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March 10, 2021

Retiree Chapters Leaders Conference Call Zoom Meeting Notes

Hello Western Region Retiree Sisters and Brothers. It is with great pleasure that I once again share my above cited notes of our Retiree Teleconference Zoom Meeting. I hope these notes find everyone in good health and safe during this Corona Virus Pandemic. I also hope that you have had the opportunity to get one or both vaccines; or in the process of receiving one or both. This is truly a trying phenomenon for us all, and we must continue to stay in prayer, focused, and practice wearing our Masks and Social Distancing as much as possible.

I also want to give a special shout out to Byron, Bobby, Al LaBrecque, Shirley Jasper, Scott Morrow, Maryann Medina, Yoggi Riley, Larry DeNayer, and others who were in attendance. It was truly a pleasure seeing each of you. I would be remiss not to thank our APWU National Convention Retiree Delegates Paul Browning, Pat McDuff, and John Richards for attending, in addition to a get well wish and speedy recovery to Dolores Young.

Conference Zoom Meeting:

Retiree Director Nancy Olumekor and her secretary Donalyn Holloway notified us via email on March 9, 2021 of the Zoom Meeting. Nancy advised that there were at least 200 representatives on the list. She opened the meeting with the Lord's Prayer. She also recognized Retirees, Officers and Members and Leaders that we were notified since our last meeting:

William Tommy Harper, Eastern Region in August

Ron Nesmith, Retired NBA Southern Region

Ken Peace, Regional Vice President passed in January

Esther Acosta- Former Chief Steward Greater Los Angeles Area Local

James Dickson- Former Secretary-Treasurer Greater Los Angeles Area Local

She asked for a moment of silence. Asked if she forgot anyone to please email her as they prepare for the Memorial Slides.

Director Olumekor thanked everyone for joining the meeting. She further thanked: Secretary-Treasurer Liz Powell and her staff for their assistance; National Officers; Hannah; Retiree Department Staff; Retiree Instructors and Counselors: Yoggi, Don, Joe, Cheryl, Ina, and Jim, as well as the National Convention Retiree Delegates of our APWU Regions: John Richards, Paul Browning, Dr. Pat Williams, Pat McGriff, and Dolores Young who has been ill and recuperating.

Guest speakers included: President Dimondstein, Secretary-treasurer Liz Powell, Political/Legislative Director Judy Beard, and Health Plan Director Sara Rodriguez.

Hannah Decker read the guidelines on Code of Conduct and Participation. Nancy stressed that she hope we all have signed up for the Vaccines. She asked everyone to please make themselves available to get their vaccination. She advised that she got one and is waiting to get the other.

Political/Legislative Director Beard welcomed and thanked everyone for joining the meeting. She shared that she had one of her Covid shots. She stated that the Legislative Department has been quite busy these days. She reported that the Postal Service received 10 Billion Dollars that they did not have to pay back in the Relief Bill. She added that the Bill passed in the house today had one Democrat that Voted NO. Originally, we had three, because they were progressive Demos that believed strongly in \$15 minimum wage. However, the Parliamentarian kicked it out. Bill with 50+1 have to meet certain criteria. Under normal process 60 Senate Members need to pass which we would have needed 10 Republicans. She stated that very few bills can pass with 50+1 including our Windfall Bill.

Director Beard reported that HR82 if pass in House when get to Senate we will need 60 Votes. It is important that we Lobby Congress and the House on both sides. She addressed the Relief Bill- American Rescue Act did not include money for Postal Service.

Director Beard also responded on President Dimondstein's address to the House of Representatives and the Public. He stated that the mail slowed down terribly. Director Beard stated that the PMG spoke and is going to release a 10-year plan in the next two weeks. Also, that the Postal Service has a draft relief document on Postal Reform. She reiterated that it is not a bill, it is a discussion document. All Stakeholders are adding input. The conversation they heard is that Retirees will not be forced into Medicare B. The document is 34 pages with three issues such as:

Service Standards- Whereby the postal service deliver mail in timely manner. APWU sees it differently. Medi-Care Integration- APWU have problems with it. No one is discussing forcing Retirees into Medicare B.

She addressed HR 695 that was introduced in February to repeal that the postal service had to repay funds. It is still a separate bill. Eighty-seven Republicans supported it.

HR 82, according to Director Beard, is Windfall Elimination and Government Pension Offset Bill to eliminate 2/3 penalty against CSRS for Retirees. She stated that there are other bills introduced by Legislative Department encouraging people to support.

