

National Association of Federal Retirees
North Island – John Finn Branch
General Meeting
Westerly Hotel – 08 June 2016

The meeting was called to order at 1300 hours by the President, Bill Turnbull.

Margaret Crites led the singing of O Canada.

Bill welcomed three first time attendees to the luncheon meeting.

Bill introduced our guest speaker, Bruce Ronayne, Executive Director Intake & Monitoring, Office of the BC Seniors' Advocate, and Bob Willis, our Provincial Advocacy Officer.

Agenda and Minutes

The agenda was approved as presented.

Moved by Serge, seconded by Cecile that the 11 March 2016 minutes be approved. Carried.

Committee Reports:

Treasurer: Serge reported that as of 31 May 2016, the branch savings and cash accounts totaled \$48,673.67. Income for the period 01 January to 31 May 2016 was \$7,554.60 and expenses were \$5,510.59, resulting in a surplus of \$2,044.01. Serge moved that the financial statement be accepted as presented; seconded by Mary Anne Stagg. Carried.

Membership: Steve Bunyan reported there are 1452 households with 725 Single and 727 Double memberships for a total of 2,179 members. The numbers are down slightly from March because some of the members who pay by cash have allowed their memberships to lapse. Steve will reactivate them once the dues are paid.

Newsletter: Kevin was absent. Bill reported that about 680 hard copies of the newsletter were mailed and another 750 copies e-mailed via our website. About half of them showed as having been opened. The National website is going to offer an e-mail facility, but it is not working yet.

Benefits: Clint Halfkenny reported things are very quiet. He has Estate Documents available at a cost of \$3.00.

Programs: Cecile Turnbull thanked the staff for a good lunch and the members attending also applauded their efforts.

The Christmas tickets are available today and will also be at the September luncheon. They are \$20.00 each and arrangements can also be made with Cecile or Bill to pick them up at their house after 15 November. There will be the usual wine/chocolate/ cookies prizes and Cecile is working on another big door prize such as the one we had last year.

Communications: Nil

Welfare: Deb Yelf reported that we have lost 13 members since the March meeting. We also have a member in hospital recovering from a spinal injury and a stroke, another is doing quite well at home also recovering from a spinal injury and another member is quite ill suffering from dementia. Deb contacts any caregivers to let them know that we are aware of what they are going through and offering our help if they give us a call.

Telephone: Norma Dean was absent to be with her husband. Cecile thanked the telephoners for getting the word out and said we could still use more volunteers and not just as telephoners. Advising our members about the luncheons through e-mail messages is being considered for next year. More to follow.

Cecile also noted that our executive is pretty lean and we have members with some really good skills from their jobs. As there are several executive members who would like to retire, please come to an executive meeting, learn what is required and then let Bill or Cecile know if you are interested in helping, in any capacity.

History: Dale Dean's surgery was not a complete success and he is presently undergoing radiation treatment in Victoria.

NEW BUSINESS:

Bill reviewed some of the things that have been happening in NAFR over the past few months. Members may recall that less than a year ago the Association at the National level was in a state of disarray with no CEO, no President and no Vice President

A new CEO, Simon Coakeley, has now been hired. Bill wrote about his qualifications in the June newsletter and played his video at the meeting. The Board of Directors also nominated and elected one of their members, Konrad von Finckenstein, as Chairman. He has been acting as President, with powers of the President and is running for NAFR President along with Jean-Guy Soulière at the AAM in June in Ottawa.

Some people find Konrad a little harsh. He was a Federal judge, was Chairman of the CRTC, and has travelled in high places. One of the things he is very outspoken about is the fact that we have managed to get ourselves into a deficit financial position and something has to be done about it. He feels it could be resolved by approaching it from both ends: (a) a dues increase to bail us out, and (b) the implementation of cost control measures. He has instructed the new CEO to put something in place to get a handle on costs. He is also quite outspoken about the need to recruit more people into the NAFR organization who have public sector experience.

One of the things that contributed to the shortfall was the unanticipated legal challenge to the government over the change to health care plan contributions. It is felt that Konrad still thinks the line in the sand message is appropriate; however, National office has since scaled back their ambitions. All they want now is a ruling from a judge saying that what the government did was wrong. They will settle for that and do not want any money back. It is hedging against a possible desire by a future government to make further changes, including to our pensions.

The current Minister of Finance has spoken publically about the demise of generous defined benefit pensions and the need to move to defined contribution plans. There is a need to make sure politicians realize that they must keep their promises. It is one thing to renegotiate a compensation package with people who are still working and are represented by Unions, but it is something else to make after-the-fact changes for people who are retired and don't have that bargaining power, as happened in New Brunswick. So there is still work to be done.

Possibly one way we have managed to get ourselves into hot water financially is by increasing the AAM meetings in Ottawa from one every three years at a cost of about \$250,000 to, by virtue of the 'not for profit' legislation that we work under, one every year at a cost of about \$500,000 per meeting. This is not really affordable. Since the business part of the meetings only lasts about 30 minutes, it could be done over the internet and Bill feels a mechanism could be put in place to handle that.

Guest Speaker. Bill turned the meeting over to Bruce Ronayne from the office of the BC Seniors' Advocate, Isobel McKenzie. He has a background in investigations from his time with the Ombudsperson's Office and spoke briefly on some major investigations on senior care he carried out. He also provided information on a few of the demographics, the kinds of housing BC seniors live in and a breakdown on the types of income sources seniors are living with as seniors. He also listed some of the issues currently being investigated by his office.

Bill thanked him for his informative presentation and introduced Bob Willis from the Provincial Advocacy Office. Bob spoke on our newest National preferred partner, Hearing Life, which is located in Nanaimo. They are offering NAFR members free exams, 25 Air Miles and a 10% discount.

The 50/50 draw winners were John Davis, Kathi Brown and Gord Diduck.

The door prize winner was Bob Mortimer.

Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 1435 hours.

Edith Kelly, Secretary

Bill Turnbull, President