

AFSCME Retirees Subchapter 161 November 2019 Members' Meeting

[I stepped away for a few minutes, and the meeting started while I was gone; the minutes don't include that time.]

On November 20, 2019, the meeting was called to order at about 11:30 a.m. All officers were present, except for Charlie, who was excused. Pat presided over the meeting.

Tony read the October 2019 members' meeting minutes. The minutes were accepted.

Jesse gave the Secretary-Treasurer's report. He said, "The beginning balance for November was \$30,904.78. No monies were paid from the subchapter's account in the past month. There were two deposits. A deposit of \$682.00 was made by the mother chapter 31 and a deposit of \$34.45 was made by Wintrust Bank in return for money paid for a supply of checks that was lost. The present balance is \$31,621.23."

Pat thanked Jesse.

John said, "I will give you an update on Charlie's health from about a week ago. It started when Charlie was to go to Springfield and met Mary and Nancy, who saw he was in no shape to travel. His daughter took him to Evanston Hospital, where he was for a week, mostly in the ICU. He was assessed as having had a silent heart attack. He went home for a few days. I believe he went to Kentucky for a few days with his brother and sister, then went back to the hospital, again on an emergency basis. He was diagnosed with fluid on the lungs, treated, and is back home now, feeling better, but weak. He said he should be back in a few weeks. Send him cards. (He hasn't figured out how to use his smartphone; you'll get a message that his mailbox is full.)

"The communications committee will meet December 4 and December 11, at noon at the Austin/Irving Library.

“All phone calls made to get people to the monthly meetings were made by Charlie, and he wasn’t doing that.

“I’m sending another form around the room. It asks for your name, address, phone number, and email address. There is one question in red: if you’re not a member of 161, mark the box with an X. this will be the easiest problem for me.”

Walt said, “It may not be as easy as you think.”

Pat said, “I’ve tried several times to change from Chapter 60 to 161. I’ve come to the conclusion that it’s not possible.”

Ron said, “I think there’s a way to change it.”

Pat replied, “Good luck.”

Mary said, “I was told to fill out a card; nothing happened.”

Ron continued, “We’ll get this done. How many are still in 60? Six right here and a few not here.”

Pat said, “I know I’m still assigned to Chapter 60.”

John said, “We’ll get everyone to use a smartphone. Don’t buy a smartphone if you don’t have one.”

Marlene said, “Charlie calls to announce every meeting. I don’t need it.”

John said, “Attendance is low, because he didn’t call.”

Walt said, “I tried to call everyone; it’s hard. I didn’t finish.”

Pat said, “The next item on the agenda is old business. Union advocacy for the FAIR tax.”

Dave said, “We’re in deep debt. In Illinois, 65% goes for local tax, and 23 to 24% for the state. So there are high property taxes. The FAIR tax taxes the upper 3% of the population. Adam Smith, the father of capitalism, said in 1776, “The subjects in every state should contribute to the support of government in proportion to the revenues they enjoy.”

Walt said, “I was shocked to hear 24% of the education budget comes from the state treasury, and 65% comes from property taxes. The constitution says the state should pay the majority of the cost of education.”

John said, "This will be a fight. Opposition will be strong."

Diane said, "I contacted Ralph Martire's office for a speaker for the FAIR tax. A speaker will be available in January."

Chaya said, "He charged the League of Women Voters \$100."

Mary said, "This is the same old trickle-down economics. This is a consumer driven economy. It doesn't make sense to take money from our pockets to give to millionaires."

Dave said, "With the FAIR tax, unemployment goes down."

Dave gave everyone copies of the lyrics to a song he wrote, "Union FAIR tax", sung to the tune of "I've Been Working on the Railroad." After we sang it, there was applause.

Pat said the next item on the agenda was other actions by retirees.

