



## Retired Public Employees Council Chapter 27 – Chelan-Douglas-Grant-Adams- Kittitas-Okanogan Counties

*Don Boxford, President*  
**(509) 670-7493 or [dbox@nwi.net](mailto:dbox@nwi.net)**

opeiu8/aflcio

**Hybrid Meeting Date:**  
**Hybrid Meeting Time:**

**Thursday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024**  
**10:30 AM**

### Computer Login Information

Go to <https://zoom.us/join>

**Meeting ID: 227 058 2870**

**Passcode: nP3L7M**

### Phone Login Information

**Dial: (253) 215-8782**

**Meeting ID: 227 058 2870**

**Phone Passcode: 956551**

### In-Person Meeting Location

**Wenatchee Senior Center**

**1312 Maple St**

**Wenatchee, WA 98801**

## **CHAPTER NOMINATIONS & ELECTIONS NOTICE**

As a reminder, **nominations** for chapter officers will take place at our **March 14<sup>th</sup> and April 11<sup>th</sup> meetings**, followed by **elections at the end of the April meeting**.

Greetings Chapter 27 members,

At our February meeting we gave an update on the progress of the 3% COLA bill for PERS/TRS 1 retirees and the End Month of Death bill. Betty Rae gave a report on her meeting with Rep. Mike Steele and Rep. Keith Goehner at which she urged them to support our bills. Rep. Goehner told her that he didn't know why they didn't make the cost of living permanent for plan 1 retiree in the first place. Betty Rae also told members that they should keep an eye on the PEBB updates if they get their medical through the state. There could be changes to the medical plans. You can go to the RPEC web site to get info as to when the PEB Board meets.

We had a discussion over getting people to run for chapter officers. We have two board members who are no longer able to serve as officers due to illness and we have already had a vacant position open for the past year. So, we are asking our members to volunteer to serve in one of our positions come the April elections.

Please feel free to contact me, Don Boxford, at 509-670-7493 or at [dbox@nwi.net](mailto:dbox@nwi.net) if you have any questions.

Don Boxford, RPEC Chapter 27 President

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Spring is almost here! Enjoy! RPEC of Washington has been considered one of the best retiree advocacy organizations in the nation. We continue to need your participation to stay influential with our legislators. Our model has been based on chapters across the state. In North Central Washington we need your participation to stay viable and there are multiple ways to participate.

Please join us for the Chapter 27 meeting on the 2nd Thursday of each month. While we would love for you to join the meetings in person, you can also join the meetings via Zoom or phone. I plan to join the March 14 meeting via Zoom. There are many other ways to participate--put together the monthly newsletter, operate the Zoom setup for the monthly meetings, become an officer, become a trustee (audit the books one time a year), make 10 phone calls a month to new members or be in charge of robocalls. If you are not getting the Weekly NewsFlash on Fridays from our state office, please contact Jakob Canup ([jakob.canup@rpecwa.org](mailto:jakob.canup@rpecwa.org)) or Don Boxford ([dbbox@nwi.net](mailto:dbbox@nwi.net)) to ask for the NewsFlash. Following the action suggestions in the Weekly NewsFlash will help guide you to becoming an advocate. One more way--the RPEC State Convention is in Wenatchee in late September. Are you available to be a delegate, or perhaps a volunteer to help put together auction baskets or check people in at the registration desk? Delegates and officers need to be elected this spring. Please step up to take a more active role--YOUR help is needed and wanted!! PLEASE AND THANK YOU!

Feel free to contact me, your representative to the State RPEC Executive Board at [shrinkingbetty@gmail.com](mailto:shrinkingbetty@gmail.com) or 509-679-6007. Take Care!

Betty Rae Adams, RPEC District 2 Representative

If you would like to receive your chapter newsletter **by email** instead of hard copy, please contact Don Boxford at [dbbox@nwi.net](mailto:dbbox@nwi.net).

### **March 2024 Executive Director's Report**

#### **Federal Advocacy**

**Call to action on The Fiscal Commission Act of 2023:** Your federal retirement benefits are at risk if Congress passes [The Fiscal Commission Act of 2023 \(H.R. 5779\)](#). This legislation will create a 16-member fiscal commission to search for ways to reduce the national deficit and balance the national budget. Funding for Social Security and Medicare will be targeted for cuts. **Call 844-331-0441 today! Tell Congress to vote NO on this bill and similar proposals calling for fiscal commissions that aim to reduce your hard-earned retirement benefits.** A detailed [position paper](#) about the proposed debt commission is available at <https://retiredamericans.org>.

