

Official Publication of the Retired Employees of the City and County of San Francisco

NEWS & VIEWS

A MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATION WORKING FOR ALL CITY RETIREES

Health Service Committee Report

By Claire Zvanski

- Confirmation letters were sent to all members, confirming changes during open enrollment. The new city plan—United Health Care Medicare Advantage Plus Drug (UHC MAPD)—surpassed expectations, with almost 1300 enrolled.
- Over 3300 flu shots were given at 26 locations.
- 723 new retirees were processed in 2015.
- HSS is working hard to stave off the 40% excise (aka Cadillac) tax to be imposed on employers in 2018. It is part of the Affordable Care Act of 2010. The tax is based on a specific cost threshold of employee health care premiums that HSS endeavors to stay below. A change in federal regulations allowing the blending of premium costs of early retirees with Medicare eligible retirees is essential to reducing that premium calculation. So is regulation of pharmaceutical pricing at the state and federal level. HSS opposes proposed state taxes on commercial health insurance, which will become a state tax on top of the other existing federal health insurance taxes that are already part of our premiums. Those aggregate taxes boost our total premium costs, taking us over the Cadillac tax threshold.
- The most controversial issue of the meeting was a presentation by the California Integrated Data Exchange (Cal INDEX). Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield created this independent nonprofit organization three years ago. It collects personal health information (clinical, analyti-

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Retirement Committee Report

By Claire Zvanski, Herbert Weiner, and Herb Meiberger, CFA

Fiscal Year 2016/15 Earnings:

- The Fund earned .03% in November. The market value of the Fund was \$20.3 billion on 11/30/2015, and FYTD earnings were -.45%.

Public Comment on the *Protect Our Benefits (POB) Lawsuit*

- Members of POB, retirees, and many members made public comments requesting that the Retirement Board grant the same supplemental cost of living adjustments (COLAs) to the members who retired before Nov. 6, 1996 as to those who retired subsequently. Speakers included Larry P. Barsetti, Rudi Faltus, Elmer Carr, Robert Couton, Sharon Johnson, Herbert Weiner and Claire Zvanski.
- Speakers requested that the Retirement Board seek independent counsel, as POB sued the City, which was represented by the city attorney's office. Speakers also mentioned the vulnerability of this group of elderly retirees, many of whom live on lower fixed incomes.
- The Retirement Board discussed the matter in closed session.

The Board Voted to Divest Securities in Thermal Coal Companies!

- During public comment, speakers urged the Board to divest coal stocks. Speakers included Jeremy Pollock, Patrick Monette-Shaw, David Williams, Brett Fleishman and Jed Holtzman.
- Commissioner Meiberger proposed a motion to sell thermal coal stocks in favor of "renewables," consistent with its fiduciary responsibility,

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January Calendar

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, Jan. 13

Business meeting & program: 10 a.m.

Irish Cultural Center
45th Ave. & Sloat Blvd.

News & Views

Editorial Committee Meeting

Tuesday, Jan. 19, 9 a.m.

Taraval Police Station
All interested parties welcome.

Executive Board Meeting

Tuesday, Jan. 19, 10 a.m.

Taraval Police Station
All interested parties welcome.

Public Meetings:

Retired Firemen &

Widows Association

Thursday, Jan. 21, 1 p.m.

Irish Cultural Center,
45th Ave. & Sloat Blvd.

Veteran Police Officers

Tuesday, Jan. 12, 11 a.m.

San Francisco Scottish Rite
Masonic Center,
2850 19th Ave. & Sloat Blvd.

Retirement System

Wednesday, Jan. 13, 1 p.m.

1145 Market St., 6th Floor

Health Service System

Thursday, Jan. 7, 1 p.m.

City Hall, Room 416

UESF Retired Division

For time/location, contact
Diane Doe at 1 (415) 822-2099 or
Ddoe@mac.com.

SEIU 1021 West Bay

Retirees Chapter

Monday, Jan. 25, 12-2 p.m.

Union Hall, 350 Rhode Island St.,
100 South Bldg.

Contact: David Williams

1 (415) 939-5149 or iamdhw@comcast.net.

Retirement Committee Report

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- which passed six to one (Stansbury dissenting).
- Divestment will include stocks valued at \$18.9 million on 10/31/2015: BHP Billiton, Rio Tinto, Vale, Black Hills, Consol Energy and Glencore; and bonds valued at \$2.1 million issued by the following companies: Alpha Natural Resources, Glencore, Suncoke Energy Partners and Vale.
 - “Renewable energy” is energy that is derived from natural processes (e.g. sunlight and wind) that are replenished at a higher rate than they are consumed. “Renewables” include—but are not limited to—solar, wind, geothermal, hydropower, bioenergy, fusion, and ocean power.
 - The Board discussed and agreed that divested funds should not sit in “cash,” but need to be reinvested expeditiously.
 - Commissioner Meiberger suggested that the best opportunities for renewables were with SFERS’ current general partners of its private equity portfolio. The Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) Committee will meet on Jan. 6 to discuss strategy and opportunities.

