

**VENTURA COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
RETIREES' ASSOCIATION**

**MINUTES
Annual General Meeting
March 11, 2020, 1:00 p.m.**

**Wright Event Center at Ventura College
57 Day Road, Ventura, CA**

1. Call to Order

Preliminaries: Signup sheet, Agenda, Visitors, Facilities

The twenty-sixth Annual General Meeting of the VCCCD Retirees' Association was called to order at 1:08 p.m. by President Rene Rodriguez. Rene welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the Annual meeting. He asked everyone to be sure and sign the sign-in sheet and to make sure they picked up the agenda and attachments for today's meeting.

(Note: This meeting was held prior to the "shelter at home" order issued by the State of California and the County of Ventura. The news of the spreading of the Coronavirus in California and nationwide had just begun and it was felt that the information to be discussed at this meeting was especially important and that retirees needed to be informed as soon as possible. Therefore, in lieu of cancelling the meeting, preventative measures were taken by providing hand-sanitizer for attendees at the check-in table and gloves were used to set out the refreshments.)

2. Welcoming Remarks by Ventura College President

Rene then introduced VC President, Dr. Kim Hoffmans. Dr. Hoffmans welcomed the retirees by saying that she was happy to be able to attend the meeting after all. She had not expected to attend our meeting due to a conference that was already scheduled. However, due to Coronavirus concerns her conference had been cancelled. Dr. Hoffmans stated that this year Ventura College will be celebrating its 95th Anniversary and that celebrations are in the planning and hopefully retirees will attend. Dr. Hoffmans brought two gifts that she gave away. The first item was a calendar/notebook and was awarded to the retiree who was the first to arrive for the meeting. MoDean McCullough, who drove in this morning all the way from Palm Desert, was the winner. The second was an attractive insulated water bottle awarded to the person who had a birthday near or the same as hers, May 29. Jim Merrill, who had the same birthday, was the winner.

3. Approval of Minutes and Treasurer's Report

a. The Minutes from the 2019 Annual General Meeting prepared by Marie Soo Hoo, secretary, were presented for review and approval. It was moved by John Woolley and seconded by Jesus "Chuy" Gonzales, that the Minutes be approved as presented. The motion was unanimously approved by those in attendance.

b. The Treasurer's Report for the period March 20, 2019 – March 11, 2020, prepared by Pat Gage, treasurer, was presented for review. In the General Fund her report reflected a balance on hand of \$11,141.06 as of March 20, 2019. The report further reflected annual expenses totaling \$3,326.51 and an annual income of \$5,456. The balance on hand as of March 11, 2020 was reflected as \$13,270.55. In the Legal Fund the balance on hand was \$24,000. Annual expenses were reflected at \$260 for Attorney Fees. There was no income reflected in this fund. This left a balance on hand of \$23,740. The report also reflected current assets in the form of 12,000 Forever Stamps with a total of 2,300 stamps used during the year. This leaves a balance on hand of 9,700.

4. Membership Committee Report

Joy Kobayashi, Membership Committee Chair, reported a total of 1,083 members in the Association. Of that total 725 are active and 358 have passed. Joy also reminded those in attendance of the dues increase, \$20 annual and \$200 lifetime, that becomes effective July 1, 2020. Joy also informed everyone that half* of the dues amount will be put into the Legal Fund to support legal fees anticipated by current health benefits issue with the District.

*[Review of the approved proposal revealed the allocation of dues payments to be as follows: (not half as stated)

Annual Membership: \$15 to the Operating Fund; \$5 to the Legal Fund

Lifetime Membership: \$150 to the Operating Fund; \$50 to the Legal Fund]

5. Opening Remarks by President Rene Rodriguez

Rene Rodriguez introduced the current members of the Executive Board. Starting with Harry Culotta, Immediate Past President and Newsletter Editor (14 years), John Woolley, Vice President (5 years), Marie Soo Hoo, Secretary (10 years), Pat Gage, Treasurer (10 years), Gary Johnson, Chair, Benefits Committee (18 years), Larry Manson, Chair, Educational Issues Committee (8 years), Joy Kobayashi, Chair, Membership Committee (2 years). Each member gave a brief description of their positions, years of service, and their previous work locations within the District. Rene also commented about the website and the blog as well as letting everyone know that Carmen Guerrero has begun assisting him with the website and is now the blogmaster.

Rene explained that the purpose of today's meeting is to answer any questions that may have come up since the February 5th meeting that was held to inform Retirees' of the District's Proposal to change benefit health providers from Anthem Blue Cross to CalPERS for employees and retirees. He also informed the attendees that there was a formal request made to meet at a special meeting with the Board of Trustees to allow the leadership of the VCCCDRA let them know what issues, concerns and other pertinent information they have discovered about the CalPERS plans.

