

RETIRED PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COUNCIL

CHAPTER 3 NEWSLETTER

May, 2021

RPEC Chapter 3 Virtual Membership Meeting Tuesday, May 18, 2021 11:00 AM to 12:30

To join the meeting online, go to:

<http://zoom.us>

Enter the Meeting ID: 812 6484 5628

Password: 2020

To join the meeting by telephone, dial:

1-253-215-8782

Meeting ID: 812 6484 5628

Password: 2020

11:00 GUEST SPEAKER: Cynthia Stewart, League of Women Voters. She will discuss transportation issues.

11:30 CHAPTER BUSINESS MEETING:

President's Report

Hello Chapter 3 Members,

It is my pleasure as the newly elected chapter president to write my first president's message. I retired from Bellevue College in 2015 and joined RPEC soon after. I quickly found RPEC meetings were a place to make new friends, learn about how we could protect our hard-earned pensions, and listen to interesting speakers on a variety of topics: public policy, healthcare and many others. I welcome all of you to attend our upcoming meeting Tuesday, May 18th at 11 am.

Of course, in-person meetings are not possible right now, but Zoom provides us a good way to stay connected in the meantime. (see zoom link on this page). For those of you who are hesitant to give Zoom a try, please give me a call and I'll show you how. It even works to participate by phone if you don't have a computer and camera.

Last month's speaker, Cynthia Stewart from the League of Women Voters, gave an excellent presentation on progressive revenue efforts in Olympia. It is an appalling fact that the 20% of Washington residents with the lowest incomes pay 17.8% of their income in state and local taxes, while the 1% with the highest incomes pay 3%. The good news is that the legislature is finally doing something about this. A 7% capital gains tax on stock and bond sales above \$250,000 just passed (real estate sales are excluded), which will help fund significant new tax credits for the lowest income residents of our state.

Cynthia will also be our speaker for our meeting on Tuesday, May 18th. Her topic this time will be transportation issues in our Puget Sound area. I'm really looking forward to this!

My sincere thanks go to all of our newly elected chapter officers. I especially want to thank past president Ellen Carmody, 2nd vice president and membership chair Colleen McGinn, and our treasurer and newsletter editor David Rader. The chapter would simply not exist without their years and years of hard work and dedication!

Finally, as retirees, many of us have been able to receive COVID vaccines. I am grateful that our younger loved ones now have increased access too.

Thanks, and see you at our next meeting,

Matt Groshong

Mgroshong1@gmail.com

206-678-5394

Treasurer's Report

Checking balance is \$12,028.58, after receiving \$809.56 from Olympia RPEC for April dues. Savings balance, \$5,058.35, and CD balance: \$3,623.94. One check was issued, making a \$150.00 contribution to Comite to assist in the annual May Day March.

There will be no annual budget this year because of the extreme uncertainty over the Covid restrictions – particularly if we will have in-person meetings, or if Razzi's is still available. Also still questionable is if we will have our annual Chapter 3 picnic. Also, it is unclear if we will be having live lobbying efforts in Olympia next year, or other state-wide activities. If you wish to be a part of these decisions, join our May virtual meeting, or contact us before the end of summer.

David Rader

2021 LEGISLATIVE SESSION OVER:

RPEC did well promoting bills and issues that were our top priorities. Here's a summary.

5021: Protecting active employees getting ready to retire. It prevented them from being penalized for being furloughed during the pandemic which would have reduced their retirement pensions by 5% through no fault of their own. **PASSED** and is on the Governor's desk.

5096: Taking a step toward repairing the tax system which had required the poorest to pay 6 to 7 times more as a percentage of their income than the wealthiest residents. **PASSED.**

Preserving the Medicare benefit at its current level so we would not have to pay more for our supplemental medical insurance purchased through PEBB. **DONE.**

Supporting a one time 1.5% COLA for PERS/TRS Plan 1: and put it in the final budget. It did not survive the final budget negotiations even though it was capped off at \$22.00 per month.

A big thanks to all those who called and emailed their state lawmakers during the session, especially those who took telephone tree lists to help spread

the word. We look forward to a larger member involvement in the next legislative session. Our efforts will now focus on contacting our members of Congress and US Senators on issues pertaining to Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security.

Any questions, call me at [206] 725-6294 or trefgrfrmr@aol.com

Colleen McGinn

RPEC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT:

State Legislative Update: The 2021 Legislative Session concluded on time on April 25th. The final budget preserved the PEBB Medicare Benefit, fully funded the employer contributions to the pension systems, and will enact a progressive tax on high-end capital gains for the first time ever. These achievements are due in no small part to the advocacy of retirees like you, so thank you for reaching out to your legislators. It has made a difference.

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.

The RPEC Legislative Committee and Executive Board will be working with our leaders, allies, and Legislative Champions to develop strategy to move a proposal for a substantive and consistent COLA in the upcoming 2022 session.

Monthly Post-Session Legislative Update Zoom

Call: During the post-session interim, we will have a monthly update on our Legislative priorities and activities on the 1st Wednesday of the month at 2:00 pm. Please join us on June 2nd for our first update. We will send an email reminder out as the date nears.

The Zoom login information will be the same each week. To join the weekly update calls via computer, tablet, or smart phone, go to <https://zoom.us/join>. You will need to enter the meeting ID: 828 6634 6713, and the passcode:

205507. Or, via telephone, dial 1-253-215-8782, meeting ID: 828 6634 6713, and passcode: 205507.

Leadership Training: Our virtual Leadership Training will be on Monday, June 14th from 10 AM - Noon. This event is designed to help provide Chapter leaders and those looking to get more involved in RPEC with the tools and resources they need to empower and engage their fellow retirees. All members are encouraged to attend the Leadership Training even if they are not chapter officers.

To RSVP for this event please visit:

<https://rpecwa.org/2021-leadership-training/>

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

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

Sincerely,



James Cockburn
RPEC Executive Director