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Retired Public Employees Council
District 8 - Chapters 1, 10, and 12
Carol Dotlich, Executive Board District Representative
(253) 985-3280 – wfsecarol@comcast.net

Virtual Meeting Date:
Virtual Meeting Time:

Tuesday, August 23, 2022
10:00 AM – Noon

Computer Login Information

Go to www.zoom.us/join
Meeting ID: 821 4386 8824
Passcode: 948873

Phone Login Information

Dial: (253) 215-8782
Meeting ID: 821 4386 8824
Phone Passcode: 948873

Happy Summer to District 8 members (Chapters 1, 10, and 12).

Recognizing that our members are concerned about the new COVID variant, and that some of our members are unable to attend meetings in-person, I will host a virtual meeting through ZOOM.

We will be joined by a representative of the Consumer Protection Outreach and Education division of the Attorney General's office. They will arm us with the tools and information we need to protect ourselves from fraud.

Many of you have received a much needed cost of living adjustment on your last pension payment. Be sure to take a look.

Zoom Meeting Instructions: (Please don't throw them away). This is a fairly simple application to use so please don't shy away from it. Using ZOOM on these devices will allow you to see each other and talk together.

If you have a computer or smart phone or tablet, you may download the Zoom application for free from www.zoom.us/download. Once you've done that, on the day of the meeting you will double click on your Zoom icon. Click Join a meeting. You will be prompted from there to enter your information. Then you will be asked for the meeting ID. Once entered you will be asked for the passcode. Enter that and you will be in the waiting room. I am the host and will let you in. See the ID and passcode at the top of the page. Please join the meeting beginning at 9:45 AM so that I can let everyone in by 10:00 AM. If you are late, I will still let you in. I would like to be able to start on time as a courtesy to everyone.

During the meeting, you may see a reactions icon at the bottom of the screen. When you click that icon, you will have the option to raise and lower your hand. Please raise your hand if you wish to speak or ask a question. When you are finished, please lower your hand. You will also see a microphone icon. Pressing that will turn on your microphone so that we can all hear you. When you are finished speaking, press it again to mute yourself.

You may also join by phone if you prefer by dialing the phone number. When prompted, enter the meeting ID. When prompted, enter the passcode. See the ID

and passcode at the top of the page. On the phone, you may mute and unmute yourself by pressing *6. When you wish to be recognized to speak, press *9. Press it again when you are finished speaking. When you enter the meeting, I will ask your name. On the regular telephone you will not be able to see everyone's face and we can't see you. However, you will be able to hear everything that is happening.

Following these instructions will allow everyone to hear each other. Otherwise, the noise level will make it very difficult to hear one another.

A lot has been happening and RPEC has taken the lead in fighting to preserve our choices in healthcare through PEBB. As you may have heard, there is an effort at PEBB to limit our choice of healthcare plans. The cost of our Uniform Medical Plan is rising again and that affects many members, some of whom have had this plan for many years. There was discussion at PEBB on June 9 to close the Uniform Plan. Our Executive Director and our representative to PEBB have been leading the effort to preserve choice. Thank you to those of you who participated in the June 30 PEBB meeting. You really did make a difference. The vote to close the Uniform plan scheduled for June 30 did not happen. I will leave it to our Executive Director to continue to inform you on this issue through newsletters and the meetings she is able to attend.

Thank you to our membership for voting in the August primary. All elections are important but considering what is happening in our country, I know we all share a lot of concerns. I am confident that you understand the importance of your vote.

The PERS1/TRS1 cost of living adjustment would not have occurred without the hard work of our legislative friends as well as our staff and members. They are the only retirement plans without automatic COLAs. We continue our work to remedy that.

Our Executive Director Laurie Weidner continues to do a great job for us and I am so grateful for her strategic insight and vision for our future. She was at our last in-person District meeting so some of you were able to meet her. She is a work horse, putting in long hours for us. She is also very effective. We are all fortunate to have her so if and when you call her or the other staff members, please tell them thank you. They are a great crew and well deserve our thanks.