#### **Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB) Update**

Based on the information available to date, it appears the Health Care Authority (HCA) will recommend the PEB Board adopt a new pharmacy benefit for Uniform Medical Plan (UMP) Classic Medicare at its April 11 meeting. The medical portion of the plan will remain unchanged. The pharmacy benefit will transition to a Part D employer-managed plan - eligible for federal subsidies. With the transition to the Part D plan, retirees are expected to see a decrease in monthly premiums in 2025. Moda will remain as the plan administrator to provide continuity and a seamless transition for UMP Classic Medicare enrollees. If you are interested in learning more about HCA's proposal to the PEB Board, visit [www.hca.wa.gov](http://www.hca.wa.gov). This topic will dominate the agenda of the Board's next meeting on March 21. You can access the agenda, meeting materials, and obtain the Zoom link by navigating to the Retiree webpage at [www.hca.wa.org](http://www.hca.wa.org). The PEB Board links are on the right

side of the page. RPEC members wishing to comment during the meeting will have opportunities to do so.

### **State Advocacy**

The Legislative session will conclude on March 7. Thus, the information included in this Letter will only be current through the date of publication. To learn more about the status of RPEC's key legislative priorities, access the bill tracker at [www.rpecwa.org](http://www.rpecwa.org).

*SHB 1985: Ad Hoc COLA for PERS/TRS 1* – The House passed SHB 1985 in early February and funded it in their initial budget proposal. The bill has cleared Senate Ways & Means and Senate Rules and could be voted on the floor on any day. The bill is likely to be funded in the Legislature's final supplemental budget. If the legislation is funded in the final budget act and signed by Governor, the COLA will be implemented in July.

*HB 2481: Month of Death Public Employees Benefits Board Benefit* – The bill waives the payment of healthcare premiums for plans managed by PEBB during a retiree's month of death. This bill also has a high likelihood of passing, given its broad support in both chambers.

*SSB 5986/HB 2285: Curbing out-of-pocket healthcare costs* – The bill curbs the cost for ground ambulance services for healthcare plan enrollees. The bill is supported by all RPEC's healthcare partners and has received strong bi-partisan support. It was sent to the Rules Committee on February 26.

*ESB 5241: Material changes to the healthcare marketplace* – This bill is designed to provide greater protections to consumers due to healthcare mergers, acquisitions, and contracting, with the goal of ensuring that consumers receive the same or greater access to quality, affordable care. The bill was sent to the Rules Committee on February 26.

*Legislative Updates:* The last weekly legislative update call will take place on March 8. All members are invited to attend from 2-3 p.m. The Zoom link is available at [www.rpecwa.org](http://www.rpecwa.org). A final legislative session report will be issued by the Council in April and available to all members on the website. Starting in April, the monthly legislative update calls will be held the first Friday of each month. Please join us on April 5 from 2-3 p.m.

### **Executive Board Update**

At the February 26 Executive Board meeting, the Board unanimously approved the formation of a special task force that will meet virtually to create a process, to be piloted this year and next, for regular review of the organization's governance and fiscal structures. Recruitment will begin soon. It is anticipated that the task force will begin meeting by Zoom in June. The Board also tasked the Membership Committee with developing plans to recruit and engage former union leaders and those with workplace leadership experience to become active in RPEC chapters. The Legislative Committee was tasked with embellishing the organization's federal policy and legislative agenda. The Executive Board's next meeting is on May 6 via Zoom. The link and more details are available at [www.rpecwa.org](http://www.rpecwa.org). All members are invited to attend.

## **Upcoming Events**

Visit [www.rpecwa.org](http://www.rpecwa.org) for a full calendar of Council Office and chapter meetings.

- March 7 Sine Die (end of the legislative session)
- March 8 Last weekly Legislative Update call (2 p.m.)
- March 14 Healthcare Workgroup (3:30 p.m.)
- March 15 Legislative Committee (10 a.m.)
- March 15 Open Zoom Convention Questions (10a.m.-4p.m.)
  - Stop by anytime if you have questions
- March 21 PEBB meeting (9-4 p.m.)
- April 5 Legislative Update call (2:00 p.m.)
- April 11 PEBB meeting (9-4 p.m.)
- April 11 Healthcare Workgroup (3:30 p.m.)
- April 12 Legislative Committee (10 a.m.)
- April 16 Select Committee on Pension Policy (10 a.m.)
- April 19 Pension Policy Workgroup (10 a.m.)
- April 25 Membership Committee (10 a.m.)
- April 25 Healthcare Workgroup (3:30 p.m.)