

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

The November meeting was scheduled as a “board forum,” and did not include regular business. President Karen Breslin and Dr. Stephen Follensbee spoke about their experiences at the International Foundation of Employee Benefits (IFEB) conference. Dr. Follensbee commented that he was impressed to learn that the Health Service System continues to remain in the forefront of health care practices.

Consultant AON Hewitt provided an analysis of the pricing effects of healthcare delivery system consolidations. Hospitals are being consolidated and purchased by large corporations. Walgreen’s, CVS, Safeway, and other chains are now providing inoculations and on-site clinics. Major corporations such as J.P. Morgan, Berkshire Hathaway and Amazon are creating their own healthcare plans for their employees. Physician groups are being consolidated and acquired by health plans and hospital systems. Sigma purchased Express Scripts, which impacts drug costs. There are also the efforts by major carriers, such as Humana and Aetna, that attempt to acquire other large carriers. Some mergers have been blocked to prevent monopolization. Evaluating the impact in California, especially northern California, has revealed that San Jose was 65% higher than the national average and San Francisco was 49% higher. Only Anchorage, Alaska was higher (the highest nationally). The HSS Strategic Plan goal is “affordable and sustainable” through the objective that focuses on investing in an integrated delivery model that will enhance care deliveries, improve care outcomes, and reduce

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Retirement Committee Report

By Claire Zvanski and Herb Weiner

Public comment began with a small group of laid-off Toys R Us employees asking SFERS to appeal to, or disinvest from, a specific hedge fund that deliberately purchased Toys R Us, in order to close it for financial gain.

- The value of the fund diminished from \$25.3B to \$24.5B between Sept. 30 and Oct. 31. CIO Bill Coaker attributed the stock losses to uncertainty about the election results, trade disputes with China, and rising interest rates.
- Board actuarial advisor Cheiron presented a series of options regarding reducing the discount rate below 7.5%, in combination with extending the supplemental COLA amortization to 10 years, with a 5-year phase-in. The recommendation to adopt a 7.4% discount rate, along with changing the amortization to 10 years, would not impact contribution rates for both employers and employees in the short term. The change in the amortization reflects best practices for retiree benefits and is designed to not exceed the average expected future lifetime of members receiving the benefit. SFERS’ members in pay status have an expected future lifetime of 17.5 years. Basically, this means that there is a greater likelihood supplemental COLAS will be earned for those who were active between 1997 and 2012. Several options were presented, including a reduction to 7.25%. It was also pointed out that the 7.5% rate is the highest in California. The board adopted the reduction to 7.4% with the 10-year amortization of supplemental COLAS.

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December Calendar

Annual Holiday Party

Wednesday, Dec. 12, 10 a.m.

San Francisco Scottish Rite
Masonic Temple

2850-19th Ave. at Sloat Blvd.

News & Views

Editorial Committee Meeting

No meeting in December.

Executive Board Meeting

No meeting in December.

Public Meetings:

Retired Firefighters & Spouses Association

Thursday, Jan. 17

Time and place to be determined.

Veteran Police Officers

Tuesday, Jan. 8, 11 a.m.

San Francisco Scottish Rite
Masonic Center,

2850-19th Ave. & Sloat Blvd.

Retirement System

Wednesday, Dec. 12, 1 p.m.

1145 Market St., 6th Floor

Health Service System

Thursday, Dec. 13, 1 p.m.

City Hall, Room 416

UESF Retired Division

For time/location, contact:

Rudi Faltus 1 (415) 956-8373

uesfrd01@gmail.com

SEIU Annual Holiday Party

Monday, Dec. 17, 12 noon

Henry’s Hunan

475 Mission St.

RSVP: David Williams

1 (415) 939-5149 or

iamdhw@comcast.net

SEIU 1021 West Bay Retirees Chapter

Monday, Jan. 28, 12-2 p.m.

Union Hall, 350 Rhode Island St.,

100 South Bldg.

Contact: David Williams

1 (415) 939-5149 or

iamdhw@comcast.net

Health Service Committee Report

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costs over time.