It is my sincere hope that those of you who have been unable to participate in the few in person meetings we have had this year, will join us in this virtual meeting. You are vital to this District, and we are so glad that you share membership with us. Come boldly with me into this new era of virtual meetings. You will master it quickly and I am always available to help you with it through practice sessions if you like in advance of the meeting. My phone number is (253) 985-3280.

Carol Dotlich
President, Chapter 12
RPEC Executive Board, District 8

Executive Director's Report

Dear RPEC Members:

This is a busy season for our organization. Here's a recap of our key activities and news.

Public Employees' Benefits Board (PEBB) update

Last month, I reported about our collective landslide victory to stop the vote on a resolution that would have eliminated the UMP Classic Medicare plan for more than 53,000 state retirees. This achievement and our work going forward with PEBB is significant for all RPEC members – regardless of whether this personally impacts you. And here's why ... Traditional Medicare (government, self-insured Medicare plans) are under attack here in Washington and at the federal level. If this resolution had succeeded, it would have limited health care plan choice and eliminated the only government self-insured comprehensive plan available in Washington for state retirees.

RPEC opposes the privatization of Medicare. We will continue to fight to keep traditional Medicare options available to all retirees. Having health care choices and preserving Medicare are key legislative priorities for RPEC and all Plan 1, 2 and 3 members.

RPEC's Opposition Campaign Results

- More than 100 emails from RPEC & the PEBB Medicare Coalition to the Health Care Authority and PEBB
- Meetings with the Governor's staff and key legislators
- More than 300 retirees protesting at the virtual meeting on June 30
- Front-page story in the *Olympian*
- Leadership of the PEBB Medicare Coalition that will shape the state's first health care listening sessions with retirees to inform future health care plan choices

Here are a few highlights of our recent achievements and the work we have underway:

- **Expand the PEBB Medicare Coalition:** RPEC created and is leading a coalition of partners around the state who stand with us in opposing the privatization of Medicare. The coalition includes: the Washington Education Association-Retired (WEA-R), Washington State Senior Citizen's Lobby, Washington State Labor Council, Washington Federation of State Employees (AFSCME Council 28), American Federation of Teachers-Washington (AFT-WA and AFT-WA Retired), Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action (PSARA), Healthcare Is A Human Right, Social Security Works Washington, and the Washington State Alliance of Retired Americans (WSARA). We aim to expand the coalition to include additional partners. If you have suggestions, please email me at laurie.weidner@rpecwa.org.
- **Co-construct public engagement opportunities:** Through our leadership of the PEBB Medicare Coalition, we are convening discussions with Health Care Authority (HCA) staff about a transparent public engagement process to inform health care plan choices for retirees. We envision working collaboratively with HCA staff to co-construct listening sessions with our members. We have also requested that PEBB hold additional public forums, which we hope to help shape. The public forums will give retirees opportunities to speak to the features of the UMP Classic Medicare Plan that they value most, describe the features they want/need in health care plans, and address concerns about the privatized options that are currently available.
- **Unanimous passage of a WSLC Resolution:** RPEC, in concert with the PEBB Medicare Coalition, crafted a resolution for consideration at last month's Washington State Labor Council (WSLC) Constitutional Convention. The resolution called for labor partners to join with us in our efforts to sustain the UMP Classic Medicare Plan, oppose the privatization of Medicare, and urge the state to explore the availability

of more government self-insured health care options. RPEC President Kandy Kraig led the discussion before the assembly about the resolution's merit and importance to state retirees. Members of the PEBB Medicare Coalition joined President Kraig by speaking in favor of the resolution. The resolution passed unanimously on July 21, 2022.

OIC Credit Score Ruling update

On July 29th, the Thurston County Superior Court overturned a ruling by the Office of the Insurance Commission (OIC) that would have prohibited insurance companies from using credit scores to set premium rates for auto, home, life, and renter's insurance policies. This ruling would have adversely impacted seniors who often have high credit scores, and therefore benefit from lower insurance premiums calculated using credit scores. At the May Executive Board meeting, the Board approved a resolution, submitted by Chapter 13, opposing this ruling.

