

MINUTES OF THE FALL REGIONAL MEETING
EASTERN MANITOBA BRANCH #91
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FEDERAL RETIREES
Alliance Church, Pinawa, MB
1:00 PM, Thursday October 13, 2016

1. **Call to Order**

Peter Baumgartner called the business meeting to order at 1.03 p.m. The meeting was held at the Alliance Church with 77 members and one guest present.

2. **Additions to the Agenda**

No additions to the Agenda were requested.

Motion: That the agenda be accepted. Moved by Elmer Voelpel, and seconded by Harley Davidson. **Motion was carried.**

3. **Introduction and welcome to the Guests**

Peter first thanked the Alliance Church for providing an excellent lunch. He then introduced John Bjore, Advocacy Program Officer, and welcomed him to our meeting.

4. **Minutes of the April 14, 2016 Board Annual Meeting**

Secretary, Kay Harvey, provided a summary of the meeting.

Motion: That the minutes be accepted. Moved by Kay Harvey, and seconded by Cindy Litke. **Motion was carried.**

5. **Business Arising from the Minutes.**

There was no business arising from the minutes.

6. **Guest Presentations**

6.1. John Bjore

John updated the members regarding changes in the Advocacy program. His position was previously called a Regional Advocacy Officer but now there are to be nine Advocacy Program Officers across Canada. The closest Officer for Manitoba is now located in Saskatoon. He then commented on the Seniors Ministry that has been proposed. He considers that this would be very good for the Association members in Manitoba. His job is to make sure that the message is always consistent and clear when any advocacy work is done.

John informed us of the status of the law suit against the Federal Government. The hearing is slated for early November and the main thrust is that the Association would like the government to acknowledge that their rights were violated when terms were changed without any consultation. The Association wants to ensure that any future changes are done by negotiation with no unilateral decisions by the government.

He talked about the new communications system (e-messaging) that is being introduced at the National Office that is designed to deliver information directly to members. Members need to go onto the website (federalretirees.ca) and make sure that their email is entered there to ensure receipt of information.

He then discussed a possible new mentoring program in partnership with the Treasury Board. When a member enters their email address onto the website, if that member has any particular specialized knowledge or expertise then the government would like to be able to use that

knowledge so they could be called upon to assist in certain instances, if they are willing. John considered this a very good idea as many seniors have specialized knowledge.

He noted that the new CEO, Simon Coakeley, is settling into his new position and there is also a new director of Marketing and Communications who is responsible for the Advocacy program. There has been a lot of restructuring and reorganizing.

The new fee structure has been introduced to halt a cash flow problem brought about partly because things cost more and a lot of money has been spent hiring new staff. Other ways of saving have included no longer making the stickers members could put on the back of their cars – the savings was \$100,000, so substantial. The Association would like to use their money to communicate simply and directly and to advocate more effectively.

In response to a question from the floor regarding the proposed Seniors Ministry he said the Association policy is to propose and promote enhanced CPP. He considers pension plans to be under attack right now. Low interest rates cause problems for companies when there is a fixed plan. Some companies want to give their employees whatever their funds are worth at the time they retire regardless of their value or what was initially paid in. Many funds are almost worthless at present so we need to ensure that pensions are properly funded. We need an anti-poverty strategy for all Canadians, young and old.

Another question from the floor asked “How safe is CPP?” John considers that it is not safe right now, but politicians make the laws so they can do what they wish. Investment of pension funds is done by very capable people and the rate of return over recent years has been much higher than the average interest rate. He pointed out that this is why the Association needs to be actively advocating and making sure our opinions are known where it matters.

7. Officers Reports

7.1. President’s Report

Peter Baumgartner opened by reminding the members to make sure they use the companies who are partners of the Association, especially the travel partners.

He went on to talk about how the Branch was started in April 1993. Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL) decided to change the benefits so a group of employees challenged the company and joined the Public Service Health Care Plan (PSHCP). He noted it had been very worthwhile, especially if there was a need for very expensive drugs. He also pointed out that since pension plans were established they have always been honoured, but the health care plan has been threatened. The government increased the member contribution from 25% to 50% without any consultation, which made the Association angry. It was not the increase in payment that caused the anger because it is understood that the cost of medical coverage is increasing, but the unilateral decision. Challenging this in court is expensive, mainly due to lawyers’ fees. Peter noted that there is a lot of information regarding the court challenge on the website for anyone interested in learning more.

