



Retired Public Employees Council Chapter 37 – Lynnwood Area

Brenda Williams, President
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Bill Dehmer, Vice President
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Meeting Date: Thursday, March 7th, 2024

Meeting Time: 1:00 PM

Computer Login Information:

Phone Login Information:

Meeting Location:

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

Dial: (253) 215-8782

Mountlake Terrace Library

Meeting ID: 875 2765 8007

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23300 58th Ave W

Passcode: 108208

Phone Passcode: 108208

Mountlake Terrace, WA

98043

<u>Our February 2024 meeting will be in-person and by Zoom</u>

Come join us for an update on the legislative session. We have many bills we are following that will benefit our members.

You may also be the winner of a drawing for a \$50.00 gift card.

Brenda Williams, President Chapter 37

Chapter 37 February 1, 2024
Zoom Only Meeting

1:00: Call to order

Officers: Brenda Williams President, present; Bill Dehmer Vice President, present, Kathy Chapman Treasurer, present, Linda McCullough Secretary, excused.

Introduction of members and guests: Adrienne, Cheryl, Warren, Darlene.

Guest Speaker: Andrew Gutzmer and Elena Huizar from the Attorney General's office Fraud Division

Elena presented information on how to avoid scams. Scams are unsolicited contact, need urgent action, requests personal information, sets up unconventional payments, and does want you to report the contact to anyone else.

Scammers want your personal information and/or your money via wire or money transfers, gift cards, cryptocurrency, or fake online marketplaces. Scammers put pressure on you. Completely ignore them. Scammers work to get your trust and they are acting as an

imposter. Romance scams are one of the largest scams. If it is too good to be true, it probably is too good to be true.

For a text scam, report it by texting it to 7726.

For any concerns about scams, fraud, or suspicious activity, please notify AGs office at 800-551-4636.

The PowerPoint of this presentation will be available soon for any chapter members through Brenda or Bill.

Cheryl Moser District 1 Representative:

Cheryl presented a Powerpoint on strategic plan for RPEC.

With lack of a plan for 5 years, with RPEC struggling to keep some chapters going, with some chapters struggling to have good attendance at meetings, a strategic plan was developed and approved in November 2023 by the Executive Board. This is a dynamic process where there will be ongoing adaptations. The plan is located on the RPEC website. Work is being done on how to implement the plan. There will be virtual meetings in the future. Everyone will have input.

Minutes January meeting: Move to address in March meeting.

Minutes were inadvertently not included in the notice.

Treasurer Report Kathy Chapman: Bank statement not available so will address financial report at next meeting.

Will address budget information at a later date.

Membership Committee Darlene Johnstone

We have 214 members.

Ask for others to attend a membership committee meeting to discuss and make recommendations for increasing and retaining membership.

Legislative Committee:

Legislative day was January 22, 2024.

Short session. Sign in to support bills.

Continue to develop relationships with your elected officials.

Old Business: We are still looking for a secretary to assist with minutes for our meetings.

Looking for speakers for other meetings.

New Business:

Kathy Bill and I will be meeting Feb 20th to talk about our budget going forward. What expenses we may have to function as a chapter,

The upcoming convention, supplies, etc. This is just to get the basics and the information will be brought to the Chapter for approval.

Next meeting: We will not have a speaker for the March meeting and that meeting will be on March 7th at 1 pm at the Mountlake Terrace Library.

Bill will check into having the April 4th meeting at the Edmonds Waterfront Center (EWC) and possibly have a speaker to talk about programs offered at EWC.

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RPEC Website
RPECWA.ORG
1-800-562-6097 Toll Free
360-352-8262 Direct

Sign up for text alerts: Just text RPEC to 237263
This is great for quick legislative information.

If you would like an **emailed version of this notice** instead of paper, just give Brenda or Bill a call.

