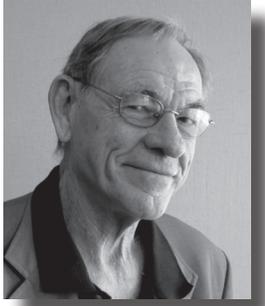




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# Retirees' Chapter News

## Virginia Governmental Employees Association



### *A Message from the President...*

Our combined VGEA Richmond Retirees and VGEA Annual Membership Meeting took place on September 14 at the DoubleTree by Hilton. It was both interesting and informative.

Several members of the VGEA Board of Directors shared their thoughts about their meeting with gubernatorial candidate Terry McAuliffe. The other candidate, Ken Cuccinelli, canceled his meeting with our Board but responded in writing to the same questions posed to Mr. McAuliffe. Representatives from the Department of Human Resources Management, (DHRM), the Virginia Retirement System (VRS), the Virginia Senate, and House of Delegates responded to questions from attendees. Considerable information from each of these bodies can be obtained via the VGEA website.

The proposed Bylaws were adopted and new Directors were announced. Our colleague, Winfree Mountcastle, finished up his term and represented us well. Our luncheon speaker, Senator Walter Stosch, who has a large number of public employees in his District 12, shared his thoughts about the upcoming General Assembly. The golf tourney on September 13 also went well and all profits will go toward the VGEA scholarships which will be awarded this spring.

This is the election season with Tuesday, November 5 not far away. Active and retired

public employees are citizens with different views on an array of topics. But we all share common interests in a fiscally sound retirement system with a cost of living adjustment (COLA) and affordable healthcare. While VGEA is and should be non-partisan, I would encourage you, your families, friends, and acquaintances to get engaged and educated about where the candidates for Governor, Lt. Governor, Attorney General, and your district House of Delegates stand on these vital public employee issues and act accordingly.

Our immediate past president, Kermit Spruill had arranged for a speaker from the Attorney General's Medicare Fraud Unit who had to reschedule for February 10, so instead we will focus on Legislative Priorities and other Chapter business on October 14. Our Vice President Dee Esser has lined up Delegate Kirk Cox for our November 11 (Veteran's Day) meeting. And our Treasurer Faye Spruill is working on our holiday luncheon at Crab Louie's on December 9.

Please plan to attend on the 14th and bring friends. When you do, please seek out our outgoing president Kermit Spruill and vice president Winfree Mountcastle who have worked hard for many years to make us a successful Chapter and thank them for their dedication and service.

**Walt Pulliam Jr.**  
*President*

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# **VGEA Richmond Retirees' Chapter – September 2013**

## ***Joint Meeting with the General Membership Meeting of the VGEA***

DRAFT Minutes of the September 14, 2013 ANNUAL GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

**Note:** Walt Pulliam Jr., serves as Richmond Retirees' Chapter President and VGEA Board of Director's Secretary, so he authored the draft of these minutes.

**Introduction:** The meeting was held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, Richmond, Va. 127 Members and guests registered. Mr. Jerry Webb chaired the Annual Meeting Committee. The Joan Dent golf tourney was coordinated by Mr. Roy Floyd and successfully conducted at the Brickshire Golf Club in New Kent County on September 13, 2013. Many Directors and VGEA staff helped with the golf tourney and registration. The Board of Directors was scheduled to meet following the Annual Meeting.

**Call to Order and Welcome:** President Wendy Brown welcomed the attendees and thanked them for coming. She had each current and incoming Board of Directors introduce themselves. She called on Walt Pulliam Jr., Nominations, Elections, and Bylaws Committee Chair to go over the proposed Bylaws' highlights and urged the attendees to vote and turn in their ballots. The September 22, 2012 Annual Meeting minutes were approved. Ms. Sonya Williams was commended for her work on the meeting.

**VGEA Issues Update:** Mr. Ron Jordan, VGEA Executive Director advised that VGEA membership and the number of Chapters are growing as is the CONNECTIONS (agency contacts) initiative. Ms. Teresa Craig leads this effort. Our current financial situation is solid. This includes a strategic reserve in case the payroll deduction system - a gubernatorial prerogative - is challenged. Ms. Ann Winslow grapples with the state's patchwork system. Our website is being upgraded by Ms. Johnna Cossaboon and our member database is much improved. The intent is to be member friendly. Legal assistance for workplace issues is being explored. Our public image has expanded. He introduced and commended the staff.

He noted that our 2014 legislative issues to be finalized by the Board would include pay issues: including increases, pay for performance, and

compression; healthcare coverage, increasing retiree healthcare credits (currently \$4 per service year), holding down health insurance costs; setting a minimum retiree life insurance as suggested by long time Member and Lobbyist, P.C. Shields; and urging VRS repayment and full employer contributions. This was a segue into our Directors' panel.

**Board of Directors' Panel** – "The Race for Governor:" – Mr. Jordan briefed the attendees on VGEA's "I Vote" campaign and "I'm a State Employee" campaign brochures were distributed. Companion stickers for Retirees are being printed. He described the work of our non-partisan Political Action Committee (PAC) which targets members of the Senate Finance and House Appropriations Committees. This facilitates access to Senators and Delegates.