Hiring Fixed Income Managers

- Staff and the new general consultant, NEPC, recommended that the Board hire *Baird Advisors and Income Research and Management* to manage bonds (\$700 million, and \$600 million, respectively). Aberdeen and Stone Harbor had previously managed these assets and outperformed their benchmarks; however, they were terminated due to change in ownership and management changes.

The Mayor’s Down Payment Assistance Loan Program (DALP)

- President Malia Cohen pulled this item from the agenda prior to the meeting. There was extensive public comment urging the Board to not invest pension funds in this program.

Good of the Order

- Commissioner Meiberger reiterated staff’s lack of response to Sai Orr’s four emails and attendance at three board meetings regarding hedge funds and the Deferred Compensation Plan. Mr. Orr’s simple inquiry remains unanswered: *Give five reasons to invest in hedge funds*. The issue of timely responses to inquiries of staff, including adherence to the Sunshine Ordinance, remains a significant topic at board meetings.
- Commissioner Makras suggested that the Board enact a policy to guarantee responses to stakeholders’ requests in a timely manner.

Questions? Comments?

Contact Herb Meiberger at herb.sf@gmail.com, Herbert Weiner at h.weiner@sbcglobal.net, or Claire Zvanski at 1 (415) 341-3085 or czvanski@hotmail.com.

New Member

Glen Van Lehn

USD

Health Service Committee Report

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- cal and pharmaceutical) and makes it available to doctors and hospitals that might request it if they subscribe to this service. Allegedly, the information is available if the member seeks emergency or other treatment at another subscribing facility or through a different physician. While the service sounds valuable, Blue Shield never informed HSS it was using this service and it never asked permission to contact HSS Blue Shield members regarding this service. HSS board members were outraged at this blatant disregard for our process and the fact that Blue Shield deigned to impose this service on our members without getting permission from the board or bringing this entity to HSS to be vetted. HSS has been unable to advise members calling to inquire about this service. The board inquired if this service violates member HIPPA rights to confidentiality. Blue Shield and Cal INDEX claim there is no violation. Another concern is that member data remains in that system even when members opt out. President Scott directed Blue Shield to return next month with better information and answers to all their inquiries.
- RECCSF wished all HSS board members and staff happy holidays.

Questions? Comments? Contact Claire Zvanski at 1 (415) 341-3085 or czvanski@hotmail.com.

At the Dec. 9 annual holiday party, the RECCSF membership voted unanimously to endorse Joe Driscoll for reelection to the San Francisco City Employees’ Retirement Board.

Rest In Peace

The following members have recently passed away.

Thomas J. Allen	DPW	Geraldine Niemann	DPH
Frances I. Beverly	WTR	John C. Sweeney	POL
Gladys K. Dahlberg	JUV	William C. Tse	DPH
Noriaki Hirasuna	CON	Robert A. Wentworth	POL
Roop L. Jindal	PTC		

Useful Phone Numbers

RECCSF Office

Email: reccsf@att.net

Website: sfretirees.org

Phone Number:

1 (415) 681-5949

Health Service System

Website: www.myhss.org

Phone Numbers:

1 (415) 554-1750

1 (800) 541-2266

S.F. Retirement System

Website:

www.sfgov.org/sfers

Phone Numbers:

1 (415) 487-7000

1 (888) 849-0777

President's Message

By Claire Zvanski

2015 was a difficult year, it seems. I am still mourning the loss of many good friends, while the media news reminds me of violence in many parts of the world, including our own cities and towns. I am not sorry to see 2015 pass into history!

Some years ago, I decided to not make new year's resolutions, and to just work harder to be a better person. It seems I could never keep all my resolutions! While it's not always easy to be a better person, I do try. Would the world be a better place if we all tried to be better and kinder? As you listen to the news, think about what you can do to make the world—or just your part of it—a better place.

On the other hand, Protect Our Benefits (POB) won the Proposition C lawsuit, so that *most* of us will receive a financial windfall on March 1; but



we should be very concerned that our earlier colleagues—retired prior to Nov. 6, 1996—are not included in that decision. By the time you read this, we will know whether or not the Retirement Board voted to pay them.

My wish for all of you is a better 2016, filled with more love, peace and prosperity.

Questions? Comments?

Contact czvanski@hotmail.com or 1 (415) 341-3085.

Pass the Word to other Retired City Employees: Start the Year Right by Joining RECCSF!

