

AFSCME Retirees Subchapter 161
March 2019 Members' Meeting Minutes

On March 20, the meeting was called to order at 11:35 a.m. We recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll call was taken. All officers were present and accounted for.

Charlie gave the president's report. He said, "We're now officially in the political season. IPI, ALEC mailed letters to state retirees, and teachers, telling them to call the pension board to say you don't want dues going to Mike Madigan. IPI and ALEC are saying, in other words that we're married to Mike."

"Rick Serber is in the organizing department of Council 31. UCAN is a child welfare agency in the city, a private non-profit human services agency. After nine months of bargaining, the union employees are still fighting for a fair contract. We are going to picket at a fundraiser on Friday, March 29, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the Chicago Historical Museum, 1601 N. Clark Street, Chicago. We'll work out transportation. We worked with the SEIU at a nursing home. No other union in the state is as active as AFSCME. Power only understands countervailing power. Friday, our job is to comfort the afflicted by afflicting the comfortable. We have to learn skills, come Friday.

"We have an election coming up in six months. Help me put labels on cards at the end of the meeting.

"The communications committee met. Facebook has egg on its face; we don't want to make mistakes."

John said, "We'll have a meeting for communications, and the phone tree."

Charlie continued, "Talk to the executive board, we'll plan a six month transition; I'll retire. We'll rotate duties; Jesse will order a booklet on how to chair a meeting. I'll still be an active member. In six months, we have nominations for elections. In September, a new group will be voted in. In October, there will be the Council 31 convention with training for new presidents. This is why I push volunteering."

Mary gave the Vice-president's report. She said, "Jane Addams Senior Caucus campaigned for and endorsed a candidate for alderman in the forty-ninth ward. I volunteered. Joe Moore is no longer the alderman. I'm teaching civics to seventh graders, going to Springfield to interact with legislators. I was recommended by the Jane Addams Senior Caucus to go to Washington at the end of April; it's an expensive city. I'm here to raise funds on my and other members' behalf, a fundraising raffle; I have raffle tickets."

Charlie interjected, "The Jane Addams Senior Caucus is a community organization. I'm impressed by their discipline and training. They're a terrific ally, a terrific school to learn."

Mary continued, "There's a Health and Education meeting next Friday; I'll look up the time. Single payer healthcare includes long-term care. I've been an activist for fifty years. This organization does more than any other. It's at 1111 N. Wells; Parking is expensive."

Peter asked, "Will there be carpooling?"

Mary said, "Yes."

Tony read the March 2019 minutes. The minutes were accepted.

Jesse gave the treasurer's report. He said, "The beginning balance was \$31,632.26. We received a rebate of \$684.84 from Council 31. \$225 was paid to three members at \$75 each. \$3,045.67 went to our account. On March 9, the money was returned to Charlie. On March 14 checks were sent to me. On the books, the ending balance was \$31,449.67, minus \$3028.41 making the real ending balance \$28,421.26."

A motion was made to accept the secretary/treasurer's report; the motion was approved.

Dave said, "Our dues are going to subchapter 160; we're at 161."

Charlie answered, "Talk to me; we'll clean this up by May."

Walt asked, "Will it help to cancel the deduction to the old subchapter and make a deduction to the new one?"

Ron Smollen introduced himself. He said, "I'm a recent retiree; I was sent a card for 161. I'm a Cook County resident. I'm in my 60's. I've gone to union meetings till the end.

"Quick question: do people get emails for dues to the AFSCME national organization?"

Dave answered, "There's an organization like the union, but it's not the union. It emails things to us, asking for money."

Charlie said, "The Council 31 executive board meeting was held March 13. They brought up the raise to \$15; IALRA is supporting Pritzker on the raise to \$15. Pritzker proposed the FAIR tax. Schools and lots of things are on property tax. It's the most regressive tax except for sales taxes. Unpaid debt hurts universities."

Joanna said, "People cry, 'Pension crisis!' Call it a funding problem. Ralph Martiri said, 'Can we get dedicated obligation bonds for the pension? That way, the pension gets the money, and the state has to pay bondholders. The pension would be hard debt, pension obligation bonds. Blagojevich and Quinn issued general obligation bonds for the pension, and used them for other things.'"

