



Retired Public Employees Council of Washington Chapter 19 – Kitsap County Area

Sandie Reynolds, President
(253)-514-8435 sandielee@comcast.net

Opeiu/aficio

RPEC Chapter 19, PO Box 5507, Bremerton, WA 98312

NEXT MEETING: Virtual Chapter 19 Meeting **Wednesday June 9, 2021 at 11:00 AM**

Dear Fellow Chapter 19 Members,

PLEASE take note we are moving our meetings back to Wednesdays as requested by many. We may need to find a new venue for our meetings if the restaurant cannot accommodate our Wednesday meetings. There has been consensus to continue the Zoom meetings on a regular basis and then perhaps in June plan a picnic for members. I will be talking with the restaurant and/or working on finding a new venue if all is well for a September in-person meeting. We will cover this subject at our virtual meeting on June 9th.

Our last meeting was very poorly attended. Of our almost 300 members we had three in attendance. Elections were not held, and we have permission to continue the current officers and chapter positions for another year.

Our meeting in June will be a mixture of legislative updates and up-to-date Council news. Several members of our Chapter have attended trainings, meetings, and public forums on issues specific to the health and welfare of our members. This is vital information. There is good news and not so good news. We will discuss the failure of the PERS 1 COLA despite high hopes going into the session.

Please mark your calendars and plan to join us for our Virtual Membership Meeting. The meeting will be held, of course, by Zoom. Members can participate online using a computer, tablet, or smart phone, or you can dial in to the meeting using a good old-fashioned telephone.

ALERT! We need two volunteers to complete our audit for this year. Both of our trustees experienced health issues or were unable to participate in the audit. It is not a hard job and is simply reviewing the expenditures for the fiscal year for our chapter. It takes probably one day to complete the task (we are not big spenders!) and then filling out a written report form to provide to the Council office once we have completed this task.

To Join the Meeting Online, go to:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82711536654?pwd=a2Q0TElzVXRtaTdOTnl4c28vaDVlZz09>

Or go to: <http://zoom.us/join>

Enter Meeting ID: **827 1153 6654**

Enter Passcode: **224 366**

To Join the Meeting by Telephone:

Dial: **1-253-215-8782**

Enter Meeting ID: **827 1153 6654**

Enter Passcode: **224 366**

A copy of RPEC **Executive Director's James Cockburn report** will be made available at the Zoom meeting, and we will review his report.

Johanna Standish, our District 6 Executive Board Representative, will be attending our meeting. She and I have been working closely on several issues and she will help to field any questions you may have.

Please try and make every effort to attend this meeting. There is much to be done and we do need to discuss the future of our Chapter. There is so much going on behind the scenes and many folks are fighting to keep our retirement benefits intact. Without your support and input these battles are difficult at best.

I will post the final copy of the newsletter on our RPEC Chapter 19 Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/349645972190263>

It is Never too Late! Cecil Lockhart died on May 4 at the age of 95. Lockhart's liver was later donated to a woman in her 60's, making him the oldest organ donor in U.S. history.

RPEC Executive Director's Report

In Person Meetings: If your Chapter is considering in-person meetings, make sure you understand and follow the local health agency guidance and/or State guidance for gatherings.

Final State Budget Update: On the evening of Sunday April 25th, the Legislature voted to approve the final negotiated 2021-2023 budget. It included a strong measure to address the capital gains tax loophole while exempting retirement accounts, residential property, and small businesses. The success of this near decade long effort to enact a capital gains tax is due in no small part to the work of members like you. Together with our allies, we have taken a big step towards fixing the state's upside-down tax code.

The budget will also keep the PEBB monthly Medicare benefit at its current level. This is a tremendous victory given there was genuine concern about losing this important benefit entirely. Unfortunately, the proposal to provide a one-time increase to Plan 1

retirees did not survive the budget negotiation process. This is especially frustrating given the modest nature of the increase which was capped at \$22 per month and the fact that it was included in the house budget with unanimous support.