February 2024 Executive Director's Report

Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB) Update

In response to our budget proviso from the 2023 legislative session, the Health Care Authority (HCA) released the findings of a study highlighting healthcare plan options that would have the same excellent benefits available through the Uniform Medical Plan (UMP) Classic Medicare but would have more affordable premiums. The report will be discussed by the PEB Board at its annual retreat on February 1st. HCA is recommending the adoption of a new configuration of UMP Classic Medicare. The medical benefits will remain unchanged in the new configuration. The pharmacy benefit would shift to an employer-managed Plan D pharmacy plan that nearly mirrors what is currently available in UMP Classic Medicare. HCA estimates this change will save retirees upwards of \$200 per month on premium costs. The new configuration is more affordable because the Plan D pharmacy benefit would be eligible for federal pharmaceutical drug subsidies. HCA will be hosting three virtual public forums and one in-person public forum in February to give retirees an opportunity to share feedback on this proposed new configuration. Details about how to register for the public forums will be available at www.hca.wa.gov. Information will also be published in the weekly NewsFlash and at www.rpecwa.org.

State Advocacy

Legislative Day 2024: Eighty-three meetings were conducted with legislators and staff. All told, nearly 200 RPEC and WEA-R members participated. We appreciate the excellent meeting summaries provided by attendees. This information will be useful in the spring as RPEC's Political Action Committee (PAC) considers endorsements for those seeking reelection.

Ad Hoc COLA for PERS/TRS 1: Thanks to your efforts and meetings that we have also coordinated with top fiscal policy decision-makers, Substitute HB 1985 is poised for a House floor vote. The bill will provide a one-time 3% COLA for retirees vested in Plans 1 with a cap of \$110 per month. Please reach out to your legislators and urge them to continue to support this bill.

Slightly lower premiums for the priciest PEBB healthcare plans: Through our efforts with the Office of Fiscal Management and fiscal policy leaders, the Governor provided a \$10 increase to the Medicare Explicit Subsidy in his preliminary operating budget. The state provides the subsidy to lower monthly premium costs. Those who have chosen the more expensive healthcare plans will benefit from the increase. As budget negotiations begin in February, we will be advocating for this increase to remain in the final budget act.

Weekly Legislative Update & bill tracker: All members are invited to attend the weekly Legislative Update held each Friday via Zoom from 2-3 p.m. The bill tracker is also updated each Friday. The tracker and Zoom link for the Friday Legislative Update are available at www.rpecwa.org.

Federal Advocacy

Fiscal Commission Act of 2023 Moves to House Vote: Your federal retirement benefits are, again, at risk thanks to legislation that was approved in January in the House Budget Committee and is poised for a full House vote. The [Fiscal Commission Act of 2023 \(H.R. 5779\)](https://www.congress.gov/bills/117/5779) will create a 16-member fiscal commission to search for ways to reduce the national deficit and balance the national budget. Retiree and senior advocacy organizations fear the Commission will prioritize Social Security and Medicare funding cuts over other federal expenditures. RPEC is sending official communication to House delegation members urging them to protect Social Security and Medicare benefits. A detailed [position paper](#) about the proposed debt commission is available at <https://retiredamericans.org>.

Executive Board Approves Strategic Plan

The Executive Board approved RPEC's strategic plan at its November meeting. The plan will guide RPEC's priorities through 2027. The plan was informed by research conducted in spring 2023 by AFSCME Retirees and data gathered by the Council Office. A background document, summarizing the strategic plan goals, is available at www.rpecwa.org.

Upcoming Events

Visit www.rpecwa.org for a full calendar of Council Office and chapter meetings.

Mar. 1 – RPEC Convention Call
Mar. 1 – Legislative Update Call (2:00 pm)
Mar. 7 – Sine Die (end of Legislative Session)
Mar. 8 – Legislative Update Call (2:00 pm)
Mar. 14 – Healthcare Workgroup (3:30 pm)
Mar. 15 – Legislative Committee Meeting (10:00 am)
Mar. 21 – Public Employees Benefits Board (9:00 am)
Mar. 28 – Healthcare Workgroup (3:30 pm)