Pro Act Bill has a lot of support and make sure Unions can go out and organized others.

HR-1 is the first bill introduced in 117th Congress with a lot of information making the election process better. The Bill will make sure employees have decent salaries and benefits, and Retirees qualities and decent way of life. She stated that most bills need Bi Partisan support.

There were QUESTIONS from the Retirees. A few of the questions raised came from:

Bobby Donelson- advised Judy that the Congressman Doberman of Main is the only Democrat that went against the bill.

Rita Smith- regarding the main opposition to HR1. Judy responded that the election process is, that many states are setting rules and a number of Republicans feel it is too lenient. Judy stated that there is a group of people that want to make it difficult for us to Vote. She further stressed that it is important that we make the election easy for people to Vote. She gave praise to Postal Workers stating that they worked 16 hrs. a day making sure people got to vote. They did a phenomenal job in the election. She also reported that management at the Headquarters Level allowed them to have a Task Force to monitor the election. She and President Dimondstein were apart of that Task Force. They then asked the postal service to all APWU Members (334 Mail Processors) as Task Force in the post office on the clock, making sure ballots got out. The Task Force had equal authority as supervisors. However, now the Task Force has disbanded, and mail is a mess.

Byron Denton- asked what is consensus of doing away with Filibuster? Judy responded that President Biden promised the Country when he got elected, he would represent everyone, and when he changes his mind, we will know about it. Byron added that majority vote is what the people is going to need. Judy advised she would express Byron's opinion to the committee. She stated that they want to see 25 Billion for the infrastructure. It would give post office opportunity to purchase new trucks, bring up to date equipment so they can handle the packages that increased in the post office.

Scott Morrow- advised that he put in the chat that Representative Gerald Golden from Maine was the only one voted against the Bill, and that he was against the overall size and scope of the Bill. He said that even Senator Manson from West Virginia said he would adjust the filibuster. HR 82 had some eighty co-sponsors originally submitted by a republican. Judy said Representative David had some 27 republicans and agreed with Scott that it is a bipartisan bill in the House. Scott stated that he has 2 Democratic Senators that vote 100% with retirees. He asked everyone to call call call call. He also inquired about auto pay on annual dues. Director Olumekor advised him to remind the members that they only pay their dues once a year. They will get a message every year that OPM will not take out the dues again until the next year. It's an annual message.

Judy expressed that HR 82 is not just postal and federal employees. Its teachers and fire fighters who are affected by the Windfall Elimination and Government Pension Offset in fifteen different states. Arkansas, California, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Maine, Missouri, Nevada, Ohio, Rhode Island, and Texas. If we all contact our members of Congress and because it was introduced by Republicans, we may get some action that we need.

Dave- questioned about the training for NDC. He also stated that the Pro Act like Civil Rights Act includes everybody. It is really important to get passed and real deal. He said he hope we can get it passed.

President Dimondstein- gave greetings to everyone. He apologized for being late, that he was on an AFL-CIO call. He expressed the wonderful job of Sister Beard on Legislative side. He also explained how important the Postal Board of Governors that sets policies and directions. President Dimondstein also explained how the Postmaster General is hired and fired. President nominates governors, Senate confirms, and when at nine speed they elect the PMG. He reported that identified with the new Administration even before they came in. They emphasized

the importance it is for the postal service to prioritize fill the vacant positions. There are actually four vacant positions. There were 4 Republicans 2 Democrats that were all appointed by President Trump and confirmed by the last Senate. He said thanks to all of us, they presented a petition to the Biden administration of over 400,000 signatures asking that he fills the vacancies quickly, and with people pro postal and pro workers and bring diversity. The Board of Governors consist of men, no Afro-Americans, no one from community side. Most are corporate/wall street. Two days after the presented the petition, they have three new nominees for the positions. They hope to have a fourth one soon for the other position. He said no one on the Board of Governors had any experience of the postal service. He spoke a little about the nominees:

