



National Association of Federal Retirees
Association nationale des retraités fédéraux
WINNIPEG & DISTRICT

National Association of Federal Retirees
Winnipeg & District Branch
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GENERAL MEETING:

Wednesday, September 21, 2022
Masonic Memorial Temple

MINUTES

Present: Ceci O’Flaherty, Lionel Guerard, Donna Dobson, Cynthia Foreman, Naomi Ashton, Dorian Guerard, Glen Schur, Paula Nygaard

Regrets: Gwen Schentag, Pat Jarrett

Attendees: 96

Meeting was called to order at 12:45 p.m.

1. Approval of Agenda:

- There are two outstanding questions in the April 14th minutes. These will be answered before the approval of the minutes.

Paula Nygaard motioned to accept the agenda as written, Linda Lazarowich seconded. Carried.

2. Introduction of “first-time attendees”:

- Fourteen first time attendees were welcomed. One eligible member attended.
- A moment of silence was held for all loved ones no longer with us including Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

3. Review of Minutes from the April 14, 2021 Annual General Meeting:

Debbie Kushaba questioned what are assets – other? These are prior year fee delays from the December membership fees not received until January.

Don Vanderhooft questioned why non-operating expenses are listed as these are balance sheet items not income statement items? Non-operating expenses are still expenses. Money going out of the branch within the current year, so are rightfully shown on the Earnings (loss) statement for the current year. We are working on a reformatted version that will show these separately at the bottom of the page, but still on the same page. We never make expense entries directly to our equity accounts. As it currently stands any change in Net Assets is shown through the Earnings (loss) as either operating or non-operating. That Earnings (loss) adjusts the Unreserved Equity on the Balance Statement. If you want to use or adjust reserved equity, it is done directly within the equity accounts only.

Motion to approve minutes as presented with the answers to the two questions was made by Cynthia Foreman and seconded by Dorian Guerard. Carried

President's Report (Ceci O'Flaherty): I know that some of you may be surprised that we are still following fairly strict Covid protocols. These protocols were established by the National Board for everyone in the Association across the country so we are still required to follow them. Because of the impact of Covid on our senior population we are erring on the side of caution. Not sure if they will still be in place for the November meeting or not.

Lots has happened since our last meeting. During the AGM we indicated in the discussion on finances that we would be contributing \$15,000 to both the National Defense of Benefit and the Branch Infrastructure Reserve Funds. This was completed and you will see it reflected when we have our financial discussion later on in the meeting.

Board retreat – May 30 to June 1 at Hecla. Good thing we were inside because the weather outside was nasty. The retreat was an opportunity for the Board to meet and plan out our activities for the next few years. We worked on developing a draft operational plan that we are now working on revising/expanding and allocating appropriate costing so that we can use it in future years to develop our Branch budgets. I am happy to announce that following the AGM, we had two people come forward as volunteers and they have been appointed to the board.

I would like to introduce Glenn Schur. Glen retired from CRA and has volunteered for the position of Director of Equipment. The other “new” board member requires no introduction. I am happy to announce that Pat Jarrett has rejoined the board as Director, Recruitment.

In June, I attended the Annual Meeting of Members. One of the highlights of that meeting was the election of the National Board of Directors. All positions for District Director were filled and as I'm sure you have all heard by now, Roy Goodall, our former Vice-President was elected as the Association President. To fill this vacancy, it was determined that instead of appointing someone to the position, there would be a special meeting of members to elect a new VP to fill the position for the remainder of Roy's term (ie. to June 2024.) There are 6 people who have put their name forward including Lionel Guerard VP of our Branch. I wish all those who have put their names forward good luck.

Golf tournament was held in August at Scotswood Links. It was a great time and a good meal even though I didn't win a prize. Paula will give more details in her report but I would like to take the time now to acknowledge the volunteers that helped with this event. As always – our organization can't run and hold events without volunteers.

Besides this General Meeting, the Board has been very busy organizing events to take place this fall and I can tell you that it feels great to be organizing in person events and meetings again.

Some of the upcoming events we have planned for this year include:

- Regional Learning Conference – October 17-19 – our branch is sponsoring this and we have invited all members of the board of directors from all 4 branches in Manitoba. We are firmly committed to supporting the branches in Manitoba so we all remain viable and responsive to the members of the Association.
- Outreach meeting – Gimli October 26 – ensuring that members outside the city are updated and included in decision making for our Branch
- Next general meeting – November 23 at ANAVets on Portage Avenue.

