word from HR about any of them.

8.3.2 Web site (Nora Gaskin) – Wild Apricot (WA) price increases are set to take effect when it's time to renew our subscription next spring. We may be able to save money by reducing our membership to a lower level. **Action:** Nora will investigate further and report at the next meeting.

8.4 Constitution and By-Laws (Brian Beckberger) – no report

8.5 Membership (Kathy Overholt) – written report

8.6 MURAnews – deadline for submission is July 16 for publication at the end of July. This will be an opportunity for Hank and the new council members to introduce themselves and report on the AGM.

8.7 Nominating (Heather Grigg) – no report

8.8 Pensions and Benefits (Brian Beckberger & Mary Law) – no report

8.9 Trips & Special Events (Mary Gault) – no report

8.10 Volunteering (Betty Ann Levy) – see President's report. There is one opportunity coming for Senior Class Assistants (SCAs) for Health/Aging 1BB3: "Introduction to Aging and Society" for Fall 2021 and/or Winter 2022. This will be published in *MURAnews*.

9. Information Reports from Liaisons

9.1 University Board of Governors (Betty Ann Levy) – no report; the last meeting of the year is tomorrow morning; a new observer will need to be named soon and we should get in touch with them about it. If Hank would prefer to do it, Betty Ann will step aside.

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

9.3 CURAC (Helen Barton) – see President's report

9.4 CURAC Later Life Learning Committee (Barb Carpio) – no report

9.5 MUFA (Hank Jacek) – no report

9.6 Unifor 5555 (Mahendra Joshi) – no report

9.7 Hourly Staff Liaison (Cliff Andrews) – no report

9.8 Hourly Pension Committee (Cliff Andrews) – no report

9.9 Salaried Pension Committee (Brian Beckberger) – no report

9.10 Age-Friendly University Committee (Mary Gauld) – no report; they just had a meeting, and Mary will circulate the minutes when they are available.

10. Other Business

There will be a brief get-to-know you meeting for the new Council after the AGM that will include a short tour of the MURA web site for the benefit of new Council members.

Moved by Brian Beckberger at 2:35 pm

“that the meeting be adjourned”

Carried.