

Retirees' Chapter News

Virginia Governmental Employees Association



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A Message from the President...

Our April 13 meeting featured Delegate James "Jimmie" Massie, (R-Henrico County) and Jim Roberts, VGEA Legislative Director. They were introduced by Dee Esser, Vice President of our chapter. They updated our Members about 2015 General Assembly achievements, including: Salary increases to improve state employee compensation and address pay compression; a bill to ensure a minimum life insurance payout; VRS funding; and moderating healthcare costs.

Sadly, Jim Roberts passed away in May. He was a solid professional whose experience and knowledge will be difficult to replace.

We spoke of the upcoming 2015 elections on November 3. Adequate compensation, fully-funded retirement benefits, and containment of healthcare costs are still primary concerns.

We each need to get registered to vote, get informed, and get to the polls. Now is the time to find out where your prospective candidates stand on these issues and act accordingly.

We elected Officers for two year (2015-2017) terms. As President, my charge will be to foster Membership growth and political participation. Dee Esser, Vice President, will continue her fine work in arranging speakers. Faye Spruill, Treasurer, will keep a close eye on our fiscal affairs while Janet

Martino, Secretary, will keep providing comprehensive Minutes. Collectively, as the Executive Committee, we will take care of VGEA Richmond Retirees Chapter business. We appreciate the work of our Nominating Committee – Ann Bordelon, Mary Donan, and Kermit Spruill. Faye Spruill gave our financial report. See Janet Martino's Minutes on page 2. Dee and Janet carried our food donations to the Central Virginia Foodbank.

We agreed to consolidate our next meeting with the VGEA Annual General Membership Meeting on Saturday, September 12, beginning at 8:30 a.m. at the DoubleTree by Hilton, 1021 Koger Center Boulevard in Midlothian. Call 877-302-7146 to register or sign-up at vgea.org. No golf tourney is scheduled this year.

Our regular meeting schedule – the second Monday of each month at 11:30 a.m., will resume in October. Our meeting dates are: October 12, November 9, December 14 (Holiday Luncheon site to be decided), January 11, February 8, March 14 and April 11.

Please plan to attend and bring a friend.

"May you live every day of your life."
Jonathan Swift

Walt
Walt Pulliam, Jr., President

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Virginia Governmental Employees Association

Richmond Retirees' Chapter: April 2015 Minutes

The 2015 April Meeting of the Retiree Chapter was held on the 13th at Imperial Plaza. The meeting was conducted by Walt Pulliam, Jr., President. He asked that everyone check the listing that was being circulated to ensure that all information was correct. Walt welcomed everyone and thanked them for bringing food for FeedMore. He also reminded everyone that tax time is almost over, and time to pay your VGEA dues.

Faye Spruill, Treasurer, gave the Treasurer's Report. The balance as of April 13th is \$1,912.93. Dee Esser introduced our speaker, Delegate Jimmie Massie. He is a UVA graduate who works in the financial industry. He has served in the House of Delegates since 2008. He currently serves on three significant committees: the Education Committee, the Rules Committee and the Appropriations Committee. He chairs two educational subcommittees. Additionally, he serves on the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) Which provides legislative oversight to all State Agencies.

Delegate Massie stated that he is very proud of Virginia. It is currently ranked as the Best Managed State, ranked fifth as Best State for Businesses, ranked fourth as Best State to Raise a Child and was ranked in the top five in most measurements. However, Virginia is ranked 49th in State and Local taxes. This is not an accident, it is an accomplishment. The Retirement System funds are as high as they have ever been and there is now a better system in health care costs.

This was a much better legislative session. Last year, with a new Governor, it was very acrimonious. This year was much better. The only disagreement was the expansion of Medicaid. They adjourned ahead of schedule and completed the budget before the deadline.

This Governor is very good at job development. As a result, the General Fund is now back to what we had in 2008. During this session, there were reforms to the SOL Testing, the establishment of charter schools, additional funding for higher education and a new ethics bill.

As a result of the *Rolling Stone* article, a lot of work was done on sexual assault issues. If a student is charged, it will now become a part of their transcript. If the campus police begin an investigation, they must notify the local police within 48 hours. Additionally, money was made available for an increase in sexual assault

counseling. The Legislature also passed a Right to Trial Medication for experimental treatments.

