



**Retired Public Employees Council of Washington
Chapter 28 – University of Washington Retirees
June – July 2021**

Mary Marbles, President (206) 322-4914

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Chapter President's Message

Mark your calendars and plan to participate in our Virtual Chapter 28 Membership Meeting on June 15th!

I am looking forward to seeing and/or hearing from you at the virtual meeting!

May God bless & keep you!

-Mary Marbles, Chapter President

**RPEC Chapter 28 Virtual Membership Meeting
Draft Minutes for 4/20/2021**

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 AM by President Mary Marbles.

Chapter 28 Members Present: Mary Marbles, Alma-jean Marion, John Hampton, Benester Fields, George Armour, Kathy Craig

Guests Present: RPEC President Kandy Kraig, RPEC Vice President Bill Ziegler

Chapter Elections: Elections were run by Kandy Kraig. No new names were submitted.

All four current officers were re-elected for an additional two-year term:

President: Mary Marbles

Vice-President: Alma-jean Marion

Secretary: Kathy Craig

Treasurer: John Hampton

Executive Board Member: George Armour volunteered to serve.

Trustees: Benester Fields, Juanita Taylor and Neoma Ramsey volunteered to serve.

**RPEC Chapter 28
Virtual Membership Meeting**

Tuesday ~ June 15, 2021 ~ 11:00 AM

Agenda

**2021 Final Legislative Report
Chapter Officers Reports
RPEC District 9 Report
Other Chapter Business**

To join the meeting online, click on:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85736989247?pwd=ajlHSTdhVzJJNTYyamY0TmRPy01vUT09>

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

Enter Meeting ID: **857 3698 9247**

Enter Passcode: **403 631**

To join the meeting by telephone:

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

Enter Meeting ID: **857 3698 9247**

Enter Passcode: **403 631**

Bill Ziegler delivered the oath of office. He emphasized that new officers need to stay involved.

Treasurer's Report: Chapter 28 held an audit meeting on March 18th.

At the 4/12/2021 Chapter Officers meeting it was decided that funds in the amount of \$180.00 would be given to each of the four officers to reimburse them for expenses incurred in years 2019, 2020, and 2021.

The beginning balance on February 14 was \$16,171.64; income was \$1,041.29; expenses were \$654.30. The ending checking balance on April 19 was \$16, 558.53.

District 9 Report: Bill stated that the Round Table has not met during the Covid 19 crisis. May 27 will be the kickoff meeting in 2021. Chapter 3 President Matt Groshong has volunteered to serve (replacing Bill Ziegler) as Chair. There could be an opportunity for Matt and his wife to help with Zoom set-up.

Alma-jean noted that District 9 chapters claim to have not received add/drop reports since September. This may be a topic for a future meeting of Chapter 28.

New Business: All present were encouraged to start looking for a new place that can accommodate up to 30 people to have our bimonthly lunch meetings. Other requirements are nearby parking and space that does not have interference from other customers. Also, we need to keep in mind that meal costs per person should not exceed \$20.00.

Good and Welfare Report: Mary encouraged each of us to protect ourselves and stay safe.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 PM. Our next meeting is Tuesday June 15, 2021.

Submitted by,
Kathy Craig, Chapter Secretary

Member Recruitment Incentive Program: RPEC of Washington has 11,171 members at present, and we are looking for more. There is political power in our numbers. The Gimme 5 recruitment incentive program is ongoing through December 31, 2021. If you recruit 5 dues-paying members in 2021, there is a \$100 prize waiting for you! Prospective members now have the option to join online via the RPEC website. Be sure that the person lists your name at the bottom of the form on the "Recruited By" line, to make sure you get credit for the recruitment. To locate the membership form, go to:

<https://rpecwa.org/join-rpec/>

It is Never Too Late! Time magazine recently reported that Cecil Lockhart died on May 4, 2021, 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.

Member Only Benefits: A new section has been added to the RPEC website with information on resources available to our members. Please visit the link below for details on the many discounts available to retirees and their family members, such as hearing and dental services, the AFSCME Free College benefits, and the Foundation for Working Families relief program for members in need.

