



Retired Public Employees Council Chapter 24 – Mason County Area

Earl Mallinger, President
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Dear Fellow Chapter 24 Members,

Little did we imagine when we gathered for our usual Chapter 24 meeting at the Blue Ox Room in Shelton last February, that our lives would soon be completely upended due to a worldwide pandemic. Going on ten months later, we still have no idea when we might be able to safely gather in-person again.



Present and ongoing circumstances serve as a constant reminder of how truly fragile life is and how resilient we are as a society and an organization. Though the RPEC staff have mainly been working remotely from their homes since mid-March, RPEC has continued to hum along, retool, and find new ways of doing business. Virtual Meetings, conference calls and electronic communication means have become our new norm for the foreseeable future.

The holiday season can be stressful under normal circumstances, and we are certainly not living in normal times. We need to stay the course and continue to follow the recommendations of the health and medical experts. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to reach out if you are in need, we may be able to hook you up with resources to help, or just have a chat when you may be feeling isolated and in need of some old-fashioned human interaction. We are in this together, folks.

In Solidarity,

Earl Mallinger, President
RPEC Chapter 24
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Johanna Standish, District 6 Board Rep.
RPEC of Washington
(360) 538-0826 or lacerta123@comcast.net

Our Ranks are Swelling! Our Chapter 24 membership has now grown to 141, reflecting an increase of 5 new members! Thanks to a recent joint recruiting drive with the AFSCME International Union, RPEC has received over 1,800 new member applications statewide since early July.

Hard Won Legislative Victory Delivered a COLA for PERS 1 Members: Governor Jay Inslee signed HB 1390 into law on April 3, 2020. Plan 1 Retirees received a 3% increase to their pension payment (capped at a maximum of \$62.50) beginning in July. We were tremendously grateful that the Governor chose to stand with and protect Plan 1 retirees

during the COVID-19 crisis.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the state was facing a multi-billion-dollar reduction in revenue, and the Governor made the difficult decision to veto nearly 150 worthwhile and important investments totaling \$445 million dollars out of the state budget on the same day that he signed our COLA Bill into law.

2020 RPEC of Washington Convention Update: In the interest of member safety and health concerns, a one day “virtual” RPEC Convention was held on Wednesday September 23, 2020 instead of the usual in-person event. The purpose of the convention is to elect statewide Officers and District Representatives to lead us over the next two years, and to consider and adopt resolutions that determine the future priorities that will shape the course of our statewide organization.

The convention was conducted using the Zoom audio-visual program, which allowed members to participate through telephone or the internet with a computer, tablet, or smart phone.

Chapter 24 was represented by Convention Delegate Deborah Axelson.

Congrats to Our Newly Elected Statewide Officers and Executive Board Members!

President: Kandy Kraig	Vice President: Bill Ziegler
Secretary: Mary Marbles	Treasurer: Clair Olivers
District 1 Rep: Joel Hall	District 6 Rep: Johanna Standish
District 2 Rep: Tomas Sandoval	District 7 Rep: Lisa Randlette
District 3 Rep: Karol Hoffman	District 8 Rep: Carol Dotlich
District 4 Rep: Jack Cooper	District 9 Rep: Alma-jean Marion
District 5 Rep: Maurice Garrott	District 9 Rep: Claude Burfect

Please join us in offering our new leadership team your support and encouragement! Thank you to all candidates for their willingness to serve, and a super big thanks to our outgoing Vice President Nancy Heley of Olympia Area Chapter 2, Treasurer Johanna Standish of Grays Harbor Chapter 18, and our District 6 Board Representative Mike Marston for their years of dedication and service.