Catalyst for Payment Reform (CPR) brings employers and other healthcare purchasers together to get better value for their healthcare spending. The mission is to **implement strategies that produce higher value health care and improve the functioning of the healthcare marketplace.** Traditional fee-for-service plans underlie all of the creative payment options, including capitation (monthly fees, per patient, that cover all treatment costs). Quality remains a significant driving force in pricing. Payment reform, including shared risk and transparency, impacts medical practices; for example, reducing the number of Cesarean deliveries, when early elective deliveries were no longer paid by Medicaid.

The HSS strategic plan goal to engage and support is about partnering with members and collaborating with stakeholders, in order to advance member health literacy and enhance engagement.

Also included: providing resources, tools, and services to support informed decisions and actions, including well-

being programs.

“Patient-centered medical homes” is apparently a new phrase for an old concept. In 2010, President Obama said: “It used to be that most of us had a family doctor... How do we get more primary physicians...so that they are the hub around which a patient-centered medical system exists?”

Primary care requires a team these days. As dictated by HMOs, physicians are limited to spending 10 minutes with each patient. Many plans are encouraging physician access via computer for “virtual” visits, as well. Primary care offices now have physician assistants and nurses who evaluate and provide many routine services that don’t require direct physician contact. This team-based care is the future of primary care, and allows for many more patients to be treated in a limited time.

How will virtual visits be billed? Will HMOs and health plans also adjust capitations and fees for service to reflect team services? While quality remains a significant concern, apparently it’s still all about the money!

Questions? Comments? Contact Claire Zvanski at czvanski@hotmail.com.

Retirement Committee Report

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- The first statement made when the board reconvened in open session was that the item revealing the recommendation of the RFP (request for proposal) finalist for the third party administration of the deferred compensation plan would be continued to the Dec.12 meeting. A number of employees and representatives from employee organizations testified in previous meetings regarding the anticipated recommendation, and the desire to not

change the administrator.

- Staff changes continue with the exit of Security Analyst in Real Assets Ashley Dennig. (Apparently, she was given an offer that she couldn’t refuse.) Tanya Kemp has been named interim managing director of private markets, with responsibility for managing SFERS’ investments in private equity, venture capital, real estate and natural resources, totaling more than \$8 billion. Ms. Kemp served on the private markets team for nearly 10 years.
- There will be an Investment Committee meeting on Dec. 19, 2018. Managing Director of Asset Allocation, Risk Management and Innovative Solutions Anna Lang will present a liquidity analysis, cash flow forecasting from Cambridge, Asset Allocation and Risk Review for SFERS trust as a whole.
- Executive Director Jay Huish noted that on Dec. 5 the California Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in *CalFire Local 2881, et al. v. CalPERS, et al*, the first of five pending vested rights cases that are currently before it.

Questions? Comments?

Contact Claire Zvanski at czvanski@hotmail.com or Herb Weiner at h.weiner@sbc.global.net.

RECCSF Officers

Claire Zvanski, President

Mary Anne McGuire-Hickey, First Vice President

John “Skee” Tostanoski, Second Vice President

Bonnie Bompert, Secretary

George Lau, Treasurer

Leo Martinez, Sergeant at Arms

Board Members

Richard Bridygham

Carol Cochran

Thomas Dang

Adlai “AJ” Jew

Sharon Johnson

Stephanie M. Lyons

Raymond Mason

Jerry Maxwell

Sheila Mullen

Linda Tabor-Beck

Tim O’Brien

David Williams

Nov. 20 Board Meeting Results

- Accepted Treasurer’s Report.
- Accepted Oct. 16 minutes with one correction.

President's Message

By Claire Zvanski

Holidays usually mean happy times, but not for everyone. I am reminded that it is also a time of high anxiety, deep depression and loss. As city retirees we are fortunate to have mental health benefits. Coping with depression, anxiety and grief is not easy, and these conditions usually don't resolve themselves over time.

Therapists are specially trained to help you work through these conditions. If you broke your arm or developed the flu, you would seek treatment from your physician. So, if you are anxious, depressed or experiencing

grief, then you need to seek treatment, as well. I am only mentioning a few emotional and mental conditions to remind you that you are not alone, and seeking treatment is always best.