President Kandy Kraig, RPEC member Nancy Heley and I will be meeting with OIC staff this month. We plan to discuss a wide range of topics including this ruling, our position, and whether OIC will seek an appeal.

Membership at a 20-year high

The response to our annual statewide new member mailing was significant, and now RPEC's membership is at a 20-year high. All chapters have received their new member lists. Please take the time to call or email your new members to welcome them to your chapter and RPEC.

Monthly Leadership Call – August 19

With the influx of new members joining RPEC this summer, the August Monthly Leadership Call will focus on cultivating new members to be more active in chapter activities. The Zoom link and other details are available on the Council calendar at www.rpecwa.org.

Free annual RPEC membership

Members around the state are beginning to recruit former co-workers and friends to join RPEC through the Recruit 2 member-to-member campaign. Since this membership campaign kicked off in May, 11 new members have joined the organization. Susan Herring, Ch 2, and RPEC Treasurer Clair Olivers, Ch 6, have each recruited two new members since May. Ch 2 leads the recruiting effort with four new members, but Ch 6 and Ch 16 are close behind. How many new members can your chapter recruit?

For every two new members you recruit, you will receive a check for \$84! To get credit, your name must appear in the "Recruited by" field on the new members' membership applications. Associate members do not count until they become full dues-paying members. Checks will only be issued to current members in good standing. If you recruit just two new members, your annual membership in RPEC will be free for a year!

Convention update

All amendments and resolutions for Convention are due to the Council Office on or before August 13th. Please email them to Derek VanSpoor at derek.vanspoor@rpecwa.org.

PAC fund-raiser

RPEC will host a fund-raiser at Convention, September 27-29, to bolster contributions to our Political Action Committee (PAC). Chapters and individual members are encouraged to donate items, from original artwork and one-of-a-kind items to excursions, experiences, and gift baskets. All proceeds support the PAC for campaign contributions to endorsed state and federal candidates. Please inform your chapter president if you have items to

donate. Every chapter is responsible for transporting their donated items to the Convention in Wenatchee.

WSLC Adopts Permanent Plan 1 COLA resolution

At the Washington State Labor Council (WSLC) Constitutional Convention in July, the assembly voted unanimously to support our resolution calling for a permanent Cost of Living (COLA) adjustment for Plan 1 retirees. President Kandy Kraig introduced the resolution, emphasizing that a permanent COLA is vital to the financial security of Plan 1 retirees.

Happy birthday, Medicare!

On July 30, Medicare and Medicaid celebrated their 57th birthdays. Strengthening and protecting Medicare are among RPEC's top legislative priorities. Our work with PEBB and our advocacy efforts to oppose the privatization of Medicare are two of the ways that RPEC is currently fighting to protect health care affordability for all members.

AFSCME Free Online College Benefit Suspended For Now

We have been notified by the AFSCME Retiree Council that the Free College benefit, afforded to AFSCME Retiree Council chapters including RPEC, has been challenged by the U.S. Department of Education. AFSCME will continue to urge the Department to support the continuation of this program.

In the meantime, the U.S. Department of Education has confirmed that the Free College partners (Eastern Gateway Community College and Central State University) may continue to enroll new and existing students for the fall semester. New and continuing students should contact these institutions about their enrollment status. If you have questions, please contact the AFSCME Retiree Council at www.afscme.org/about/retirees.

Important Dates

Visit the RPEC website at www.rpecwa.org for a full calendar of Council and chapter events and meetings. All meetings noted are virtual via Zoom except for Convention.

August 13: Resolution/amendment submittal deadline for Convention

August 18: PAC meeting

August 19: Monthly Leadership Call (chapter leaders and all those interested)

August 24: Executive Board meeting

Sept. 23: Legislative Committee meeting

Sept 27-29: RPEC Convention (in-person, Wenatchee)

Oct. 5: Monthly Legislative Update Call

Oct. 21: Monthly Leadership Call (chapter leaders and all those interested)

Oct. 24: Finance Committee meeting

Oct 27: Membership Committee meeting

Oct. 28: Legislative Committee meeting

Nov.14: Executive Board meeting

Best,
Laurie