**Directors** – Terry, Stenbridge, Grant, Jenkins, and Pulliam - formed the panel coordinated by Mr. Jordan. The panelists had each attended a meeting with Gubernatorial candidate Terry McAuliffe on July 16. Ken Cuccinelli canceled his scheduled September 3 meeting but responded in writing to the same set of questions put to Mr. McAuliffe. Members had submitted the questions online. A rescheduled meeting with Mr. Cuccinelli is still being sought.

Each panelist offered his or her perspective and impressions on the meeting, the meeting cancellation and responses to the questions. No advocacy was offered.

Mr. Jordan noted that there are about 100,000 state employees and about 30,000 retirees who can be a major electoral force. It was noted that the race for Lt. Governor is critical, as the winner will be the tie breaking vote in the Senate. The Attorney General is vital as well since his legal interpretations affect state policies and procedures.

The House of Delegates' races are important too. Members were urged to get engaged with candidates both before and after the election to ensure that their issues and positions are known. They also were asked to come to Richmond and join other VGEA members to participate in the 2014 Legislative Day.

**Minutes of the September 14 ANNUAL GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING (Cont'd)**

During the attendees' question and answer period, a member reported attending a meeting during which AG Cuccinelli said he favored making state employees "at will." Mr. Jordan advised that he had heard the same thing and wanted to meet with the AG and ask the question directly. Another member advised that former AG Kilgore dismissed a number of staff who had to sue for appropriate severance pay. *Note:* This was in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* the next day and Mr. Cuccinelli denied making the statement.

Members were encouraged to get informed about the issues, the candidates' positions, and get to the polls.

**Partners:** Our Partners – American Income Life; Hanson Agency; Liberty Mutual; and Peak Performance (Prepaid Legal) – were thanked and a representative of each spoke to the attendees.

**Panel Session** – "The Challenges Ahead for State Employees and Retirees:" Sara Wilson, DHRM Director; Bob Schultze, VRS Director; Betsey Daley, Senate Finance Committee Staff Director; and Robert Vaughn, House Appropriations Committee Staff Director formed the panel coordinated by Mr. Jim Roberts, VGEA Lobbyist.

Each panelist offered brief introductory remarks and responded to questions from the Members. The questions were shown on a screen for all to see and then panelists took oral questions from the attendees. They remained through lunch and responded to individual questions. President Brown thanked each and presented them with a gift. Ms. Wilson gave hers to departing Director Smith, H.R. staff in DOC.

Legislative staff hoped that employee pay would be addressed but were uncertain about costs of the new healthcare law and adding to rainy day fund. Ms. Wilson is working on healthcare law changes and the market lag between the private and public pay. Mr. Schultze spoke about the changes in Federal unfunded liability accounting standards which yield higher liability totals but VRS is on track assuming the Legislature holds to its funding plan.

**Closing Remarks:** President Brown thanked the attendees for coming and praised Chairman Webb, the Annual Meeting Committee, and VGEA staff for

their work organizing and carrying out the annual meeting.

**Luncheon/Guest Speaker:** Senator Walter Stosch 12th District, Henrico and Hanover Counties and Chair of the Senate Finance Committee spoke about the Commonwealth's fiscal situation which is OK but will face some real challenges. These include Federal sequestration, payroll tax revenues (about 80% of revenues) which are slowing up, upholding the VRS funding plan, outstanding demands, rainy day fund, and Medicaid. He was complimentary of state employees. President Brown thanked him and presented him with a gift.

**Door Prizes:** Jerry Webb, assisted by Martha Wright, conducted drawings and awarded prizes throughout the meeting time.

**New Directors:** Terry Alfred, Terry Braddock, Marc Crippen, Jim Gibson, Jay Hufton, and Tom Tucker were elected to terms through 2016 and were welcomed to the Board.

**Outgoing Directors:** These included Jerry Webb (Annual Meeting), Roy Floyd (Golf), Doug Smith (CONNECTIONS), and Mike Pawley (Scholarships). Winfree Mountcastle (Finance/Bylaws/Member Services) was praised for his work on behalf of retirees and identification of issues. They were acknowledged for their service and presented with tokens of appreciation.

**Proposed Bylaws:** The Committee, assisted by Mr. McKinley Jordan, collected and counted the ballots. They were approved by more than 2/3's of the attendees and so became effective immediately. Ms. Cossaboon was commended for her help with this project.

**Walt Pulliam Jr.,**  
**VGEA Secretary**  
*Drafted September 16, 2013 / Submitted*



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**MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR  
ELECTION DAY!**

**November 5** will be here before you know it, so be sure to get out there and vote! If you can't get to the polls, you can still vote by using an absentee ballot. Ask about it now or go to the State Board of Elections' Website by typing this into your computer or other electronic device's browser line:  
<http://www.sbe.virginia.gov/AbsenteeVoting.html>