1. Our former lead counsel Anton Hajar who clearly understands the postal service and the roles of the union and postal workers.
2. Ron Stroman who was the previous Deputy Postmaster General who brings some deep experience about the post office, and
3. Amaral McReynolds who along with the others bring a different perspective, so they are pleased on both fronts. What is happening with the mail now has never happened in our lifetime. He said he does not blame it all on Louis DeJoy, he inherited a lot of it, but he also brought in policies that made it worse and has to be held accountable. He stressed that they were pleased with the efforts around the election mail. To have a stronger board of governors is very important. He gave a big shout out to all those that worked on the petition. He added that we have an opportunity that we haven't had to get some genuine postal reforms. The post office has lost 65 billion pieces of mail a year from ten years ago, and the pandemic has pushed them further down. They are trying to get the postal service to try to expand on things such as paycheck cashing, electronic money transfers, ATMs in post office, electric charger stations in front of the post office, just have to have willing partners on the management side. They are being careful on the language making sure current retirees are fully protected and no undermining of the health benefits they have today and other things. We definitely have a president of the United States who is pro union who is not afraid to say it and not afraid to point out working class families and working-class communities. So, it is an idea of building back better.

Cynthia- question on Chairperson Malone who had a bill HR8015, how does it affect us as retirees? Judy said the draft discussion doesn't have a number. Judy asked more clarification from Cynthia. She said she knows one was Medicare. Director Olumekor addressed the question. Director Olumekor explained 8015. President Dimondstein state it was in the last Congress and has to be reviewed.

President Dimondstein stated the Pro Act is a wonderful piece of Legislation. Another is the one with the question of voters' rights. He addressed voters suppression taking a new progressive turn. The whole country was founded on voter suppression. We now have 250 proposed pieces of legislative since the election to try to limit mail balloting, etc. He asked what is the matter with 50+1? We will have to do some work with how the government functions. He also addressed what happened with the minimum wage of \$15 an hour. These archaic rules are depriving people.

Karen Wing- is it true postal service has a new contract with Staples? If so, what kind of contract is it? President Dimondstein stated that is the idea of packages challenges where packages are being stolen when left of doorsteps. There are a lot of delivery companies including the post office that are looking at ways packages can be delivered to companies like Kohl's where customers can go and pick them up. Packages be dropped at Staples, it goes through the mail, and customers can go and pick them up.

Yoggi Riley- Medicare for current retirees. President Dimondstein stated that it would mean prospective Medicare integration. Almost 80% of all our retirees do it. Medicare integration is only prospective meaning no one already retired would be forced into Medicare 'B'. If want to come into 'B' there is no penalty. Carve out for future retirees. In the future when people retire will have to purchase 'B'. Current active employees it takes pressure of 'C'. Active employees along the way may have 20-30 years to go may save 30 or 40 dollars. There could be two groups but will have to be under FEHB. They are working hard on the language to make sure the language is right. They won't support it without the waiver for those who want to get in. If it is not part of the whole package, they will not support it.

Bill and Vickie- had a question on the chat, asking if APWU was aware that Wal Mart in Florida is selling Priority Mailboxes for a dollar and forty cents each. President Dimondstein responded that he was not aware of it. Asked if a picture could be sent to him so they can look at it.

Paul Browning- inquired about the Board of Governors, and if we expect support from them. President Dimondstein gave a brief description of the individuals, emphasizing that Ron Bloom who is chairman of the Board worked for NALC and was clearly supportive of Louis DeJoy and strategic plan coming out in a week or two. They are nervous about that plan. He stated that they are concerned about the

rumors of slowing down of mail and closing down of plants. They haven't seen the plans. He added that the postal service did not consult with them. When the new people get on their perspectives may help other people get better perspectives as well. If DeJoy is willing to try some new things and some right things they will unite with them and do the right thing. If he is undermining things, they will fight him. He stated that he has a feeling that they will be doing both.

Al LaBrecque- stated that he was concerned about the forcing of people on to Medicare 'B' that had declined at age 65. Will those people coming on, the new retirees between ages 55 and 65 automatically put on at 65, will they be liable for the premiums of Medicare?

President Dimondstein answered, the ones 59 and already retired not yet Medicare eligible, their position is they also will be grandfathered out. Its like someone who is already retired over 65. When they retired at age 58, they did not know that this was part of a position. So, they have to make sure the language is very clear that at 65 they have the option and are not forced in. Someone not retired at 56 and retire they will be responsible for Medicare 'B' and can opt out. They will not support it unless it is crystal clear.

Byron Denton- signatures. Some guy went on television and people all over called him. He got a lot of signatures and asked Mark not to forget us old people.

President Dimondstein stated it was all a collective effort. 10 Billion dollars is real money.

Don- APWU Health Plan did a wonderful drive. It's a good deal and will get better as we go along in time.

Pat McGriff- asked Judy about SB78, a Florida bill from last month. Asked if Judy knew anything about it. Judy said it's a state issue and she will research and get back to her.