In the coming days and weeks, we will be putting together more information and having discussions about where we go from here on the Plan 1 COLA issue. Our sincerest appreciation to those who called, emailed, testified, and otherwise made their voices heard during this Legislative session.

Online Membership Application: We have updated the “Join RPEC” page on our website to provide the option for new members to sign up for dues deduction or payment via credit card. Please encourage any fellow retirees to utilize this new convenient and secure option to sign up today.

Make sure they list your name in the “Recruited By” field so you can be entered into our membership recruitment rewards program.

State Legislative Update: RPEC Leaders are encouraged to schedule meetings with their members and the Legislators in their area. Meetings during the Legislative interim are vital to ensuring retiree issues are addressed during the upcoming session.

2022 will present our members with the opportunity to secure a substantial and consistent COLA for Plan 1, address Medical and Prescription affordability, and build on the recent efforts to balance the upside-down tax code.

The discussions our members have between now and January will pay dividends next year. Specific talking points and opportunities to connect with Legislators will be shared as they become available.

Please join us on the 1st Wednesday of each month for a Zoom meeting on our Legislative priorities and activities during the interim.

To join the meeting via computer or tablet go to: <https://zoom.us/join>

Enter the Meeting ID: **828 6634 6713**

Enter Passcode: **205 507**

To join the meeting via telephone:

Dial: **1-253-215-8782**

Enter Meeting ID: **828 6634 6713**

Enter Passcode: **205 507**

Leadership Training Reminder: Our virtual Leadership Training will be on Monday, June 14th from 10 AM -Noon. Materials and meeting login information will be sent to attendees in early June via email and USPS.

Action Item: Tell Congress to Repeal GPO/WEP: The Government Pension Offset (GPO)

and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) have been unfairly impacting the Social Security benefits of some public service retirees for decades. Because of GPO-WEP, 25% of public sector retirees see cuts to their Social Security due to other earnings or pensions. Some retirees have even had their Social Security benefits cut to zero. AFSMCE & RPEC have consistently pushed for the repeal of these harmful provisions.

A recently introduced bi-partisan proposal called the Social Security Fairness Act (S. 1302, H.R. 82) would fully repeal both the GPO and WEP. Please contact your member of Congress to ask that they support this important proposal.

DRS- Public Records Request: We have been informed of a public records request to DRS from a group called American Transparency, which operates a website called openthebooks.com. The group has routinely made these requests every few years. Their purpose appears to be a creation of a database of retirees and active employees nationally, and they have received data from many states. Their agenda appears to be promoting the idea that salaries and pensions for public sector folks are somehow grandiose or wasteful of tax payers' dollars.

We understand our members may have concerns about the information being released but under current law this information is public record. We will be monitoring how the group uses this information and evaluate any next steps we can take to protect the interests of our members.

It is important to note that contact information is not included in this request and cannot be released.

Sincerely,



James Cockburn, Executive Director,
Retired Public Employees Council of Washington

Chapter 19 Events/Meetings

June 9, 2021 Chapter 19 Virtual Membership Meeting

Important Dates- Statewide RPEC Events/Meetings

June 7, 2021	RPEC Political Action Committee Meeting
June 14, 2021	RPEC Leadership Training
June 18, 2021	RPEC Legislative Committee Meeting
July 27, 2021	RPEC Membership Committee Meeting
August 16, 2021	RPEC Finance Committee Meeting
August 25, 2021	RPEC Executive Board Meeting
October 28, 2021	RPEC Membership Committee
November 8, 2021	RPEC Finance Committee Meeting
November 15, 2021	RPEC Executive Board Meeting

*Statewide meetings will be held virtually until it is safe to resume meeting in-person. For details about meeting times and how to join the meeting, call the RPEC office at 1-800-562-6097 or view the calendar on the RPEC website at: <https://rpecwa.org/calendar-3/>