Key Actions Taken by Delegates at the RPEC Virtual Convention on September 23, 2020

Summary of Convention Resolutions Passed:

- To evaluate RPEC legislative efforts at all levels to ensure effectiveness
- To allow chapters to assess the cost/benefit of allowing members to voluntarily elect email newsletters in lieu of, or in addition to, hard copies
- To ensure that, within 90 days of election, Council Executive Board members shall receive board orientation/training
- A late resolution pertaining to universal healthcare was sent on to the Resolutions Committee for consideration

Summary of Constitutional Amendment Passed:

- Retired employees of public employee unions, excluding law enforcement and firefighters' unions, are eligible for RPEC membership
- Members who prefer not to have RPEC dues deducted from their pension checks by DRS, may opt to pay dues directly to RPEC by cash, check (annual preferred), credit card, bill pay or other secure electronic payment from a personal account
- The annual RPEC Audit Report will be sent to Chapter Presidents in non-convention years
- The Executive board may meet by audio or video on request of the President in accordance with Appendix E of the International Constitution

Other Business:

- RPEC Legislative Priorities for the 2021 session were fine-tuned

2021 Legislative Day Update: RPEC faces some sizeable challenges when the state Legislature convenes in Olympia in January 2021. Our strength lies in our membership, that is something we need to continually remind our legislators of.

Owing to the continuing pandemic, the RPEC Executive Board decided to cancel plans for our annual trek to Olympia for an in-person Lobby Day and Legislative Reception during the session in February. We will still have an organized lobbying effort during the week of February 8th through virtual means.



Welcome the Newest Member of the RPEC of WA Family!

Please join us in congratulating RPEC Executive Director James Cockburn and his wife Sarah on the birth of their first child. Little Mackenzie chose to make her debut on September 4th at 6 lbs. 7oz, and 19 inches long. Dad reports that baby is small but mighty, and she and Mom are healthy and doing well.

RPEC Executive Director's Report

Happy Holidays! I hope that you and your family enjoy your celebrations and traditions while also staying safe and healthy. Despite the many challenges we faced this year, I am proud of our leaders and my fellow staff members for their tireless efforts to protect our members' retirement security. As we head into the New Year, our focus will shift to the Legislative Session, which will be conducted remotely in 2021.

DRS Report on Pension Funding. The Department of Retirement Systems (DRS) released their 2020 Annual Comprehensive Report which includes an update on the funding status of all public pension plans. The funding levels are as of July 31, 2019 and are as follows (previous level in parenthesis):

PERS 1= 65% (60%) SERS 2/3= 91% (89%)
PERS 2/3= 96% (91%) PSERS 2= 101% (96%)

It is important to note that these funded statuses are a snapshot in time but due to strong investment returns prior to the beginning of 2020 have been helping to raise the funding level of our pension plans over the last few years. The long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on investment returns and funding levels will not be known immediately and will depend on the nature of the economic recovery.

Returns were slightly down for the first quarter of 2020 but were not as much as initially feared. The Washington State Investment Board takes a long-term strategy for the pension funds and keeps the investments diversified to minimize losses due to stock market volatility.

Action Item - Contact Your Legislators: While less than initially anticipated, the state's \$2.7 Billion revenue shortfall will put tremendous pressure on the Legislature to find savings. That will leave your hard-earned benefits vulnerable. The options of reducing or eliminating the state's PEBB Medicare Benefit are on the table, so retirees need to send a clear message that increasing out-of-pocket health insurance costs for seniors - during a pandemic - is unacceptable!

Please call them today at 1-800-562-6000 or visit <https://app.leg.wa.gov/rosters/> to send an email.

Sincerely,



James Cockburn
Executive Director
RPEC of WA



Important Dates

Meetings will take place virtually until further notice

January 28, 2021	RPEC Membership Committee Meeting
February 18, 2021	RPEC Finance Committee Meeting
February 22, 2021	RPEC Executive Board Meeting
April 26, 2021	RPEC Finance Committee Meeting
April 27, 2021	RPEC Membership Committee Meeting
May 6, 2021	RPEC Executive Board 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 Meeting
November 8, 2021	RPEC Finance Committee Meeting
November 15, 2021	RPEC Executive Board Meeting

All RPEC members are welcome to attend the meetings listed above by good old-fashioned telephone, or online using a computer, tablet, or smartphone.

For details about meeting times and how to join the meeting, call the RPEC office at 1-800-562-6097 for details or view the calendar on the RPEC website at:

<https://rpecwa.org/calendar-3/>