

**AFSCME Retirees Subchapter 161
June 2019 Members' Meeting**

The June 19 meeting was called to order at 11:31 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, "I've printed a handout, "The Myths of Medicare." The Chicago Metro Retirees meet this Monday, June 24 at SEIU Healthcare, at 22nd and Halsted. At 9:30 a.m. is a hospitality hour; business starts at 10:15. They will discuss the Green New Deal. Our communications team is calling people. We have 29 people who've signed AFSCME retiree cards, who live in this area." Charlie interjected, "Welcome back, Karl!" He continued, "The Jane Addams Senior Caucus fundraiser is at Ignatius High School, Thursday, June 27 from 11:30 to 3:00. We purchased 2 tables, 16 slots.

"Maria Britton-Sipe, the retiree coordinator, said, 'You're not holding elections in the right year, according to the constitution.' So we'll hold an election for one year, then pass out cards and hold another election for two years."

Mary gave the Vice-president's report. She said, "Related to single-payer, is universal in-home care. We have Medicaid with spenddown. If you need long-term care, you have to spend down your assets. The Jane Addams Senior Caucus is working on a universal in-home care resolution, and will have a meeting Friday, June 25 at 4:00. We've dispensed a team to give community presentations on Medicare for all."

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

Jesse gave the treasurer's report. He said, "The beginning balance was \$29,644.98. Two checks were written in May, one for \$106.89 to cover cab fare in April and a check for \$400 to the Jane Addams Senior Caucus to pay for dues for the Jane Addams Senior Caucus. We all are now members. A deposit of \$661.76 was made for

the rebate from Council 31. The ending balance for May was 29, 644.98. In June, I wrote two checks for \$118, so far.”

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

Charlie said, “If you’ve attended any actions, a perennial is Anne Scheetz. Anne’s going to give us a heads-up on Medicare for all.”

Anne said, “We have what Joseph Stiglitz described as the worst healthcare system in the developed world. It’s the most expensive, with terrible outcomes. Life expectancy is low, maternal mortality and infant mortality are high. We have restrictive networks, which is especially true for mental health care. It’s a huge financial burden, even with employer sponsored health insurance. The system is marked by huge inequalities. Pharmacies close in poor neighborhoods, and open in rich neighborhoods. 30% of healthcare costs go to bureaucracies. It is inefficient.

“We need healthcare with value for the money. We need people to die not because they have no access to care. We need a healthcare system where no one suffers financially.

“We need what is called single-payer or national improved Medicare for all.

“We would have it cover 100% of medical care, enroll all automatically, with no bills. It would be tremendously efficient. It makes sure everyone is covered.

“It doesn’t solve the fact that there are huge areas with no healthcare. We need to plan for the work force we need, doctors, and personal care attendants.

“Healthcare now makes profit for a few. Healthcare should be built around what we need.

“The pharmaceutical companies, the insurance companies and the AMA don’t want us to win. The Jane Addams Senior Caucus organized a die-in at the AMA meeting.”

Walt said, "I lost my wife and brother. They were treated, and the insurance company said they had to be transferred to a nursing home."

Anne said, "We have to get rid of the insurance companies. We have to pass a resolution for national improved Medicare for all. HR 1384."

Dave asked, "Are there local congresspersons on our side?"

Anne replied, "Schakowsky, Davis, Rush, Garcia and Kelly are sort of on our side."

Marlene asked, "Would the public option work to put insurance companies out of business?"

Anne answered, "Public option means you have to buy into it. You need the money to buy into it. Insurance companies compete by not covering people."

Mary said, "I heard from a parishioner from Canada, who said they pay more taxes and have lower overall costs."

Anne said, "Canada didn't include medications; it's not equal among the provinces. We don't have a shortage of money. We have extremely wasteful spending."

Charlie asked, "Who pays for the uninsured?"

Anne replied, "We spend more than any other country and get less. Most of us want to take care of each other. When have we heard people in power say we can't afford to go to war?"

Pat asked, "Does this include illegal immigrants?"

Anne answered, "If you live here, you're in."

Shannon pointed out, "We already pay for the uninsured."

Diane said, "45 years ago, I got shingles, went to Austria, went to a free clinic, got B12 shots, and paid nothing."

Ron asked, "How do we get people to pay more taxes?"

Anne said, "For 95% of people, their total out of pocket will go down. Unions have endorsed the bill."

Anne continued, "Democrats have phony bills to get campaign contributions from insurance companies."