Be sure to check it out, there may well be benefits and discounts that could be of interest to you! For more info go to:

<https://rpecwa.org/member-only-benefits/> or
<https://www.afscme.org/member-resources/afscme-advantage>

How Big Will the Raise for Social Security Recipients Be in 2022? The Social Security cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) are announced annually and helps offset your loss of purchasing power due to inflation. The cost-of-living adjustment for Social Security could be the largest in over a decade. For the nearly 70 million people receiving Social Security benefits, this may help offset higher costs of items needed to survive during the coronavirus pandemic.

The Social Security COLA for the following year is generally announced in October and is based on current inflation. The Social Security COLA was just 1.3% in 2021, but benefits could increase by 4.7% next year. This would be the most significant Social Security cost-of-living adjustment since 2009 when there was an astounding 5.8% Social Security COLA. Before you start planning on spending your larger Social Security benefit, keep in mind there are several more months of data that could change the eventual Social Security COLA for 2022.

In 2021, the average Social Security benefit was just \$1,543 per month, and the maximum benefit was \$3,148 per month at full retirement age in 2021. The full retirement age is 66 if you were born from 1943 to 1954. The full retirement age increases gradually if you were born from 1955 to 1960 until it reaches 67. For anyone born 1960 or later, full retirement benefits are payable at age 67.

As the economy sprints out of the coronavirus recession, it is expected that inflation will lead to a larger Social Security COLA than we have seen in quite some time. Each year, the Social Security Administration (SSA) bases the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) increase on the Department of Labor's consumer price index (CPI) for urban wage earners and clerical workers. The CPI is meant to be used as a measure of inflation.

More Social Security Taxes Coming in 2022? For those of you still working and earning an income, you will likely also see an increase in the income subject to Social Security taxes in 2022. This year, your first \$142,800 of earned income will get hit with Social Security payroll taxes for 2021. It is too early to know whether this number will increase again in 2022. President Biden ran on adding new Social Security taxes for earned incomes above \$400,000. Time will tell if this is implemented in 2022 and if the additional taxes will also translate into potentially larger Social Security benefits for retirees.

Inslee Announces Vaccination Incentives: Governor Jay Inslee recently announced a suite of new incentives to help encourage unvaccinated Washingtonians to get the COVID shot. The Washington State Lottery will be conducting a "Shot of a Lifetime" giveaway series during the month of June, working with state agencies, technology companies, sports teams, and higher education institutions across the state to offer a myriad of different prizes to vaccinated individuals.

This includes people who have been vaccinated in Washington, regardless of when. The incentives are not just for new vaccinations. Vaccinated Washingtonians do not need to do anything to be entered in the four drawings. The Lottery will automatically gather names from

the DOH statewide immunization database.

The incentives include:

- Lottery cash drawings, with prizes totaling \$2 million. The Lottery will conduct one drawing for \$250,000 every week for four weeks for all vaccinated individuals. At the end of the four weeks, there will be a final drawing for a \$1 million prize.
- Higher education tuition and expense assistance
- Sports tickets and gear
- Gift cards
- Airline Tickets
- Game Systems and smart speakers

According to the most recent data from the state Department of Health (DOH), approximately 63% of Washingtonians 16 years and older have initiated their vaccinations. The state hopes that the incentives will entice unvaccinated people to initiate their vaccinations and raise the statewide rate to save more lives and protect more people.

Washington is set to reopen fully on June 30, or when the percentage of eligible adults who have initiated vaccination reaches 70%, whichever comes first.

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.

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**

New Online Membership Application Option: 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.

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. AFSCME & 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

RPEC Chapter 28 Events/Meetings

June 15, 2021	Chapter 28 Virtual Membership Meeting
August 17, 2021	Chapter 28 Virtual Membership Meeting
October 19, 2021	Chapter 28 Virtual Membership Meeting

Important Dates- Statewide RPEC Events/Meetings

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/>