Janet- In Blue Cross Blue Shield and switch to basic and get \$800 back a year. She will compare this Open Season.

Al LaBrecque- would like Dr. Pat and Pat McGriff to send their email addresses. Nance said she would do the exchanges.

Sarah Rodriguez- thanked Nancy for inviting her. Will keep her report short and sweet. Discuss the Medicare Integration and Advantage Enhancement. They are

two distinctly different issues. The Enhancement is not a separate plan, you still enroll, it's a sub option for their high option. You have to have high option plan and enroll in A&B. The benefits are as good or better as the high option. Difference is it is handled by United Network, whereas traditional high option is under Cigna. It cost no additional money. This was done to give our members a lot of things they were asking for. She stated that 80% of our members already signed up voluntarily for Medicare Part B. As an incentive you get \$50 back that either goes to your social security check or your civil service check. They have the silver sneakers membership. There are tons of gyms you can go to; you show your card and don't have to pay a membership. You also get an eye exam per year that is covered, a thousand dollar a year coverage for dental, first line essentials program, and once a year you get forty bucks you have to use in a quarter, and you can use to order vitamins, band aides and other over the counter products you can order. If you don't like the plan you can call in and they can switch you back. You can go to out of network doctors. They are having their Open Season in October 17-20th in Detroit at the MGM Grand. They will have more information soon. She took questions which included Brother Scott who shared that he gets an extra \$600.00. He also explained the Medi Gap program. Brother Al also shared information about his experience regarding being in the rural areas and providers. Pat McGriff asked about why her rheumatologist appointment had to be pre-approved? Sara said she would look into that since she was not aware of any changes. Byron asked that she keep the plan he wants even if he has to pay extra. He had issues with United. She can be reached by email or phone if you have any issues. Paul Browning asked about the \$40. Sara said it comes by mail. His other question if on Medicare if he has to process other claims. Do they take United Health? You have to take Medicare assignment and be billed or if your doctor is willing to bill United Health Care. They don't have to be in the Network. Charlene asked about APWU high options and what Sara would suggest regarding Medicare B. Sara said if she did not accept at 65, she may have to pay penalty. For this you have to have both A&B when you become 65 or pay a penalty. Sara stated that at this point she is not qualified for the Enhancement. Scott said Medicare will not process any claims if you have APWU high option. He never had issues with APWU providing a provider for him living in the rural area.

Secretary-Treasurer Powell- welcomed everyone. She advised Al that she sent him the rules at a glance. We postponed the Convention until 2021. She reported that the October 2021 Convention will follow the All-Craft Conference, but she does not think it will go forward because we are all more important. We should know in two and a half weeks whether or not to cancel. Nevada has been giving

periodic updates talking about going to Casino with Social Distances. We would have to follow all rules and there is no way we can do that with the number of people we have. Our group is too large to accommodate social distancing. June Contract Negotiations Starts. We will have a Webinar to keep updated. She is available by email 24/7. Asked everyone to stay safe.

Bobby Donelson- when talk about Convention are you talking about All Craft. He and his wife got their shots. It seems that women are having the worse time, but none are lasting over two days. He encourages everyone to get it.

Byron Denton- asked Liz we don't have any money, but we are not broke? He appreciates National taking our health beyond what a convention would be.

Director Olumekor- reported that they sent out emails to over 220 Chapter Leaders, and mailings to everyone regarding Chapter Leadership forms. This is the access you have to your Rebate we have online. When your term of office ends, and you don't update your Leadership Form your access is lost. We have a new Online Join Feature as members retire, they can join. This is an opportunity to see our members increase. Everyone retire is sent an application. By June, the same group will get an email to joint and an application to join.

Cash Pay Members next year or end of this year will have opportunity to pay online. Bobby asked for clarification on the ones that pay \$36. Director Olumekor explained that when deducted from annuity OPM sends the letter because they are not going to deduct again until the next year. People who pay cash many are switching over to OPM. Al asked President Dimondstein to report DeJoy has got to go. He gives him no credit. He tried to undermine the mail in ballot. Director Olumekor reminded everyone to try to have Retiree Chapter Meetings and hold elections via Zoom. Secretary-Powell and her staff are available if you need assistance. Don't hesitate to contact her office. Mic was opened for everyone to greet each other.

Teleconference ended at 2pm PST.

I remain in solidarity,
Dr. Pat Williams,
National Convention Western Region Retiree Delegate