



# Retired Public Employees Council Chapter 11 – Walla Walla County

*Barry Jenkins, President*

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<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>Tuesday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024</b>
<b>Meeting Time:</b>	<b>11:30 AM</b>
<b>Meeting Place:</b>	<b>Yan's China Buffet</b>
<b>Meeting Address:</b>	<b>1618 Plaza Way, Walla Walla, WA 99362</b>

Spring is here, and you are invited to the April meeting of your **Walla Walla Chapter of the Retired Public Employees Council**. Come out in the nice weather and share some tasty lunch and stimulating conversation with your fellow retirees.

Our chapter's get-together is on **Tuesday, April 9<sup>th</sup> starting at 11:30 AM**. We will meet at **Yan's China Buffet, located next to Safeway at 1618 Plaza Way, Walla Walla**.

The program for April will be a presentation by a representative of the **YWCA**, who will bring us up to date on the agency's current programs for women and children.

If you would like to serve your local RPEC Chapter, please consider becoming our next Secretary. In the meantime, we will need to ask at each meeting for someone willing to take minutes for the President.

Guest speakers are always being recruited for our meetings. Suggestions for future programs are welcome.

## **NEWS OF YOUR CHAPTER:**

At our March meeting, we had a guest speaker from the **Friends of Children of Walla Walla**. Executive Director Scott Kasenga updated us on their latest activities. On the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Friends' mentoring service, they are partnering with Walla Walla schools, community members, and local college students to improve school attendance and learning. The organization recruits adults to be mentoring friends with individual kids, and runs school programs to help students feel connected to their schools and help them resist bullying.

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**Per our chapter's constitution, we will once again open nominations for our 2024-2025 officers at the April 9<sup>th</sup> meeting and vote for the officers. In the meantime, please consider if you would like to serve as an officer in our RPEC chapter. Plenty of help is available for any member choosing to accept a position in our chapter. Besides local current and past officers, the State RPEC Executive Board members are great resources with detailed information for all officers.**

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**Also, we will open nominations for Convention Delegates at the April meeting. The RPEC State Convention will be September 24<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>. Members can have their registration, hotel, food, and mileage reimbursed, so if you are interested, we can help you register. The Convention registration cutoff is June.**

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We especially enjoy new members coming to our meetings, so if that is you, please come and introduce yourself! Last month, in addition to many regular attendees, we welcomed member Gwen Gobel to our meeting. There is such a thing as a **free lunch** for new members at your first meeting.

Don't forget to invite other retired public employees that you know. If you get two friends to sign up, you can win a check for \$84 (the equivalent of annual membership dues)! *There is no limit on how many members one person can recruit or on how many \$84 checks you can earn!*

Questions? Call President Barry Jenkins at 509-529-6372 or 509-240-2844.

## **Governor Inslee Signs Plan 1 COLA Bill**

It's official. For the third year in a row, PERS 1 and TRS 1 retirees will receive a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA). On Tuesday, March 26, Governor Jay Inslee signed Substitute House Bill 1985, providing Plan 1 retirees with a one-time 3% COLA not to exceed \$110 per month. The COLA will be reflected in pension checks received at the end of July 2024.

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

### **Convention 2024, Sept. 24-26, Wenatchee Convention Center**

Are you interested in serving as a chapter delegate to RPEC's biennial Convention? You do not need to be an officer or chapter committee leader to attend. Any member in good standing is eligible to serve as delegate. If you are interested in being considered for your chapter's delegation to Convention, contact your chapter president. Delegates are chosen by election at a chapter meeting. If you are selected to represent your chapter, your Convention registration fee and lodging will be covered by your chapter. Guests may also attend at their own expense. The registration fee is \$150, which covers the Convention packet and all meals. The Convention hotel is the Coast Wenatchee. The RPEC rate is \$116.00 per night before taxes and fees. Visit [www.rpecwa.org](http://www.rpecwa.org) for more details or contact your chapter president.

### **Federal Advocacy**

**Call to action on The Fiscal Commission Act of 2023:** If you have not already done so, please join your fellow RPEC members and AFSCME Retiree chapters nationwide in urging Congress to oppose The Fiscal Commission Act of 2023 (H.R. 5779). If this legislation is approved, your federal benefits will be at risk. [The Fiscal Commission Act of 2023 \(H.R. 5779\)](#) 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) To Vote on Potential New Pharmacy Benefit, April 11**

On April 11, the PEB Board will act on a resolution that will change the pharmacy benefit for Uniform Medical Plan (UMP) Classic Medicare. RPEC's Legislative Committee supports this change, as it will lower monthly premiums for most plan subscribers. The medical benefits in the plan will remain unchanged. The new pharmacy benefit will continue to be administered by Moda to provide continuity of service and care for retirees. By making this plan more affordable, the new benefit, if adopted at the April PEB Board meeting, will help to ensure that an employer-managed

plan remains in the mix of healthcare plan options available to public sector retirees. Currently, all but two plans are privatized. Preserving traditional Medicare continues to be a key federal priority for RPEC, in addition to preserving these options for the public sector retirees in Washington. Members are encouraged to attend the April 11 meeting and offer comments during the Public Comment period. Visit [www.hca.wa.gov](http://www.hca.wa.gov) for more details.

### **State Advocacy**

Beginning this month, the Legislative Update Calls will be held monthly, the first Friday of each month. Please join us on April 5 from 2-3 p.m. Details are available at [www.rpecwa.org](http://www.rpecwa.org).

### **Council Welcomes New Team Member**

Jane Hewitt joined RPEC in mid-March as our new Finance and Operations Specialist. Jane brings more than 40 years of relevant work experience to RPEC. She is married with grandchildren, originally hails from Great Britain, and is an animal lover with three rescue pets. Jane can be reached at [jane.hewitt@rpecwa.org](mailto:jane.hewitt@rpecwa.org). Please give her a warm welcome to RPEC!

### **Upcoming Events**

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

- April 5 Legislative Update Call (2:00 p.m.)
- April 11 Public Employees Benefits Board (9:00 a.m.-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.)
- April 26 RPEC Staff retreat (10 a.m.-3 p.m.)
- May 3 Legislative Update Call (2:00 p.m.)
- May 6 Executive Board Meeting (9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.)
- May 7 Executive Board Strategic Plan Work Session (9:30-12:30 p.m.)
- May 8 Public Service Recognition Week (at Heritage Park, Olympia)
- May 9 Public Employees Benefits Board (9 a.m.-4 p.m.)
- May 9 Healthcare Workgroup (3:30 p.m.)