Many organizations are asking for donations during the holidays. If you believe in the mission of RECCSF to represent and defend your benefits and your issues as city retirees, then we request that you include RECCSF in your giving plan. It is our intent to remain viable and active long into the future, and we can only accomplish that with your ongoing support.

May all your holidays be happy and healthy.



Questions? Comments? Please feel free to contact me at 1 (415) 341-3085 or czvanski@hotmail.com.

Save the Date



**Wednesday, December 12,
10 a.m.**



Annual RECCSF Holiday Party

Scottish Rite Masonic Temple, 2850-19th Ave., at Sloat Blvd.



Firefighters, Local 798, Annual Toy Program

If you can, please bring **new** unwrapped toys to the Dec. 12 holiday party, to help disadvantaged kids have a happy holiday.

(Checks payable to SFFD Toy Program are also gratefully accepted.)

If you are unable to attend, please feel free to drop off your donation at any San Francisco Fire Station.

Bequests

RECCSF is grateful to any members who remember our organization in their estate planning.

Useful Phone Numbers

RECCSF Office

Email: reccsf@att.net

Web site: sfretirees.org

Phone Number:

1 (415) 681-5949

Health Service System

Web site: myhss.org

Phone Numbers:

1 (415) 554-1750

1 (800) 541-2266

S.F. Retirement System

Web site: sfgov.org/sfers

Phone Numbers:

1 (415) 487-7000

1 (888) 849-0777

MEMBERS CONNECT



RECCSF 2nd Vice President “Skee” Tostanoski and his bride, Andrita, at their cousin’s daughter’s wedding in Tucson, Arizona. From left, newlyweds Zarek and Hannah, Andrita and Skee.



Saguro National Forest, showing some of the awesome Saguaro cactus that are at least 160 years old.



This is Boot Hill Cemetery, historically significant because it includes the names of those who died at the OK Corral, as well as others. It was fascinating — and sad — reading the tombstones of such famous characters of the old west.

We need member photos!

Since our general membership meetings are now scheduled bi-monthly, our editor will welcome personal photos of our members—at work or play—to be published in *News & Views* in non-meeting months.

Just be sure to include captions with member name and activity description, and email to sheilamullen@mac.com.

Images suitable for publication will be printed as space allows.

Breezing Through the Holidays

From Your Friends at San Francisco Federal Credit Union

Make a Plan

- Set a budget and stick to it.
- Make a gift list that includes the people you would like to buy for, gift ideas, and a price range.
- Plan ahead to make time for holiday errands.

Other Tips

- Know the store's refund or exchange policy, and ask for gift receipts.
- Call the stores first to see if they have

what you are looking for.

- Use the Internet and catalogs, if you prefer.
- Throw a potluck, appetizer, or desert party instead of a full dinner party.
- Send holiday postcards instead of more expensive greeting cards.
- Reduce stress by reducing the amount of your social engagements.

Also, consider applying for our Visa Platinum Rewards credit card. It offers one of the lowest interest rates in the Bay Area, plus 1% cash back on purchases, no annual fee, and other benefits.

Apply at SanFranciscoFCU.com, call (415) 775-5377, Option #4, or stop by one of our branch offices.

Take advantage of the many benefits of being a member of the San Francisco Federal Credit Union. Become a member today!

This article is courtesy of, and provided by, the credit union's financial partner, BALANCE. As a benefit of belonging to San Francisco Federal Credit Union, you have access to personal financial counseling at no charge through BALANCE. We are always here to help. Please visit any of our branches, or call us at (415) 775-5377.

No Executive Board or Editorial Committee meetings being held in December.

The San Francisco Zoo needs you!

Looking for a meaningful activity in your spare time? Consider becoming a zoo docent. If you love animals, enjoy sharing information with others, and think that it's important to conserve wildlife, this activity is for you.



demonstration, and a brief tour. To participate, call 1 (415) 753-7122 or email docent@sfzoo.org.

