



1011 East Main
Street, Suite 400
Richmond, VA 23219
info@vgea.org
804-355-3120
1-877-302-7146

Retirees' Chapter News

Virginia Governmental Employees Association



A Message from the President...

Our Chapter met on November 10. Our speaker was Susan Jones of the Department of Human Resources Management, who addressed healthcare costs and answered questions. See Secretary Janet Martino's minutes on page 2 for more details. Treasurer Faye Spruill provided a financial report. We acknowledged and appreciated the service of our military veterans, because the meeting date was the day before Veteran's Day.

The 2014 elections were held on Tuesday, November 4. Sadly, the voter turnout was low. The lameduck and incoming Congresses could have significant impact on national issues which affect us, for instance, healthcare cost containment, taxation, entitlement revisions, immigration reform, and homeland security. It's important for each of us to learn about Congressional positions and respond accordingly. Sources of information include vpap.org and vop.org.

The General Assembly will reconvene the second week of January 2015. Revenue shortfalls and budget cutbacks will dominate deliberations. VGEA staff will be advocating on behalf of State employees and retirees. Increased pay, maintenance of the funding plan for VRS, containing healthcare costs, and supporting equal opportunity remain our priorities.

We must be the "squeaky wheel" reminding our Governor, Senators, and Delegates that:

- Nearly, 2,300 full-time employees receive public assistance
- 10% of full-time State employees qualify for Earned Income Tax Credit
- State employees salaries trail similar private sector jobs by 21.45 %
- Medicare coordinating insurance rates will rise 10 percent in 2015.
- Current inflation is about 2.0 %

Please congratulate Dee Esser, Vice President, who has been appointed to the VGEA Board of Directors to complete an unexpired term. She will be eligible to run for re-election. We appreciate Dee's willingness to serve and know that our Chapter will be well represented.

Our Chapter's annual Holiday Luncheon is set for 11:30 a.m., Monday, December 8 at the Olive Garden Restaurant on W. Broad St. near Glenside Drive. No speaker is planned. The next Chapter meeting will be at 11:30 a.m., Monday, January 12, at Imperial Plaza, 1717 Bellevue Ave., Richmond. Vice President Dee Esser is working to line up an informative speaker.

Please alert your friends and colleagues and urge them to actively participate.

Let's each one, reach one.

Walt Pulliam Jr.
President

Officers

Walt Pulliam, Jr.
President
9210 Waterloo Court
Richmond, VA 23229
804-741-5466
waltpulliam@verizon.net
VDOC

Dee Esser
Vice President
4600 Willow Leaf Place
Henrico, VA 23228
804-740-8898
d_esser@verizon.net
VEC

Faye Spruill
Treasurer
4818 Village Lake Drive
Richmond, VA 23234
804-272-7065
fzspruill@verizon.net
SCHEV

Janet Martino
Secretary
3010 Briar Lane
Richmond, VA 23228
804-264-1009
janetwva@msn.com
DOLI

Virginia Governmental Employees Association

November 2014 Minutes

The 2014 November Meeting of the Richmond Retirees' Chapter was held on the 10th at Imperial Plaza. The meeting was conducted by President Walt Pulliam. He asked that everyone check the listing that was being circulated to ensure that all information was correct. Walt welcomed everyone. He reminded us that tomorrow is Veteran's Day and we should take this opportunity to thank all who have served in the military.

Dee Esser, Vice President, introduced Susan Jones, Program Director of Retiree Health Benefits for the Department of Human Resources Management. Susan just received the Governor's Agency Star Award. Susan reminded us that we pay 100 percent of the cost of the Health Insurance Program. When costs go

up, our premiums go up as well. Last year, because we had a surplus in the Health Trust Fund, we were given a subsidy that resulted in a reduction in our increase in premiums. This year, we will have a 10.5 percent increase. There are several factors that are driving up costs. One is the increase in costs for drug coverage. Another factor is that Medicare requires that plans cover a certain percentage of drugs for most medical conditions.

Option I Plan was abolished because the premium would have been higher than Advantage 65 with fewer benefits.

Option II has "Major Medical" coverage which Advantage 65 does not have. However, most people never use this coverage. It is more expensive than Advantage 65.

Susan also discussed why once you leave the State Program, you can't come back. Health Insurance is for your protection. The danger of leaving the program is that Insurance Companies can cease to exist. Additionally, they

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The large freestanding clock (left) in front of the General Assembly Building on Capitol Square in Richmond, has marked the beginnings of many General Assembly Sessions, and will see the start of the 2015 session this January.



(Continued from page 2)

can increase premium costs. There are many Drug Coverage Plans that are cheaper than the State Plan and you should shop around for which plan is best for you.

If the State allowed members to return, it would result in an "adverse selection." Members would leave when they don't need it and return when they do need it. Walt asked if there were any issues we needed to discuss. Winfree Mountcastle had a correction to the October Minutes. The minutes should be changed to read that the proposed minimum payout for Life Insurance is \$8,000 not \$15,000 as reported.

A motion was made by Bill Davis to donate \$50.00 to the Imperial Plaza Employee Assistance Fund. Virginia Claytor seconded. Motion carried.

Faye Spruill, Treasurer, reported that our current balance is \$1,994.67.

Dee Esser, Vice President, explained that the reason we did not have a Legislator as our speaker today was because they were called into a Legislative Session.

Janet Martino, Secretary, asked anyone who plans to attend the Christmas Luncheon be sure to sign the sheet circulated and include how many would be attending. Anne Bordelon will have her group call members who are not in attendance. The cut off for the number who will be attending is December 2nd. The luncheon is December 8th at 11:30 a.m. at the Olive Garden on Broad St. near Glenside Dr. We do not have to pay in advance, but we need to give the restaurant a count of attendees. If you plan to attend, please contact Janet Martino at (804)264-1009 or janetwva@msn.com; Dee Esser at (804)740-8898 or d_esser@verizon.net; or Faye Spruill (804)272-7065 or fzspruill@verizon.net.

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

For State Retirees:

Virginia Governmental Employees Association

(877) 302-7146 toll-free

(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



Mark your calendars for

VGEA LEGISLATIVE DAY 2015

Monday, February 16, 8:30 a.m.

At the VGEA Office

- ***Meet your Legislators!***
- ***Learn to Lobby***
- ***Tour the Capitol***

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Don't Miss the Next
VGEA Richmond
Retirees' Chapter Meeting
At Imperial Plaza

January 12, 2015
11:30 a.m.

Looking forward to seeing you!