Delegate Massie was asked why he opposes Medicaid expansion. He explained that the costs for this program are increasing at 8 percent per year. State funding is only increasing at 3 percent and you can't count on the Federal Government to continue to pay 100 percent. He said that he is a budget person, and he feels you need to make the current system more viable before you expand.

He was also asked about rising tuition costs and the amount of student debt. He elaborated that Virginia has low tuition rates compared to other states. However, the legislature is focusing on that issue. They have now limited the amount that colleges charge for Athletic fees. UVA has now capped the amount of debt that a student can amass. When asked why they do not allow people to refinance their student debts, he stated that State has no control because it is a Federal Program.

When asked what we need to do to get an increase in our Health Care Credit, he said that since he is not on that committee, he is not familiar with that issue.

Delegate Massie thanked all of us for our State service. He said that it is through State employees that the State has such a high ranking.

Jim Roberts, our VGEA Representative, gave us an update on this legislative session. He stated that 2014 was one of the worst legislative experiences in decades. This (2015) session was very different. It was very successful and positive. The VGEA Board met in December and approved a list of legislative priorities. This session they advanced the schedule to restore VRS reserve funds. They also established an \$8,000 minimum for Life Insurance payout, and it will be indexed upward in the future with a Cost of Living (COLA) increase every year.

Current state employees will receive a 2 percent across the board increase as well as a "compression" increase of \$65 per year of service for those with at least five years of continuous service. The cap is up to 30 years. Some other changes are that all insurance companies must use the same standardized forms. There is also a new class of leave for people who adopt children.

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Walt reminded us that this is an election year. We need to find out where our candidates stand on issues before we cast our ballots.

The nominating committee (Anne Bordelon, Mary Donan, and Kermit Spruill) reported the following officer nominations:

President	Walt Pulliam
Vice President	Dee Esser
Secretary	Janet Martino
Treasurer	Faye Spruill

There were no further nominations. It was moved and seconded that the slate be elected. Motion carried. A motion was made and seconded that our September meeting would be combined with the VGEA Annual Meeting at the DoubleTree Inn on September 12th. The motion carried. Our next regular Chapter meeting will be on October 12th at 11:30 a.m.

Submitted by:
Janet Martino, Secretary

ADDENDUM:
After the March presentation by Kathy Earhart from FeedMore, members who attended the March meeting were asked to bring contributions for the FeedMore Program to the April meeting. Dee Esser and Janet Martino delivered 140 pounds of food and \$45. Additionally, many donated empty egg cartons and paper and plastic bags. The staff at FeedMore was very appreciative of our donations. Thanks for your contributions!

Upcoming VGEA and Retirees' Chapter EVENTS

- **September 12 - VGEA ANNUAL MEETING:** 8:30 a.m. The DoubleTree by Hilton, 1021 Koger Center Boulevard, Richmond, Virginia 23235, (804)379-3800. **Speakers:** *Secretary of Administration Nancy Rodrigues; NEW Director of the Virginia Retirement System Patricia "Trish" Bishop; Director of the Virginia Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) Sara Wilson; and MORE!*
- **October 12 - Next meeting of VGEA Richmond Retirees:** 11:30 a.m. Plan to attend and bring friends!
- **October 15 - Tidewater Regional Meeting:** 6 p.m. Olive Garden - near Greenbrier Mall, 1631 Ring Road, Chesapeake, Virginia 23320. (757)424-4758.

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Call 877-302-7146 or email info@vgea.org to RSVP for VGEA meetings.

Important Telephone Numbers for State Retirees:

Virginia Governmental Employees Association (VGEA)
(877) 302-7146 toll-free in Va.
(804) 355-3120 office
(804) 228-4501 fax

Virginia Retirement System
(888) 827-3847 toll-free

Social Security Administration
(800) 772-1213 toll-free

Medicare
(800) 633-4227 /
1-800-MEDICARE toll-free

Department for The Aging
(800) 552-3402 toll-free

Virginia Retiree Health Benefits Program
(800) 572-4098 toll-free

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Employees Association (VGEA) is
The VOICE of Virginia's State
Employees and Retirees**