



McMaster University Retirees Association

Gilmour Hall Room B108
1280 Main Street West, Hamilton, Ontario, L8S 4L8, Canada
(905) 525-9140 ext. 23171
mura@mcmaster.ca
www.mcmaster-retirees.ca

Minutes for COUNCIL MEETING of McMaster University Retirees Association Wednesday, March 8, 2023, 1 PM (Zoom)

1. Welcome & Regrets

Present: Denise Anderson, Cliff Andrews, Helen Barton, Brian Beckberger, Susan Birnie (chair), Barry Diacon, Mary Gault, John Horsman, Hank Jacek, Betty Ann Levy, Dina LoPresti, Jan Nicholson, Kathy Overholt, Richard Stubbs

Regrets: Nora Gaskin, Nancy Gray, Jordan Roberts

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

2.1 Council Meeting February 8, 2023 (for approval)

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

“that the minutes of February 8, 2023 be approved”

Carried.

3. Business Arising

4. Human Resources Report (Jordan Roberts) – no report

5. President’s Report (Susan Birnie)

Susan met with Wanda and Jordan on February 16 to discuss the definition of a retiree for the RRSP group, and supplemental benefits.

Some comments/questions arose from the report provided to Susan by Jordan:

1. **Special library privileges:** Is off-campus access to electronic resources for all retired faculty, or only for professors emeriti?
2. **UTS support:** The restriction to support only email, on the web interface only, seems overly restrictive and does not reflect the conversation in our last discussion with UTS. Many issues here, and we ask why a base level of support would not be provided to find out the actual issue, understanding that at some point UTS will say that is as far as they can go.
3. **Lounge access and Online Campus Directory:** The restriction to professors emeriti and MURA executive seems overly restrictive. These are retirees’ ways of keeping

connected to the university and would be used by retirees who are providing service via committee work or being involved in research projects. Why not any retiree who asks for it?

4. **Meal plan:** At least three current council members have meal plan access. They applied when they were retirees and it was clear they were retirees. So, is this a change? If so, are these people grandfathered into the plan?

Nora and Susan met with McMaster President Dr. David Farrar on February 28.

They provided him with background on MURA's purpose and funding model. He commented that when he was at UBC their retiree association asked for funding, and were following our model of active employee associations providing funding so that it is not necessary to charge a membership fee. He was very interested in the services that MURA provides to retirees. He was impressed that we do all that we do on a shoestring budget. He asked to be included in our newsletter distribution list. He pledged to continue the financial support that his office has been providing. On a number of occasions, he told us to contact him if we have any difficulties with funding or working with university departments.

Susan was pleased to bring to Council a request to appoint two individuals to the Secretary and Treasurer portfolios. Nora Gaskin has been our Secretary for many years and has provided a service and knowledge level that few could meet.

Moved by Brian Beckberger, **seconded** by Betty Ann Levy

“that Nora Gaskin be appointed Secretary of MURA for the 2023/24 year”

Carried.

Diana Parker is a recent retiree, and comes highly recommended by Jan Nicholson.

Moved by Brian Beckberger, **seconded** by Jan Nicholson

“that Diana Parker be appointed Treasurer of MURA for the 2023/24 year”

Carried.

6. Treasurer's Report (Nancy Gray) – written report

There were no questions on Nancy's report. Regarding funders for 2024-2026, we have received confirmation from MUFA, SEIU and the President's Office. Council was concerned about the Unifor informal message on advice of the executive meeting that they will not be funding at the level we requested. This is a continuation of reduced funding from the last three years. Council discussed alternative approaches to respond.

7. Reports on Special Projects

7.1 Academic Awards Endowment (Helen Barton)

Since the email appeal went out there have been 12 donations totalling \$1800. This puts the total received at \$22,830, and the total with pledges at

\$25,079, so we can proceed with forwarding the \$3,000 from MURA funds, as well as the \$1,000 for each of the next two years to cover the scholarship until the endowment can be used.

7.2 Archives (John Horsman) – no report

7.3 Fundraising – MURA Cards (Mary Gauld) – no report

8. Information Reports from Committees

8.1 AGM (Mary Gauld) – written report

A date has been set for a virtual Zoom AGM to be held on Wednesday June 14. Dr. Diane Sherafali has agreed to be the guest speaker. She recently did a talk for the Optimal Aging Portal which seemed to be well received. The talk was entitled: “What’s your health goal? Why people fail and how to succeed with Dr. Diana Sherifali.” She talked about “tiny habits”. It was quite interesting and she did a lovely presentation. Mary is sure it will be well received.

8.2 Holiday Lunch, aka Spring Fling (Mary Gauld) – written report

- The plan is now to hold this event at the Phoenix on the patio. In the event of inclement weather, we can go indoors. Each table has an umbrella and they are hoping to have some awnings in place by then, but this is not guaranteed.
- We will be capping attendance at 125 people.
- The meal will be a BBQ with burgers (meat, halal or veggie), salad, potato, dessert and non-alcoholic drinks included. Still working out the costs but should come in at \$35.00/person. We have received confirmation from the President’s office that they will subsidize all McMaster retirees for \$10.
- Still working on the idea to have some short tours of the campus provided.
- Discussion around whether or not to invite guests. Agreed to invite Dr. Farrar only this time.
- Discussion of whether the spring event will replace the Christmas lunch for future years or be in addition. Agreed that the Christmas lunch should also go ahead, and that we will make a decision on the spring event after we see the results from this year. The full panel of usual invited guests will come into play for the Christmas lunch.