By Herb Weiner

RECCSF is the *only* organization advocating for health and pension benefits for retired city employee that is officially recognized by the City and County of San Francisco. We appear at all Health Service System and Employees' Retirement System meetings to advocate for *all* retired city employees.

Because RECCSF can only succeed in these efforts by maintaining our strength in numbers, your membership and participation is critical. In addition to advocating for the protection and improvement of health and pension benefits—which are currently under attack—RECCSF hosts monthly meetings (except in August) that feature speakers and activities that keep members up to date on current matters of interest, and also make it possible for members to reunite with former coworkers and make new friends. Additionally, RECCSF annually features a June officer and board member installation luncheon and December holiday party.

In order to continue to successfully advocate for our members' benefits, we need your help in recruiting new RECCSF members. Please make this effort your new year's resolution!

"Thank You" to Our 2015 Generous Holiday Party Donors

Mollie Agahi
Sue Blomberg
Carol Cochran
Brian Cunningham
Thomas Dang
Nancy Gin
Barbara Hughes
Sharon Johnson
Richard King
George Lau
Madeleine Licavoli
Stephanie Lyons
John Madden
Leo & Mary Martinez
Mary Anne McGuire-Hickey
Beverly Nelson
Timothy O'Brien
Margaret O'Sullivan & HSS

Beverly Pardini
Retired Firemen and
Widows Association
San Francisco Federal
Credit Union
San Francisco Veteran Police
Officers' Association
SEIU 1021 West Bay Retirees
Star Travelers
Herb Weiner
David Williams
Claire Zvanski
(partial list)

The Board wishes to extend a sincere "thank you" to all of our volunteers who make possible RECCSF events throughout the year.

RECCSF Secretary Position Vacant

A great opportunity to become more involved and meet other members.

Responsibilities: taking monthly minutes.

If interested, please contact Claire Zvanski at 1 (415) 341-3085

or czvanski@hotmail.com.



DECEMBER HOLIDAY PARTY





RECCSF volunteers who helped make the Holiday party possible.

Protect Our Benefits

By Skip McKinney

Protect Our Benefits is an independent political action committee which falls under the provision of the San Francisco Ethics Commission. The opinions are those of the writer.

On Dec. 2 both the City and POB submitted their responses to the court's writ of mandate. As we expected, the City is not appealing, which means nothing changed from our last court date. On Dec. 9 we met in Judge Wiss' court to finalize the case.

The Retirement Board staff is in the process of abiding by the peremptory writ of mandate involving the post-1996 retirees. About 18,600 retirees—of which 660 are deceased—qualify for retroactive supplemental COLA benefits.

If you have any questions about *News & Views* going fully electronic as of the October 2015 issue (or have any other RECCSF-related questions), please leave a message at the RECCSF office at 1 (415) 681-5949 or email reccsf@att.net; we will respond to your inquiries as soon as possible.

Reading Jay Huish's declaration in support of San Francisco's return to writ of mandate is a somewhat daunting task because of the complexity of the issue.

Several qualifying groups for the supplemental COLA will receive payment in their Feb 28 checks; another check will be issued for the interest *owed*, followed in April with another interest check. At this writing, the attorneys (POB and CCSF) were scheduled to get together the week of Dec. 14 to discuss court costs. On May 13, a status conference—just a formality—will convene on how the settlement is going.

Our attorney, Mr. Clisham, was able to get on the record about our concerns on the exclusion of the pre-1996 retirees. Any future suit to be initiated by us regarding the pre-1996ers will have no effect on post-1996 payments and negotiations for legal fees. For all intended purposes, the post-1996ers' case is over.

The Retirement Board also held their monthly meeting on Dec. 9. Several retired members spoke at public comment; the basic theme was *Do not leave the pre-1996ers behind*.

Member Joe Asaro wrote a compelling letter regarding the history of previous propositions and ERS actions and practices leading up to the 2011 Proposition C, stressing how "fully funded and pre and post 1996 retirees"

are not terms that appear anywhere in the charter." He also thought that the city attorney should not be involved because of conflict of interest. (We asked for independent counsel for advice and counsel on this issue.)

Before going into closed session regarding pre-1996ers, president of the Retirement Board Supervisor Malia Cohen inquired about the "may" wording handed down by the court. Once again, Joe Asaro stressed "the judge couldn't implement a stronger wording in his decision because the charter decides, who, when and how a much a retiree is paid. It is all in the San Francisco Employees' Retirement System (ERS) *mission statement*. The court does not have the authority to change the charter; only the people can do so through the ballot.

We believe and hope they will take all this into consideration. The Retirement Board will be discussing the issue and will have more information at their January meeting.

For the latest information, please check the Protect Our Benefits website or Facebook.