6. Business Action Items

a. Report by Nominating Committee Chair: John Woolley

The positions of secretary and treasurer were both open to be filled this year for two-year terms. John commented that both incumbents had indicated they were willing to continue serving. There were no other nominations from the floor.

b. Elections

i. Secretary – Marie Soo Hoo was nominated for reelection. It was moved by Lynn Fauth that nominations be closed, and the motion was 2nd by Bill Thieman. The motion to approve Marie Soo Hoo as secretary of the VCCCDRA, effective July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2022, was unanimously approved by those present.

ii. Treasurer – Pat Gage was nominated for reelection. It was moved by Lynn Fauth that nominations be closed, and the motion was 2nd by Al Miller. The motion to approve Pat Gage as treasurer of the VCCCDRA, effective as of July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2022, was unanimously approved by those present.

At the conclusion of the elections and prior to the start of the Main Program, Carolyn Dorrance asked about having an amendment to the current By-Laws to add two (2) At-Large Members to the Executive Board. Rene asked that if Carolyn would write up the amendment and send it to the Executive Board, they would take it under consideration for discussion and if recommended it would be presented at next year's Annual General meeting for approval.

7. Panel on District CalPERS Health Plans Proposal

Rene informed the attendees that for this year's meeting it had been decided not to have a Keynote Speaker as in previous years. Instead, he stated, that it was felt best to continue the discussion of the District's benefit proposal.

At this point Rene turned the meeting over to Gary Johnson to serve as moderator for the panel. Besides Gary, the panel included Marta Freixas and Rene Rodriguez.

Gary provided an overview to the attendees of what has transpired over the past few months regarding the District's proposal to change to CalPERS to provide health benefits for employees and retirees. Without this change, the current plan will cost \$25,000/year for classified employees and \$22,000/year for academic employees. The faculty are currently in mediation with the District and are opposed to CalPERS.

Gary noted the District's letter to retirees informing them of a possible change in benefits was sent without the knowledge of the Board of Trustees.

He also reviewed the employee contracts language over the years and how that has changed as a result of negotiations. He noted for many years faculty and classified contract language provided the same benefits for both groups, however, that changed several years ago.

Gary also stated that he has been in contact with Tom Sharpe, the attorney that handled the Settlement Agreement for the VCCCDRA to ask for answers to our questions on this current issue and if we have a case for a lawsuit at this time. Gary stated that Tier 1 employees are not required to enroll in Medicare per the contract language and CalPERS would require all retirees to enroll. He hopes to get a response from him soon. He also recently met with Patricia Parham and has obtained the name and number of a labor attorney to contact if he does not hear back from the other.

Gary acknowledged his appreciation for the assistance of Marta Freixas who has been reviewing the CalPERS plans in detail and developed the spreadsheets that have provided a comparison of the proposed plans and the current Anthem Blue Cross plan.

Gary and Marta reviewed the spreadsheets and other information provided and answered questions from the audience throughout the meeting. Marta made a point of stating that she felt those eligible for Medicare coverage would be in better shape and she would recommend that anyone who becomes eligible should enroll in Medicare. As part of her presentation, Marta displayed two Powerpoint visuals that read as follows:

1. If you have Medicare A and B,
 - CalPERS will be the supplementary insurance
 - If Medicare doesn't pay for a service, CalPERS won't either,
 - Best thing to ask a healthcare provider: "Are you a Medicare provider, and do you accept Medicare assignment?"

2. If you don't have Medicare A and B,
 - CalPERS will be the primary insurance,
 - There is no out-of-pocket maximum if you use non-participating providers,
 - There are many procedures for which you will have to get pre-approval or for which there are restrictions on how much CalPERS will pay,
 - Best thing to ask a healthcare provider: "Are you a Blue Cross provider, and is this procedure and facility covered?"

Marta also stated that CalPERS is a self-funded plan and is not an actual insurance company that is covered by State law in California.

Gary returned to the podium to report that Mt. San Antonio College classified employees have left the CalPERS health plan because: (1) it's too expensive, and (2) they have no voice in how claims are handled.

In response to a question, Rene displayed the Association's e-mail address, vcccdra@gmail.com as the address to copy any messages that retirees send to the Board of Trustees. He also noted that the Association may sue any union that agrees to break previous collective bargaining agreements.

After some discussion, the following motion was made by Al Miller and seconded by Bill Thieman:

To authorize the Executive Board to begin a campaign for a "war chest" of funds for the exploration of legal action against the District based on the proposed CalPERS plans and to file legal action against imposing an inferior benefits plan on the Retiree group.

Motion passed by a majority vote of the membership present.

Gary continued to comment that what we are facing is overwhelming and difficult to understand at all as we are all affected differently. The imposition of CalPERS on the employee groups is, in essence, a union busting move. The Unions will no longer have the power to negotiate benefits, only salaries will be negotiable and that does not affect the retirees. He also assured everyone that detailed tracking of the funds donated will be kept in the Legal Fund as has been done in the past.

At this point Ruth Hemming made the following motion and it was seconded by Ana Maria Valle Villa:

That the members authorize the Executive Board to act on its behalf as it sees fit regarding its benefits.

Motion passed by a majority vote of the membership present.

8. Announcements

There were no further announcements.

9. Adjournment

Rene thanked everyone for attending the meeting. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Marie Soo Hoo
Secretary

4/20/2020;4/27/20;5/3/20;5/6/20-Apprvd-3-17-21