Peter thanked Chuck Vandergraaf for all his work for the Branch in his five years as President.

He provided a summary of the meeting he attended in Saskatoon and the Annual Members Meeting in Ottawa earlier this year. Due to the use of simultaneous translation sometimes the finer points of an argument were missed and that made it hard for some resolutions to be dealt with effectively. He pointed out that the whole organization is run by volunteers, from the President down, but wording in some resolutions put volunteers answerable to Head Office staff. This was unacceptable because volunteers are not staff. There is now a new President, Jean-Guy Souliere, and Roy Goodall, who was previously a Prairie Region Director, is now the Vice-President.

Peter went on to discuss the need for a Vice-President for the Branch and also people to be mentored to take over current roles on the Board as many are long-serving and no longer young.

Peter and George Montgomery will be attending the Learning Conference in Winnipeg later this month.

Peter emphasized that the Branch can only provide information to members, not advice. It can direct but not advise due to liability concerns. Health Benefits Officers now need a criminal records check. He stated that the goal is to make information sharing with members more effective and efficient.

7.2. Finance Officer's Report

Don Daymond provided an income statement as of September 30, 2016 showing net revenue of \$2,577.42 and net expenses of \$2,601.14 leaving a deficit of \$23.72. He also provided a Balance Sheet as of September 30, 2016 showing Total Assets of \$15,788.99 and Total Liabilities of \$103.95, leaving Net Assets of \$15,685.04.

Motion: Don moved that the Financial Statements as of September 30, 2016, be accepted, seconded by Evelina Baumgartner. **Motion was carried.**

7.3. Benefits Officer

Gary Simmons presented the Health Benefits Officer's Report. He explained that Peter Cliche had indicated he wanted to 'retire' from the position after many years of service. Since then Donna Wuschke has been appointed by the Branch Board to replace Peter with Gary appointed as a member-at-large to support her in the position. Peter has agreed to be a resource to support and mentor both Donna and Gary. He noted that this meant the branch now has a choice of three people to contact if they have questions related to health benefits. He promised that they would answer if they could, and if not, would undertake to find the answers. He also noted that there is a Health Benefits Corner in the Fall Newsletter that contains information that may be of interest to members, and this will continue in future Newsletters.

7.4. Membership Report

George Montgomery reported that the branch has 673 active members (252 double memberships and 169 single).

7.5. In Memoriam

George read the names of members who had passed away since the Board Annual Meeting and Peter Baumgartner asked for a moment of silence to be observed in their memory.

These were: Annette Gauthier, Don Kubish, Ed MacDonald, Margo Middleton and Dorothy Willacy.

8. New Business.

There was no new business.

11. Date of Fall General Meeting

The Board Annual Meeting will be held in early April 2017 (tentatively April 7), with the actual date to be finalized as soon as possible and will be held at the Alliance Church in Pinawa.

12. Adjournment

Motion: Moved by Don Daymond that the meeting adjourn at 2.10 p.m.

Motion was carried.

Minutes approved: _____
Date

President

Secretary

These minutes will be presented to the Board Annual Meeting for formal approval.

After the business meeting Keith Masterman, Vice President, Tax, Retirement and Estate Planning, and Jennifer Sinclair, Associate Vice President of Sales from CI Investments made a very informative presentation entitled “What’s new in Estate Planning, 2015, 2016 and beyond”.

Motions moved at the meeting:

1. That the agenda be accepted. Moved by Elmer Voelpel, and seconded by Harley Davidson.
2. That the minutes be accepted. Moved by Kay Harvey, and seconded by Cindy Litke.
3. Don moved that the Financial Statements as of September 30, 2016, be accepted, seconded by Evelina Baumgartner.
4. Moved by Don Daymond that the meeting adjourn at 2.10 p.m.

All motions were carried.