

Note: The minutes of the Annual Business Meeting, held October 8, 2019 at Unicoi Lodge are now available in draft form for review. The GSRA Board has reviewed and approved them on a preliminary basis, pending presentation to and final approval by membership, as required by the Bylaws, at the 2020 Business Meeting. (Also provided is a summary of GSRA's accomplishments for 2019.)

If you have questions or comments, please let us know.

Georgia State Retirees' Association

Annual Business Meeting

October 8-8, 2019

Unicoi Lodge Helen, Georgia

President Jim Sommerville called the business meeting to order on Tuesday, October 8, 2020 at 2:30 P.M. Members received notice of the business meeting via email correspondence and the Association's newsletter throughout August and September of 2019.

Opening Remarks: Sommerville reviewed GSRA's legislative achievements of the past year, with particular acknowledgement of the significant contributions made by Chuck Freedman, Joseph Drolet and Chuck Clay.

Legislative Overviewⁱ - Chuck Clay, Legislative Consultant: Clay, lobbyist for GSRA, commended the organization for its commitment to achieving its legislative goals over the long term, primary among them, establishing equity among state retirement plans. Specifically, reinstatement of COLAs for ERS members remains GSRA's top priority

Clay encouraged members statewide to find opportunities to engage with their legislators all year long to communicate concerns face-to-face whenever possible and to thank them for their support.

Among other legislative issues we are following: Tax reform, as it impacts retirees; "surprise" medical billing.

Presentation of Local Chapters – Kip Mann, Chair, Membership and Marketing Committee: Mann introduced Bob Pollock as committee co-chair and announced the formation of a new chapter in the greater Macon/Bibb County area; the Rome area; and the reactivation of the ABC Douglas chapter. Plans for 2020 include possible reactivation of the Lake Oconee chapter and an expansion of the current Athens group to draw in membership from more of the Northeast Georgia area. Mann encouraged local chapters to promote members' purchase and wearing of GSRA logo polo shirts to promote visibility and market the organization statewide.

Presentation of 2018 Annual Meeting Minutes – Beverly Littlefield, GSRA Secretary: Littlefield thanked Connie Smith for recording the minutes for the October 16, 2018 meeting. The minutes were provided for member review in the 2019 meeting materials. Motion to approve: BJ Bennett; 2nd: Harold Grindle. Motion carried.

Presentation of GSRA Financial Report and Legal Fund Report – Harold Grindle, GSRA Treasurer: The meeting materials included a three-year "Statement of Receipts and Expenditures" for members' review. The materials also included a

balance sheet and statement of income and expense for the separate legal fund. Grindle encouraged members to support the fund by donating by check or credit card via the GSRA website. The policy governing the establishment and use of the fund is also available through the website. Motion to approve: Bob Pollock; 2nd: Tom Hill. Motion carried.

Presentation and Election of 2020 Slate of Officers and Board Nominees – Gloria Jack, Chair, Nomination Committee: Ms. Jack chaired the committee, which included Steve Herndon and Cindy Tharp, and returned the 2020 slate of officers:

Officers: President – Jim Sommerville
 President-elect – not filled
 Treasurer – Harold Grindle
 Secretary- Beverly Littlefield

At-Large Board Members: Chuck Freedman (2020-2021)
 Cindy Tharp (2020-2021)
 Melissa Belk (2020-2021)

Local Chapter Board Members: David Taylor (2020)
 Allan Hill (2020)
 Lynell Hayes (2020)
 Bob Pollock (2020)

Continuing Board Members: Sam Shepherd (2019-2020)
 Joy Evans (2019- 20200)
 Sadie Rogers (2019 -2020)

President Sommerville invited nominations for President-elect from the floor. There being none, Sommerville called for a voice vote of members present, through which the slate of nominees was approved without opposition.

Goals for the Future ⁱⁱ – Jim Sommerville: Major areas of focus include:

- Continued work in refining initial successful negotiation via the Memorandum of Understanding with ERS for access to retiree contact information
- Advocate for appointment of a GSRA member to the ERS Board
- Continued advocacy re “surprise” medical billing
- Participate in development of the Department of Community Health’s Request for Proposals for the State Health Benefits Plan, with emphasis on maintaining coverage and benefits while also controlling costs
- Internal to GSRA: Staffing strategy to provide for ongoing administrative support and event planning, upon the retirement in 2020 of Donna Buffum

Other Business:

- Members invited to provide their thoughts and concerns re the SHBP proposal development
- Question: Can local chapters access GSRA membership information? GSRA administrator can assist.

- Question: Is there a financial goal to increase the legal fund? We have not set a specific goal, but the solicitation for contributions in the newsletter did generate additional revenues.
- Are there any efforts to recruit ERS Board members to join GSRA? Not at this time. That could be a conflict of interest.
- Comment from joint member, GSRA/GDOT Retiree Association: GDOT group also has written a resolution in support of reinstatement of COLAs.

Adjournment: There being no further business, President Sommerville thanked members for their attendance and participation in the Annual Meeting and declared the business meeting adjourned.

Door Prizes: Alan Hill, Coastal Georgia, conducted the drawings for door prizes.

End notes:

ⁱ The Agenda was adjusted to allow Mr. Clay's presentation earlier in the session, due to constraints of his schedule.

ⁱⁱ Meeting materials included "GSRA Goals and Objectives for 2019-2020" for members' review.

Submitted by:

Beverly Littlefield, Secretary

Addendum to Business Meeting Minutes

Accomplishments of the Georgia State Retirees' Association for 2019

At the convocation of the two-day Annual Meeting, beginning October 7, 2019, President Jim Sommerville provided an overview of the Association's accomplishments for the year:

- GSRA successfully negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding with the Employees Retirement System (ERS), establishing deliverables that the agency committed to execute to facilitate our ability to contact state retirees. Among the deliverables was an ERS email blast to all members who were not currently GSRA members. This email blast went out in August of 2019 and provided a link to the GSRA website (see <https://www.ers.ga.gov/post/5-ws-h-gsra>.) Shortly after that email blast, GSRA saw a significant uptick in the number of new memberships. Another deliverable provided for revised retirement ERS application language to include a question that will allow the retiree to opt in to allow his or her contact information to be shared with GSRA. We will evaluate the impact and success of these initiatives.
- We were able to meet with Governor Kemp in early 2019 to discuss the issue of COLAs and to provide him with our fiscal proposal on how to restore the COLA without a creating a significant impact to the state budget. This was the first time we had been able to secure a meeting with a sitting Governor.
- Increased revenues over time has positioned GSRA financially to be able to secure the services of two part-time employees. In anticipation of the retirement of GSRA Administrative Assistant Donna Buffum, contracts have been offered to two staff, one of whom will assume responsibility for day-to-day operations and administrative duties. The second staff member will provide support for event planning duties, specifically for the Annual Meeting activities and for the GSRA Legislative Day at the Capitol. This marks a shift from our past reliance on volunteers from among Board members and the general membership to plan and conduct the events.