Walt said, "Marilyn asked, 'What happened to the pension fund? Did it go to something else?' Yes."

Macarthur said, "They took pension funds they didn't pay into, and took some out."

Charlie said, "They're paying the right amount now. They want a ramp, to pay less for five years. The ramp starves the pension. They approach current workers with less than twenty years, and buy them out, and workers with less than twenty years who worked for other states, and buy them out."

Walt said, "I've talked to senior citizens on Food Stamps who took a buyout. They're living in public housing, and wearing raggedy clothing."

Macarthur said, "Beware of the two tiers and the buyout. They have a schedule to end the pension by 2040."

Ron said, "You offer to take lump sum, and you get a 1 ½% raise instead of a 3% raise."

Tony said, "I lost my job at 60, and, a few months later, moved in with my father-in-law to take care of him. After a couple of years, he moved into a nursing home. I wasn't doing as much for him anymore, and he had the added expense of paying to stay in the nursing home, so I took Social Security at 63."

Dave said, "You were adept at handling a tough situation, but you would agree it's better to wait."

Mary said, "Unless you have a serious illness, expect to live to 100."

Charlie said, "The usual suspects, Representatives Skillicorn and Cizniski introduced House Joint Resolution Constitutional Amendments 19 and 21, a pension diminishment clause."

Pat said, "I'm pretty sure Governor Pritzker would veto the bill. The Democratic House and Senate wouldn't vote for the amendment."

Jim said, "The referendum is advisory."

Macarthur said, "They're trying to make a deal. We give you the graduated income tax, and you give us your pension."

Walt said, "The amendment gives the state legislature the ability to reduce pensions."

Pat said, "Karl says that current retirees are not affected."

Dave said, "With no new blood, there goes our pension."

Walt said, "The constitutional amendment says the state legislature has the power to cut pensions for current retirees. Right now, both bills have been stuck in committee since February 13."

Ron said, "These are Republicans."

Walt pointed out, "They only need one guy to flip."

Diane Tobin asked, "Do we have a group email to post information on bills? Illinois Senate Bill 2021 will privatize AFSCME jobs for Medicaid workers. Trump will add minutiae for work requirements for food stamps. They're working on a bill to give work to non-profit

groups. I work with the Alliance for Community Services. Trump's budget is robbing social services to build the stupid wall."

Charlie said, "We dropped retirees from 27,000 to 23,000 in four years."

Marilyn said, "If they cut retiree pensions, let the last retiree in Illinois turn out the lights."

Charlie brought up back pay. "Any state retirees here owed back pay, or anyone who knows anyone like that, the person should call Maria. They should have their paperwork. They have to straighten out the mess one person at a time."

Marilyn said, "You have to ask for it to get it."

Charlie said, "They broke up the retirees. We're in Region I. When there's a primary, AFSCME either votes to endorse the candidate or doesn't. Maria will make a phone tree by region."

"We'll have trustees elected every three years."

"With HB 1441, we'll allow Canadian drugs into Illinois."

"We'll stay after good and welfare to put on labels. Thirty-five labels and cards, it will take a half hour."

John said, "Karl Heinz Gabbey was hospitalized last week with a heart attack."

Charlie said, "Can I have a motion to send him a card? His address is 160 Hillendale Drive, Bloomingdale 60108."

Ron asked, "Will 401Ks be taxed? Pritzker promised not to."

Bill asked, "Has anyone seen large increments in their Medicare payments?"

Dave asked, "15% of bill?"

Pat said, "For United Healthcare Medicare Advantage."

Charlie said, "I'll hand out the packets. Is there anything else?"

Mary said, "I've still got raffle tickets, six for \$5."

Dave said, "In terms of the coming election, which candidates for president stand up against globalization? Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren are on our side. Corporations want to send jobs abroad, and want no regulations."

Mary said, "Beto O'Rourke is vague."

Dave said, "He comes from a millionaire family; he's for fossil fuels."

The next meeting will be April 17.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:56 p.m.