

## **RETIREE SUPPORT GROUP OF CONTRA COSTA COUNTY**

### **GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

**FEBRUARY 7, 2019**

#### **Opening**

At 10:07 a.m. the meeting was called to order by Chair Pat Patterson. We recited the Pledge of Allegiance and welcomed three new members to our group. A quorum was present. There was a change of Board members this month: Mike George is now Director Seat #1 and Jack Funk is now Vice Chair. Doug Pipes is away on vacation today.

#### **Minutes**

Pat informed us that according to RSG Bylaws the RSG Board must approve minutes of our meetings. However, members are still welcome to comment on the previous minutes during our meetings and make suggestions about corrections that should be made.

#### **Treasurer's Report**

Terry Mann gave the Treasurer's Report. All bills have been received and paid. Dues have been deposited except \$10 which he received this morning. The current amounts in our General and Legal funds were reported. In April our dues will decrease to \$2.00 per month. This change is being made because the Legal Fund is approaching our goal amount. If the Legal balance is less than our goal after dues reduction, then a transfer from the General Fund will be made to bring the Legal Fund balance up to goal.

#### **Status Reports**

Louie Kroll – Absent.

Steven Ojena – Nothing to report about the website.

Jack Funk – Nothing new.

#### **CCCERA Board Retiree Representative and Alternate**

Pat Patterson reported that at a special Board meeting held just prior to this membership meeting the Board discussed the issue of a vacancy on the CCCERA Board to represent retirees. In a letter Jerry Tellis informed the Board that he would be retiring from the CCCERA Board. Louie Kroll has decided to run for this position, and Mike Sloan is running for Louie's current position as alternate representative. In a vote of 5 yes, 0 no and 0 abstentions the Board voted to support the candidacies of Louie Kroll and Mike Sloan for the positions of retiree representative, and alternate retiree representative on the CCCERA Board. A motion was made from the floor for the membership to support this decision, but do to restrictions in the RSG Bylaws a motion may not be made on a subject that has not been agendized.

#### **Vacancy of Board Member-at-Large Seat #2 and RSG Secretary**

The Board Member-at-Large Seat #2 is empty due to Glenda Edwards' move to Oregon. The position of RSG Secretary is still vacant. If anyone is interested in either of these positions, please contact Pat after the meeting.

#### **Report on CalPers Long-Term Health Care Litigation**

Mike Sloan gave an update on this issue. CalPers requested a settlement in late November or early December. However, it turned out to be about paying lawyers' costs and fees. We replied "no thanks". Expert depositions

are done for their side. Judge Johnson, who has done an excellent job, is retiring. Judge Ann Jones will take over the case.

The trial is scheduled for June 10 and is expected to take about two weeks although it could run into three or four weeks. CalPers filed an appeal regarding class decertification; apparently they are stretching this out as long as possible. The Judge indicated that June 10 is a firm date. Any RSG members who can go to the trial in Southern California are invited to attend, especially on the first and last days. Mike will continue to keep us updated.

Settlements: The group with lifetime benefits with lifetime protection could receive up to \$500 million, the group without that protection - \$750 million. CalPers stated that if it loses the lawsuit it will have to raise premiums, which makes no sense. This lawsuit was originally filed in 2013 after CalPers raised premiums 85%.

Mike answered several questions from RSG meeting attendees:

Can those who dropped out be reinstated? The judge limited the lawsuit to breach of contract and that will not address reinstatement for members of the class.

Is there any way for all 122,000 people involved in the settlement to be involved any decisions about the trial? No.

What will lawyers receive from settlement? Typically, attorneys receive about 30% of the settlement, but the exact amount in this case is unknown.

Who is Towers Watson? It is an actuarial group that set up the numbers used to establish the original rates for the LTHC insurance.

It was mentioned there are approximately 20,000 people who were sent checks from the Towers Watson settlement who have not yet cashed their checks. Bidart's office advised everyone that recipients had until January 31, 2018 to cash the checks or they would be invalidated.

### **COLA for 2019**

Pat reported on the upcoming COLA pension increase. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is up 4.5%. A COLA raise of 3% will appear on our April checks. This results in an addition of 1.5% to the COLA bank for a total of 2% banked. There was some discussion about different tiers and COLA increases/banking. Many of us are in Tiers 1 or 3, which have a cap of 3%. We are fortunate to have a couple of retired CCCERA Board members as members of CCCRS as they are able to report valuable details about our retirement system.

### **Health Net PPO Plan B Will no Longer be Available**

Pat received a letter from the Contra Costa County Benefits Department about Health Net PPO Plan B, which has only 14 retiree members. This plan will no longer be available effective January 1, 2020. Those affected by the change can switch plans during the late 2019 open enrollment period.

### **Guest Speaker – Sue Burke of Vitas Health Care**

Ms. Burke gave an informative and enthusiastic presentation about Hospice and their need for additional volunteers. She told us about how Hospice affected her own family and the care her parents received, especially her Mother who had dementia. It's difficult for the caregivers who often need help with the patient.

Medicare pays 100% of Hospice care (Medicare Part A). Hospice patients can contact Hospice and sometimes avoid hospital readmissions. Patients can be either at home or in the hospital per the patient's choice. A Nurse

Manager runs the care team: a chaplain, volunteers, nurses, and others (for bathing, etc.). Contra Costa County has more than 40 Hospice organizations (profit and nonprofit). Hospice furnishes walkers, wheelchairs, beds, and related items for home use.

Volunteers are needed to put together welcome packages for new patients, handle legacy programs, scrapbook projects, or call patients by phone to stay in touch between visits. For those who like to sew, meaningful mementos can be made for a patient's family such as a pillow made from Dad's shirt or special ornaments.

Vitas Hospice has a connection with Contra Costa County Veterans' Office to help ensure all Hospice patients who are veterans will receive all the benefits to which they are entitled.

Ms. Burke concluded her presentation by leaving her business cards and other Vitas Health Care literature for us. Pat thanked Ms. Burke and offered a \$100 donation to a charity of her choice. She will get back to Pat about her selection of a charity.

### **Group Information Sharing**

An issue came up about the Retirement Board regarding whether employees who die on the job should receive disability retirement. Historically this has been the case. The CCCERA Board has requested an opinion from the County Medical examiner as to the fact that if someone dies on the job are they disabled. This would affect the beneficiary as it would make a difference in benefits. The ruling on a current case will affect future cases.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:21 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Wallgren, Assistant Secretary