MacArthur asked, "What are the hospitals' stands?"

Anne replied, "For profit hospitals are against it."

Pat asked, "Jan Schakowsky is against single payer?"

Anne answered, "She's staying right on the fence."

Bill asked, "How do we guarantee this won't devolve into the VA situation; my Medicare went up \$2000."

Anne said, "Passing single-payer isn't enough; we have to continue to fight."

Mary asked, "How would the quality of healthcare improve?"

Anne said, "There would be access to care everywhere, there would be no insurance companies to come between patients and doctors or nurse practitioners."

Karl asked, "Why is corporate America not backing this?"

Anne said, "The number one speculation is class solidarity, the people on top keeping their privilege. Also, they want employees to be afraid of losing their health insurance so they won't organize or go on strike. So they'll be afraid of being fired and losing their insurance"

Jesse asked, "Will national healthcare create jobs?"

Anne answered, "Yes, there are jobs we need, such as physical therapists and personal care assistants."

Pat asked, "Would single-payer limit where I can go for healthcare, like the Mayo Clinic?"

Anne replied, "No, you can go anywhere."

Mary said, "If people with disabilities get medical care, they could return to the workforce."

Ron said, "We need a list of politicians who take money from the AMA, the insurance companies and Pharma."

Keith said, "We don't have a strategy for putting Medicare for all into effect. We should lower the Medicare age piece by piece."

Anne countered, "Medicare now doesn't cover everything; it doesn't cover dental care or long-term care. The problem with HR 1384 is, it only covers the young and the old the first year.

"HR 1384 includes long-term care."

Jesse asked, "If Governor Pritzker is in favor of it, could we have single-payer at the state level?"

Anne said, "Medicare is a federal program; Medicaid is a state and federal program. The states have to have a balanced budget; the federal government does not, because the federal government creates money when they spend money. The best way to do it is at the national level."

Charlie said, "How many have signed up for the Jane Addams luncheon? Nine. Seven more could come. You don't have to pay anything."

Mary said, "Jane Addams is in the forefront in advocating for single-payer, and is pressuring Quigley and Lipinski on single-payer."

John said, "One problem we have, regarding the communication committee. 30 members heard this; 770 members heard nothing. We have no way to communicate with them. We don't have their address, cell phone number, landline phone number or email address. We will contact them using the sticky label method. The sticky label contains current information on a member."

Dave said, "Be polite. Say, 'Is it possible to speak to Sally Brown?' They'll say, 'Who's calling?' 'I'm a retiree like Ms. Brown from our local union. Is your address current?'"

Marlene said, "I wouldn't give that information on the phone to someone I don't know."

John said, "Don't be aggressive about it."

Charlie said, "We'll have a subchapter phone number, so we won't have to leave personal numbers."

Charlie continued, "Can I have a motion to pay \$100 to Anne Scheetz?"

The motion carried.

Charlie said, "There's a conference in October. I encourage anyone who's active to come down. The Jane Addams luncheon is Thursday June 27 from 11:30 to 3:00 p.m. at St. Ignatius College Prep, 1076 W. Roosevelt Rd."

Dave said, "Thanks that we have functions sorted out, so that different people are in charge of different areas."

Charlie said, "We need to vote on moving the election from two years to one year to bring us in sync with our constitution."

A motion was made, seconded and approved.

Mary said, "At the executive board meeting, I introduced the idea of bringing the Working Women's Historical Project here in August. I want to make a motion to approve up to \$600 to pay the actors."

Nancy and Dave said, "That's a lot of money."

Mary countered, "And worth every penny of it."

Ron asked, "Is this space big enough for this?"

Charlie proposed an amendment to table this 'til next month for a motion, and a motion to find a place for it, find out about cost and whether other subchapters would go in with us on this. The motion carried.

Marlene made a correction to the May minutes. Windfall Profits apply to state employees with *over* 30 years, not *under* 30 years.

Nancy said, "Mary, when advertising things to go to, you should tell John Metz, so he can publicize it."

Charlie brought up Labor in the Pulpit. He said, "If your church or synagogue would like someone to come or you would like to speak, contact me. This is through Arise Chicago. C.J. Hawking is in charge of that."

Dave said, "The Communication meeting is Tuesday July 16 from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. at 6100 W. Irving Park, Chicago, a block west of Austin, on the north side of Irving. Everyone is invited, even if you've never come before.

The next meeting will be July 17.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:55 p.m.