Having said all this I'm sure you will understand that with all the other planning, we have run out of time to plan our postponed celebration to recognize Manitoba 150 years as a province. We are still working on this but the new proposed timeframe will be Spring of 2023. What I can tell you so far is:

- Celebrations Dinner Theatre May 3, 2023. Show "The Office"
- Need a minimum of 175 participants to have the venue to ourselves
- The event will be designed as a recruitment event – only members and perspective members will be eligible to attend for the cost to be supplemented by the Branch
- Will need volunteers – please see Donna Dobson after the meeting if you are interested in volunteering to help with this event. This is a recruitment event please bring an eligible friend.

Questions: Who gets to vote for the National Vice-President? All presidents get to vote the number of members they have on a specific day. The National Board of Directors get one vote each. Can we as a branch get information on who is running and have a mini-vote prior to the national members' meeting. This is not currently happening but Ceci will bring it up at with the other presidents to see what is happening in other branches. She will get back to us at the next meeting.

What happened to the Speakers Series learning events? These were put on hold during the pandemic. Dorian Guerard was elected as Director for the Speakers' Series in April and will be starting the learning events again shortly.

Financial Statements: Ceci presented the financial statements as Gwen was ill. No questions were asked. *Motion to approved the financial statements by Tom Higham, seconded by Al Godfrey. Carried*

Reports:

District Director (Connie Kehler): Public Service Health Care Plan Renewal update: On August 3, 2022, following more than 2 ½ years of negotiations, the Public Service Health Care Plan Partners Committee reached a deal on a renewed, modernized PSHCP. The deal will see meaningful enhancements and improvements across nearly every benefit category and will take effect July 1, 2023, when Canada Life takes over from Sunlife as the plan administrator. As part of the negotiations, measures to help manage costs, including for pensioner plan members, have been agreed to and will be implemented. While the deal is subject to Treasury Board approval, this is considered the final package, we expect the deal to move forward. If it does not, we will take every step necessary to ensure members get what is promised.

When surveyed in 2017 members were asked for their top priorities for PSHCP improvements. These were vision care, eliminating restrictions to accessing physiotherapy and massage therapy, better paramedical and hearing aid coverage, improvements to hospital coverage and emergency travel benefit enhancements.

Key gains include: increasing vision care from \$275 to \$400 every two years; increasing amounts for massage, osteopath, naturopath, chiropract/podiatrist from \$300 per year to \$500 per year; increasing coverage for hearing aid from \$1,000 per five years to \$1,500 and introducing a new benefit to cover hearing aid batteries (up to \$200 per year); removing the requirement for prescriptions for services like massage, physiotherapy, psychological services and speech therapy; removing the \$500 to \$1,000 corridor of uncovered physiotherapy services and introducing a maximum of \$1,500 per year for physiotherapy; improving acupuncture coverage by removing the restriction to have it performed by a physician and increasing that coverage from \$300 per year to \$500 per year; improving the Emergency Benefit While Travelling by moving coverage from \$500,000 to \$1 million and increasing family assistance benefits; increasing the Hospital Level I coverage from \$60 per day to \$90 per day and increasing Levels II and III to \$170 and \$250 respectively; for people living with diabetes, increasing coverage up to \$1,000 per

60 months for insulin jet injector devices, and introducing new coverage for specific diabetic equipment and supplies; introducing coverage for injectable lubricants such as Synvisc to treat joint pain and arthritis at \$600 per year.

The association also realized an important gain for low-income pensioners. Pensioners who retire between April 2015 and March 2025 will be eligible for the low-income pensioner relief provision, provided they meet the low-income threshold requirement.

Barriers affecting access to health care and equipment have also been addressed. The requirement for walkers and wheelchairs to be used inside the plan member's residence will be removed, and new wheelchair claims will be permitted within the existing five-year time limit when a plan member's condition has changed and requires a new chair.

Other additions include increasing nursing services to \$20,000 per year, adding gender affirmation coverage with a lifetime maximum of \$75,000, laser eye surgery coverage at a lifetime maximum of \$2,000 and up to \$5,000 per year on mental health services. Mental health services have also been expanded to include psychotherapists, social workers and registered counsellors.

In advance of the deal's implementation in July 2023, plan members should begin to prepare for some important changes as negotiations included implementing certain measures that will help the plan manage escalating costs. These include: a prior authorization program which will require pre-approval for coverage for specialty or high-cost drugs such as biologic or biosimilar drugs; mandatory generic substitution, with a 180-day transition period and a process to allow exceptions to continue to receive coverage for brand-name drugs based on medical need; limits to the frequency and amount of pharmacists' dispensing fees. Members will be encourage to refill maintenance prescriptions at 3 month intervals, and fill their prescriptions at pharmacies with lower dispensing fees; increasing out of pocket maximum slightly from \$3,000 to \$3,500 per year.