Come to the Zoo's special event on Sunday, Jan. 20, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon, and find out what being a docent is all about. The event includes light refreshments, a powerpoint presentation, a biofact



Happy Holidays

Protect Our Benefits

By Skip McKinney

Protect Our Benefits is an organization whose goals are to enhance the dignity and quality of life of all San Francisco City and County retirees and preserve their health and retirement benefits. The opinions are those of the writer.

CCSF V. SFERS (PRE-1996)

We are still awaiting a court date. The last update we received was that the case was put on a “conference list,” which is the step that precedes the assigning of a court date.

There has been some movement at the California supreme court level. Cal Fire, Local 2881, vs. CalPERS, the first of the five pending vested rights cases currently before it, at this writing is scheduled to hear oral arguments on Dec. 5, 2018. This is the case in which Governor Brown has taken a special interest in order to put a dent in the so-called “California rule,” the

precedent that forbids public agencies from reducing pension benefits for current employees and retirees unless they provide additional compensation to offset the loss of income. POB will be monitoring.

Health Service System

Open enrollment is completed, and we hope that the plan you selected proves satisfactory. If not, please direct any problems or complaints directly to HSS. The plans contain performance ratings, and we want to ensure that you are receiving the best care. If you have not done so already, please be sure to get your flu shot.

SFERS Retirement Board

SFERS projects that investment returns for October declined approximately -3.25%. The sharpest decline was in public equity—36% of the assets—by -7.06%. Uncertainty about the election results, trade disputes with China, and rising interest rates all contributed to the sharp decline in stocks.

The Absolute Return portfolio, a hedge against a down market, declined by approximately -1.25%, but is still positive on a calendar year basis.

Protect Our Benefits

I hope that you have had a chance to visit our website, protectourbenefits.org, which has substantially improved in relation to our history and our mission.

Since POB now has its website up and running, I need to hang up my writing quill. Due to personal commitments and time constraints, this will be my last article submitted to the RECCSF *News and Views*. I want to thank the editorial staff of *News and Views* for permitting me to submit my monthly articles, and hope to “catch you” on the website.

Your continuing contributions are greatly appreciated, and are tax deductible. Please mail them to Protect Our Benefits Trust, P.O. 2120250, San Francisco, CA 94121-0250.

Remember:

“United we stand; divided we fall.”



RECCSF is seeking donations for our Dec. 12 annual holiday party raffle.

“Cash is king,” and *new* donated items are also welcome for the raffle.

If you can help, please mail monetary donations to the office or bring to the event.

Please bring your new, unwrapped gifts to the event.

Upcoming General Membership Meeting

Wednesday, December 12, 10 a.m.

Annual RECCSF Holiday Party

Scottish Rite Masonic Temple, 2850-19th Ave., at Sloat Blvd.

(Parking available in lower level garage.)

Mark your calendars now!

RECCSF is seeking donations for our Dec. 12 annual holiday party raffle.

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Please bring your **new, unwrapped** gifts to the event.

News & Views

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Volume 119, Number 11

Sheila Mullen, Editor

Office: 1 (415) 681-5949

Office email: reccsf@att.net

Executive Board Meeting

No meeting in December

Note to members:

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

News & Views

January Deadline:

☛ Friday, Dec. 14, 5:30 p.m.

Please email your submissions to:

sheilamullen@mac.com.

Letters to the editor and opinion pieces are welcome.

All submissions subject to further editing.

Visit our website:

sfretirees.org

RECCSF office

email:

reccsf@att.net

3915 Irving St.,

San Francisco, CA 94122

Membership and Subscriptions

for retired city employees

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

Active city employees within five years of retirement are eligible to join RECCSF.

- \$48, *annual*
- \$600, *lifetime* (payable over four months in four payments of \$150 per month, or annually over four years in increments of \$150 per year)
- Members without computer access should contact the RECCSF office at 1 (415) 681-5949.

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

Sheila Mullen, editor, RECCSF office, 3915 Irving St., San Francisco, CA 94122-1294

Telephone: 1 (415) 681-5949



I want to know!

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RECCSF

Retired Employees of the City and County of San Francisco

