

THE ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED CONSERVATIONISTS

Meeting of April 1, 2015 held at Imperial Garden, 2039 Allen Blvd., Middleton

ARC President Laurel Steffes called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

52 people were in attendance. The cost of the meal was \$14.00 for the Chinese Buffet served family style: 5 main dishes with rice, egg rolls and tea.

A moment of silence was observed for friends and family who have passed and for our troops who are serving in harm's way.

The March minutes were read and approved.

Financial Report

Paid \$650.00 to Imperial Garden for meals, tax and gratuity (from cash collected.)

Opening balance on April 1 for Savings is \$223.33 and Checking is \$175.10.
Dividend on Savings account in April is \$.02.

Activity on Checking account for April (*draft*):

DEPOSITS: \$78.00 proceeds from lunch.

EXPENDITURES: \$6.28 to Barb Wolf – reimbursement for copies (handouts about health insurance and 2015 meeting schedules)

Closing balance on May 1 for Savings is \$223.35 and Checking is \$

Guests

- *Sue Bangert* – Sue retired in January 2015 from her position as DNR's Deputy Division Administrator of Air, Waste and Remediation. In her 35 years of service to the state, she also held positions as a wastewater engineer, unit leader and the director of the Bureau of Waste.
- *Mike Hammers* – Mike worked for DNR for 35 years. He was with the Bureau of Water Quality, wastewater section before his retirement in January 2015.
- *Paul Heinen* – Paul held the position of policy advisor for 6 DNR Secretaries. He started his career as a legislative liaison in 1983. Since retiring in May 2014, Paul has been working for The Nature Conservancy as their government relations director.

"Frank-n-Miller Report"

Ed Frank said final annuity adjustments are 2.9% for Core and 2.0% for Variable. The rates are effective May 1, 2015. In calculating both the annuity adjustments for the Core Fund and Variable Fund, a 5.0% assumed investment return is used to fund the original benefit. Only returns in excess of 5.0% can produce an increase in a retiree's annuity. Returns below 5.0% can result in a negative adjustment, depending on other factors such as past returns. Preliminary 2015 performance as of March 31, 2015 is Core 2.1% and Variable 2.2%.

The Coalition of Annuitants annual meeting is May 19 at American Family HQ, east side of Madison. Register at the COA website if you'd like to attend. You can find a link to COA on the ARC website.

In recent news, it's reported that California workers may lose promised benefits, and the Illinois Attorney General is trying to make a case for reducing retiree benefits. In Wisconsin, investment earnings make up 77% of WRS revenues. With lower returns, WRS is moving toward a fixed benefit. Ed said there's nothing to worry about in the near future, but it bears close monitoring. ETF paid \$4.4 billion in retirement benefits to retirees and beneficiaries last year.

President Steffes handed out an informational sheet about possible changes to health care benefits. Here are a few of the proposed changes for the health insurance program for 2016. See ETF website for more details.

- Introduce a deductible and increase the maximum out of pocket for the Uniform Benefits offering
- Increase the deductible and maximum out of pocket for the Standard Plan
- Increase the health savings account contribution for the high deductible health plan
- Change office visits from coinsurance to a copay
- Keep generic drugs affordable (\$5 copay) and shift to coinsurance for brand drugs
- Continue to self-insure the Standard Plan and State Maintenance Plan, as well as pharmacy and dental benefits
- Investigate premium-based incentives for participation in the Well Wisconsin Program
- Establish uniform metrics to measure health plan performance

Old Business

Budget Bill impacts to DNR - President Steffes sent a letter to all 120 legislators stating ARC's position on items in the budget bill, namely 1) opposing change to the status of Natural Resources Board from policy-making to advisory, 2) opposing the moratorium on Stewardship spending, and 3) maintaining all positions in Science Services. She received 5 personal responses, the rest were auto-replies thanking her for the input.

Paul Heinen commented that the tide is turning on Stewardship cuts, there likely will be fewer cuts to the Science Services staff than proposed, and there isn't support to change the status of the NRB.

ARC Treasury – Last month we considered some ideas that would increase the amount in the treasury to make sure we could cover all of our recurring costs. After a short discussion on the 4 main proposals, John Hagman made a motion that we temporarily increase the add-on at meetings from \$1 to \$2, Jim Miller seconded. Voice vote in favor. Ed Frank made a motion to increase the lifetime dues from \$2 to \$5. Jim Miller seconded. Voice vote in favor. The other two ideas discussed were having a collection jar at meetings for voluntary contributions, and creating a Memorial Fund when a member passes away. Since these initiatives would be voluntary, the group felt it didn't require a vote. Bruce Chevis suggested we make the amount contributed to Natural Resource Foundation for memorials \$50, instead of \$75. George Mickelson seconded. Voice vote was no, contribution will remain at \$75. Changes will be implemented starting with the June 2015 meeting.

New Business

None.

Deaths and Illnesses

Barbara Folz, wife of Dan Folz (DNR Green Bay) passed away on March 4.

Doris Brinson, mother of member Diane Brinson passed away on March 28.

Ruby Brown, DNR Finance, passed away.

Birthdays

In the month of April, Sheree VandeBrink, Mary Ellen Lins, Linda Netzer have birthdays. Al Prey turned 80 and Jim Amundsen is 83. John and Brenda Hagman celebrated their 40th anniversary with a trip to Mexico, the Nigl's celebrated their 56th wedding anniversary.

Trips

Chuck Pils was in Cuba on a Camaguey sister city mission. He traveled with the Wibles and Weisners. It was a great time that included birding, visits to national parks and lots of music. Roger Larsen was in Arizona. He also stopped in Kearney, Nebraska and saw thousands of Sandhill cranes. Barb Wolf was in Banff, Alberta skiing.

In February, the southern ARC contingent had their annual luncheon in Bonita Springs, Florida.

Jokes

Rudy Nigl and Rick Kavelage shared jokes.

Meeting adjourned at 1:30 pm.