8.3 Communications (John Horsman) – no report

8.3.1 Condolence cards (Dina LoPresti) – no report

8.3.2 Web site (Nora Gaskin) – no report

8.4 Constitution & By-Laws (Brian Beckberger)

Actions: Helen will send Brian the information on changes to the Constitution that was published in 2006. Brian will do the write-up for the AGM.

8.5 Membership (Kathy Overholt) – no report

8.6 MURAnews

Deadline for next issue April 14. Need to include details/registration for AGM, constitution changes and Spring Fling.

8.7 Nominating (Hank Jacek)

2023 Nominating Committee Report MURA Council 2023/2024

Honorary President*: Alvin Lee

Executive

Past President (ex officio): Hank Jacek

President (Nominated): Susan Birnie (One-year term, to 2024)

Vice President (Nominated): Jan Nicholson (One-year term, to 2024)

Treasurer (ex officio)*: Diana Parker

Secretary (ex officio)*: Nora Gaskin

*appointed

Councillors

Nominated for office, three-year terms until 2026:

Virginia Aksan

Jane Mah

Continuing in office until 2025:

Mary Gauld

Jan Nicholson

Richard Stubbs

Continuing in office until 2024:

Cliff Andrews

Barry Diacon

Dina LoPresti

Kathy Overholt

In accordance with Article 8.01 Section 3 of the MURA Constitution: "Further nominations for the nominated positions will be received by the Secretary of the Association up to seven (7) days prior to the date set for the annual general meeting from nominators who are regular members of the Association together with the verbal or written acceptance of the nominee. Nominations will also be received from regular members at the annual general meeting."

Nominating Committee

Hank Jacek (Chair)

Helen Ayre

Heather Grigg

John Horsman

Kathy Overholt

Moved by Hank Jacek, **seconded** by Brian Beckberger

“that Council accept the Nominating Committee Report for 2023/24”

Carried.

8.8 Pensions and Benefits (Brian Beckberger)

Working on or resolved 4 queries:

1. A person whose bi-annual pension report included incorrect information about the beneficiary. We will have to advise our members to carefully check the accuracy of their report
2. Can someone who leaves the country (and gives up benefits) regain those benefits when they return to Canada? Brian to email Jordan.
3. A person who was looking for their T4A slip – resolved.
4. Queries about coverage for additional services provided with eye examinations – there is no such coverage except for some tests prior to cataract surgery.
5. A question about how to replace a lost ID card. – Directed to web site.

8.9 Trips & Special Events (Mary Gauld)

Looking at organizing some walks for people to participate in. Some suggestions include:

1. **Campus tour** – including outbuildings
2. **Bruce Trail**: starting at Chedoke Golf Course to the Dundurn Stairs – turning back and walking up to Scenic Drive. Ending at the Lancaster Eatery for food/drink.
3. **McMaster trails**: led by Helen Barton?
4. **Pier 4 and the Hamilton Harbour Waterfront Trail**

Niagara Routes:

For those willing to go farther afield

1. Walking the **Queenston Heights Park**: Site of the War of 1812 and the starting point of the Bruce Trail – flat and easy walk around the park. A bit more adventurous walk to follow the trail where Brock was killed and the Americans invaded. Picnic lunch could be brought and taken at the park
2. Walking the **Niagara Parkway**: Parking in Chippawa and walking towards the Falls provides a view that many people don't take in. Lots of options along the parkway and the Niagara School of Horticulture
3. **Welland Canal**: Start at Lock 3 where the St Catharines Museum and Welland Canal Centre are located. Many choices to walk from there, and a lovely Greek restaurant located along the canal (George's Greek Village) that could accommodate people wanting to have a meal or a drink after.

8.10 Volunteering (Dina LoPresti) – no report

9. Information Reports from Liaisons

- 9.1 **Age-Friendly University Committee** (Mary Gauld) – no report
- 9.2 **Community Engagement Committee** (Dina LoPresti) – no report
- 9.3 **CURAC** (Susan Birnie) – no report
- 9.4 **CURAC Later Life Learning Committee** – no report
- 9.5 **MIRA Community Partner Network** (Jan Nicholson) – no report
- 9.6 **MUFA** (Hank Jacek) – no report
- 9.7 **Unifor 5555** (Barry Diacon) – no report
- 9.8 **Hourly Staff Liaison** (Cliff Andrews) – no report
- 9.9 **Hourly Pension Committee** (Cliff Andrews) – no report
- 9.10 **Salaried Pension Committee** (Brian Beckberger) – no report
- 9.11 **University Board of Governors** (Richard Stubbs) – written report

10. Other Business

Moved by Brian Beckberger at 2:51 pm

“that the meeting be adjourned”

Carried.