ASSOCIATION OF MONTANA RETIRED PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

Board Minutes

Outdoor meeting and Conference Call

July 21, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

The board meeting of the Association of Montana Retired Public Employees was called to order by Lyle Manley at 2:30 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Lyle Manley, Connie Welsh, Patty Mott, Cathy Kendall, Jan Brown, James Driggers, Jim Lewis and Kim Hoxie (staff) were present, Leo Hudetz present by conference call and Dale Boespflug was excused.

GUESTS

Brian Thompson, AMRPE Lobbyist by conference call

Mike O’Connor

MINUTES

Corrections: under PUREVIEW LAWSUIT UPDATE

Several members that” service” changed to “serve”.

Jan Brown made a motion to approve the amended May minutes, Cathy Kendall seconded the motion, and the amended May minutes were approved unanimously.

REPORTS

**Treasurer’s Report**

James Driggers presented the financial report and noted that there has not been a lot of activity. A CD is due in August and he will roll it over to another established CD. James did comment that membership dues income is down from last year, however it was discussed that it is from the membership dues billing error last year.

Patty Mott stated that this year’s membership dues and last year’s membership dues cannot be compared because of the amount of people that paid even though their membership was not due. The membership dues were rolled over to extend the membership years for members who paid even though their membership was not expired. In 2019, 75% of the dues were collected compared to 88% of the dues this year. There are about 100 people who have not renewed their membership this year.

Cathy Kendall made a motion to approve the July financial statement, Jan Brown seconded the motion, and the July financial statement was approved unanimously.

**Membership**

Patty Mott stated that a handful of renewals are coming in during the summer. Currently 88% of the renewals have been returned. The breakdown of renewals is as follows: Lifetime, 16 (2%); 1 year, 603 (80%); 2 year, 103 (14%); 3 year, 34(4%). Patty Mott also recommended to the board to send the final renewal notice by email in August.

Patty Mott made a motion to approve the billing of the remaining one hundred membership renewals by email in August. Connie Welsh seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

**Restructure of AMRPE Dues**

The board discussed restructuring the membership dues for 2021. The board agreed on the following new membership dues:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1 year | $20.00 |
| 2 years | $39.00 |
| 3 years | $58.00 |
| Lifetime membership: |  |
| Eliminate Lifetime under 60 years of age |
| 60-70 years of age | $225.00 |
| Over 70 years of age | $175.00 |

Lyle Manley made a motion to approve the membership dues pricing that will be implemented January 2021. Patty Mott seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

**PureView/ Lewis & Clark County Lawsuit**

Brian Thompson indicated that the case is still in the discovery stage and recommended AMRPE not to get involved until it goes to the Supreme Court or if something changes in the future, he will notify the board.

Jim Lewis arrived at the meeting.

Brian Thompson also mentioned the Legislative Interim Finance Committee does not have a meeting scheduled but the full Finance Committee will be meeting on August 11, 2020. The Montana Public Employees’ Retirement Administration (MPERA) Actuary, Cavanaugh MacDonald, will be presenting the results on the stress test. Brian believes that the Finance Committee’s focus may be elsewhere due to the revenues and budget issues from COVID 19.

The board also discussed the data that was used to compile the charts and graphs prepared by The Pew Charitable Trusts relating to the Montana Public Employee Retirement System. Brian Thompson indicated that he spoke with Representative Hamilton and the data for the graphs doesn’t use the entirety of Montana information but uses some public information archived by Boston College. Mike O’Connor recommended to the board to try to get the data specifically used by Pew to develop their information.

**Join forces with Teachers**

Cathy and Connie have not started this project due to COVID 19. Connie Welsh mentioned that they will be contacting Shawn Graham to discuss communicating the same message about the economic impact State and Teacher retirees make in the State. One in ten Montanans receive their retirement benefits from Teachers’ Retirement System (TRS) or the Public Retirement System (PRS). This idea is not to impede the representation of Teachers (TRS) by Labor but to try to communicate the same message.

**Opinion -Editorial Letter**

Connie Welsh stated she will be creating two articles this summer on the benefits of the pension and a call to action by the public retirees to talk to political candidates to see where they stand on state pensions.

She mentioned that is important for Montanans to understand that State employees have put 15% of their paychecks into the pension with matching funds from their employer just like in the private sector.

Connie will be asking for board members to help create and edit the articles and help plan when the articles will be distributed to the newspapers.

Connie Welsh also commented that she is working on the letter of understanding for Brian Thompson of Browning, Kaleczyc, Berry and Hoven, P.C. work with AMRPE for the coming year.

NEW BUSINESS

**What can we do to encourage members who live outside Helena to apply for Board positions or other volunteer activities?**

Cathy Kendall will schedule a committee meeting to discuss and generate some ideas.

**State Employee Group Benefits Advisory Council (SEGBAC)**

Jim Lewis reviewed information from the SEGBAC meeting in March. He indicated that the decision for health insurance premiums will be made in August for 2021. By his findings, he is hopeful that there will be no changes in premiums for the new year.

**Secure Act**

Mike O’Connor mentioned that he received information from the Montana Public Employees’ Retirement Board (MPERB) that indicated the Secure Act increased an individual’s required minimum distribution age from 70 ½ to age 72. This change in federal law applies to both the Defined Contribution Retirement Plan and the 457(b) Deferred Compensation Plan. Leo Hudetz volunteered to write a statement for the website and an email blast to the membership.

Lyle Manley adjourned the meeting at 4:49 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on September 15, 2020, 9:30 a.m. at 100 North Park – PERA Office, 2nd Floor Conference Room.