Rest assured these changes will be communicated clearly and with advance notice and that all plan members will be able to access support and assistance when these measures are implemented in July 2023.

Questions: What happens if there isn't a generic drug available for a specific ailment? There is room for exceptions built into the agreement so it should be fine.

Will premiums be going up? We have not been advised of any changes to premiums.

Will it be a seamless transfer? Members may have to reinput certain information as not all information will be able to be transferred.

Will Canada Life do direct billing? We don't have that information yet, probably not at transition date.

Mega Recruitment Drive: It's back and bigger and better! When you refer a member to the Association, you get a chance to win one of 14 great prizes, including the grand prize of \$10,000 cash courtesy of Johnson Insurance. The early bird draw will be held November 1 and the prize is a \$500 pre-paid credit card courtesy of Rogers and SimplyConnect. Until December 31 any existing member who successfully refers a new member to the Association will instantly receive a \$5 gift card and a ballot for the grand prize draw. There are no limits to the number of times you can be entered into the grand prize draw so the

more members you recruit the more chances you have to win. Even if an eligible prospective member only signs up for our electronic newsletter, you'll still be entered into a draw for a \$250 pre-paid credit card, courtesy of HearingLife Canada. It costs nothing to sign up for the e-newsletter and it's a great way to learn more about what we do.

Advocacy Program Officer (Cynthia Foreman): We will continue to work with the Seniors Coalition regarding the ongoing consultation on the Manitoba Seniors Strategy. Please take a moment to complete the survey that went out to all members September 16. Hopefully, you had the opportunity to complete the first survey. It is our understanding that there will be ongoing surveys, interviews and focus groups until October 10, 2022 to gather as much feedback as possible.

As a result of the elections at the June AMM the Advocacy Committee has a new chair, Roland Wells from Atlantic. He is busy getting oriented and working with the Committee to develop a plan for ensuring the Association's advocacy priorities are front and centre in upcoming elections in provinces as well as the next federal election.

In addition, our Branch is busy finalizing our operational plan which has a large advocacy component. We will be reaching out to engage you in our upcoming advocacy activities. We want to ensure our concerns are raised in the October 2023 provincial election and we will need your help.

As an Association, we don't often get involved in municipal elections but we have worked with the Seniors Coalition to develop a number of questions that relate to older adults.

We continue to be concerned about the state of long-term care and home care as well as our universal health care across the country. While there seems to be a lot of discussion about these issues there doesn't seem to be much action. This will be the focus of discussions at the National Board, the National Advocacy Committee and local advocacy discussions. The upcoming district meeting will have a large advocacy component as will the Regional Learning Conference for the Manitoba branches.

There is strength in having voices collaborating on like-minded issues. We are continuing to network with the Manitoba Seniors Coalition (MSC), the Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP), and the Manitoba Health Coalition (MHC). We are always looking for other like-minded organizations to work with on issues important to older adults.

There are a couple of interesting highlights coming up:

October is Seniors and Elders Month in Manitoba

October 3-9 is Active Aging Week – Check out Active Aging in Manitoba's website for activities near you!

Branch Services Coordinator (Paula Nygaard): In my role, I assist the Manitoba branch executive with general needs as well as develop the annual learning conference. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Winnipeg branch for their support of the learning conference for all Manitoba branches.

This year's conference is being held October 17-19. Topics to be discussed include: CRM hands on training including the volunteer portal; volunteerism and recruitment, branch rationalization, advocacy, membership engagement, operational planning based on the national strategic plan, branch structure, and guest speakers.

The conference is available to board members and is an excellent opportunity to learn about NAFR, team building and sharing ideas with other branches.

I collaborated on the three-day board retreat May 30-June 1. It was an excellent opportunity for board members to meet and discuss the objectives of the branch and planning for the next few years' activities. I worked on preparing and planning the District Directors' meeting being held September 28 & 29. This is a very interesting session that focuses on all branches in the Prairie/NWT region.

Golf Report (Paula Nygaard): On August 16, 2022 Winnipeg & District held its first golf tournament since 2019. It was held at Scotswood Link; 65 members golfed (down significantly from previous years but probably due to COVID); we had five extra attendees for dinner only; as in previous years it was best ball and is a fun tournament; lots of prizes and donations from several golfers. Many thanks to all the wonderful volunteers. We have blocked August 15, 2023 for next year so please mark your calendars.

Motion to Adjourn the Meeting at 1:45 by Paula Nygaard, seconded by Connie Kehler. Carried

Next Meeting

Wednesday, November 23, 2022

SIGNATURES:

Donna Dobson, Secretary

Date

Ceci O'Flaherty, President

Date