On behalf of Protect Our Benefits, we wish you and yours a blessed holiday season.

Note: At the Dec. 14 POB meeting, POB voted to endorse Joe Driscoll for reelection to the Retirement Board.

Travel Committee Report

By Beverly Pardini and
Marylou Allen

Friday, Feb. 12

Visit to Monterey Bay Aquarium features expert guide for ADA-accessible 60-minute tour. Learn how they care for more than 35,000 plants and animals, make a home for a shark, grow a living kelp forest & more; lunch on your own.

Sun.-Wed., March 20-23

"Las Vegas at Leisure" includes three nights at the downtown Golden Nugget, roundtrip deluxe motor coach transportation, baggage handling, escorted day trip to Laughlin on the Colorado River, and a night motor coach tour of the "strip," stopping at the Bellagio.

Wed., April 20

First stop: Stewart and Jasper Almonds, an extensive gift store located in Newman. Lunch stop: Hilmar Cheese Factory (offering a delicious menu). Continue on to Modesto and Sciabica & Sons Olive Oil for a tasting and gift store visit.

Info: Marylou at 1 (800) 334-3465 or
mrylallen@yahoo.com.

Goals: Dreams with a Deadline

By Warren Alderson,
Service Center Manager

If you are like most Americans, at least a few of your new year's resolutions had to do with money. San Francisco Federal Credit Union wants to help you go from *wishing* in January to *having* in December. These five steps can help turn your financial resolutions into realities.

- **Identify your goals.** A goal should be tangible, so that you can track progress. There are three basic goal types: short-term (under a year), mid-term (one to three years), and long-term (three-plus years). Look at the numbers. Understand your financial parameters and options by examining your income and expenses. After that, you can determine the amount you can save each month.
- **Assign a time frame.** Mark your calendar with the projected achievement date. If the goal is mid or long term, allocate progress points (i.e. "\$500 in my IRA account by June

5, \$1,000 by Dec. 12). Keep yourself motivated by flipping to those dates often.

- **Design a savings strategy.** Have the allocated savings sum automatically deducted from your paycheck or checking account and deposited into a separate savings account. It's easy, and you'll never miss what you don't see.
- **Be flexible.** Don't give up; modify! If you simply can't put the \$150 into your vacation fund this month because your transmission "blew," don't panic. You may be able to make it up over the next couple of months; or, you could revise your achievement date slightly.

There are few greater gifts that you can give yourself then pursuing—and achieving—your financial goals; which is one of the many reasons San Francisco Federal Credit Union wants to help. Call or stop in and let us help guide you toward your financial goals.

*The Firefighters are very grateful to the RECCSF members
who donated a great many toys to their holiday program.*

*Leo Martinez collected several very large bags
full of toys, and says "Thank You!"*

Membership and Subscriptions

for retired city employees as of July 31, 2015

Membership application: www.sfretirees.org; email: reccsf@att.net.

- \$48, *annual*
- \$600, *lifetime* (payable over six months in six payments of \$100 per month, or annually over six years in increments of \$100 per year)
- **Subscriptions for mailed printed copies will be available for an additional \$25 a year.**
(Exceptions may be made for members without computer access.)

News & Views is the publication of the Retired Employees of the City & County of San Francisco, Inc., a nonprofit organization. *News & Views* is published to express the policies, ideals and accomplishments of the organization. Nothing shall be published herein that is racist, sexist or ageist, or that is derogatory toward religious beliefs and other personal issues; nor shall be published anything in violation of Article VII, Section 1 of the RECCSF constitution. Editorial contributions from individuals, organizations and groups other than RECCSF and its members may be included in *News & Views* only upon the approval of the Editorial Committee.

Submissions to *News & Views* are solicited and encouraged.

Submit in Word document to: sheilamullen@mac.com, or

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News & Views

January 2016

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Claire Zvanski, President

Linda Tabor-Beck,
First Vice President

John Madden,
Second Vice President

Secretary, Vacant

George Lau, Treasurer

Leo Martinez, Sergeant-at-Arms

Executive Board Meeting

Jan. 19, 10 a.m.

Taraval Police Station
2345-24th Ave.

All interested parties welcome.

Note to members:

Please keep RECCSF updated
with changes in address,
phone number and email.

News & Views

February Deadline:

☛ Friday, Jan. 15, 5:30 p.m.

Please email your submissions to:
sheilamullen@mac.com.

Letters to the Editor of 50 words or less welcome.

All letters subject to further editing.

Visit our website:

sfretirees.org

RECCSF office

email address:

reccsf@att.net

Welcome, New Retirees

Upcoming General Membership Meeting

Wednesday, Jan. 13

Wellness and Nutrition Coach Al Garza

Mr. Garza will share strategies to
help begin a healthy 2016!