Mary said, "Coming up is the Jane Addams Senior Caucus Holiday Luncheon, Thursday, December 12, from 11:30 to 2:30 at Emanuel Congregation, 5959 N. Sheridan Road. I propose we buy a table. There are eight to a table, at \$25 a person, a table is \$200."

A motion passed to pay \$400 for two tables.

Mary said, "I'm selling raffle tickets for the event, six for five dollars."

Pat said, "I'd like you to welcome our speaker, Bill Esler. The topic is "Attending the Theater for Free."

Bill said, "I'm Walt's younger brother. I'm retired. I'm a member of the Society of Professional Journalists. I work part-time, and I also do theater reviews. I review plays because I like saying what I think about what I've seen after I see it. Theater is a social voice. Most theater is done at the local level. It's not just for fun; it's an economic engine. When I write reviews, I get free tickets. If you can write a review in three days, you get in the theater for free. I write for the website "Buzz Center Stage. You usually get to be there opening night.

"Another approach is you can buy tickets at discount. There is Gold Star. Hot Tix is a non-profit. You can order tickets online. You can

get the next day's tickets except on Friday; you can get tickets for the weekend.

"Bernhardt Hamlet played at the Goodman Theater. Sarah Bernhardt, at the age of fifty, couldn't play roles like Camille, so she played Hamlet. She made a silent movie about it.

"I could buy a ticket two weeks in advance for ten dollars, instead of sixty dollars. But I reviewed the play and paid nothing.

"Hot Tix is at Water Tower Place, and across the street from the Cultural Center. You have to pay fees to buy tickets online. Steppenwolf and the Goodman have rush tickets. You stand in line, and pay thirty dollars or less. You could be an usher. There are the Saints. To be a Saint, you pay \$100 a year, which averages about two dollars a week. The Park District has free tickets; you pay little or nothing. Many theaters have a sliding scale; you pay what you can."

Bill then asked for questions. He said he'd been a critic for three years. It takes a couple to three hours to write a review. He has written a bad review of a play.

Karl asked, "What kind of requirements are there for a review?"

Bill answered, "You want to tell why the reader should see the show in the first few paragraphs. No spoilers. Don't give the plot away."

Ron said, "I've been a member of Metropolis Theater in downtown Arlington Heights. Also, I tried to get free tickets to Broadway theaters."

Mary said, "Loyola had Adult Education with local theaters."

Bill said, "Thank you."

Pat said, "Thank you, Bill."

Pat said the next item on the agenda is new business.

Dave asked, "Who wants to put together a skit for the December meeting?"

Dave said, "See me if you're interested."

John gave Charlie's address. Apartment 1A, 4448 N. Western, Chicago 60625.

Dave said, "We should have a work plan to do things that Charlie did."

Mary said, "We should set an Executive Board meeting to decide these things. Thank you, Diane, for arranging for the January meeting. We should talk about what other members are doing in the community."

Diane said, "We should do a draft of a timeline, and focus on the FAIR tax and Medicare for all and discuss it in January."

Pat said, "Also preserving pensions. Diane has a motion on the floor to discuss the draft plan."

The motion was seconded.

Ron said, "Also, we have an election."

Mary said, "Maybe we can work more closely with John Hamlin. Frankly, I don't trust any lawmakers."

Diane's motion carried.

Chaya said, "At the Sulzer Library tonight at 7:00 p.m., Indivisible and a sustainability group are having a program on the environment. Also, the president of the Senate is leaving. Tim Weisberg is the favorite. Melinda Bush is from Lake County, she is a progressive. SB1863 and the amendment HB4A on the mail-in vote went through the House committee. Representative Tim Butler stalled it. It will go back to the House in January. Please fill out some witness slips. It's a record of information as to your position as a citizen. You can get it online. New voting machines have a barcode which is not accessible to voters. They're in Oak Park and one other suburb, not around here."

The next meeting is December 18, the third Wednesday of the month.

The meeting was adjourned, to be followed by lunch and socialization, at 1:20 p.m.