

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors
Retired Employees of Alameda County
Monday September 11, 2023, 9:30 A.M.
Zoom Video Conferencing Board Meeting**

Dawn Stevenson, Vice President of the Board, called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM

Roll Call: Dawn Stevenson, Paul Reeves, Connie Land, Suman Sharma, Kathy Foster, Cynthia Baron, Linda Slater, and Liz Koppenhaver were present. Michael Fara, ACERA Communications Manager, Charo Panesi-Guerra, REAC Member and Administrative Assistant, and Marsha Rice, REAC Member, were also present.

Minutes: Minutes of the August 14, 2023 REAC Board meeting were reviewed. Paul noted a spelling error in the August 14th Minutes. In the last paragraph of the Guest Speaker item, Ronica was incorrectly spelled as “Ronda”. Connie moved that the August 14, 2023 REAC Board Minutes be approved as corrected. Cynthia seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

Announcements & Communications: Suman announced his retirement from the REAC Board, and as the REAC Board Treasurer, effective October 1, 2023. He mentioned that it was a great pleasure serving on the Board, and getting to work with very dedicated individuals. He also wanted to thank Connie Land for all the help and assistance she gave him during his time on the Board. The Board took a moment to thank Suman for all his efforts on behalf of all retirees, and the positive contributions he continually made on behalf of the REAC Board. Liz also thanked Suman for his patience and guidance explaining the intricacies of the Treasurer’s duties and responsibilities.

Connie moved that the Board elect Liz to the position of Treasurer effective October 1, 2023. Kathy seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

Connie reported that she received a call from a member who received a letter from ACERA asking her to certify the benefits she was receiving. In addition, the letter asked for her name, her address, and her date of birth. The member was concerned because she had never received a letter like that from ACERA, and given the high number of scams perpetrated against seniors, she thought it might not be a legitimate request. Connie contacted Mike and Jessica Huffman at ACERA, to determine if ACERA was actually sending out those letters. They confirmed that the letter our member received was a legitimate request. It was sent from ACERA’s Internal Audit Division. Connie suggested that ACERA may want to notify all retirees that they may receive requests from ACERA which are legitimate. If they are unsure, or concerned, they should always check with ACERA before they release any personal information.

Kathy agreed that adding something in the Newsletter regarding the topic would be a good idea. She asked Mike if that was something he could do. Mike also agreed that sending out additional information regarding the issue would certainly help retirees. He will work of developing an article which retirees can use as a reference tool when deciding how to respond to letters from ACERA, etc.

ACERA: Michael Fara, ACERA Communications Manager, provided his report on the September 6, 2023 Retirees Committee meeting. There was one Action Item and two Information Items.

The Action Item was a discussion and possible motion to recommend that the Board of Retirement approve maintaining the current hearing aid benefit allowance for Medicare and Early (non-Medicare eligible) retirees enrolled in the Kaiser Permanente group medical plan. After a brief discussion, the Retirees Committee voted to recommend to the Board of Retirement a motion to maintain the current hearing aid benefit allowance for Kaiser Permanente Medicare and Early (non-Medicare eligible) enrollees for Plan Year 2024.

The first Information Item was a presentation on the renewal of Alameda County's medical plan contracts for the 2024 Plan Year. The purpose of the presentation was to present rates and plan design changes, which resulted from the Plan Year (PY) 2024 renewal negotiations between the County of Alameda and its medical carriers, Kaiser and United Health Care (UHC).

The overall blended (i.e., for actives, subgroups and early retirees) rate increase for Kaiser is 14.07%. The final rate increase for UHC is 13.48% for both Signature Value (SV) and Signature Value Advantage (SVA). The Kaiser Permanente Senior Advantage (KPSA) plan is increasing by 11.84%.

Kaiser indicated that the higher than usual rate renewal was based on inflation, labor shortages, and the ongoing recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Kaiser also noted that an increasing demand for care has driven utilization much higher, at the same time that inflation and labor shortages substantially increased the cost of care delivery.

United Health Care also indicated their increase was partially due to a "return to normal", a curtailment of needed medical services, which occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, inflationary trends, and labor shortages. They also experienced an increase in "high-cost" claimants and "high" inpatient and outpatient utilization among the UHC membership, as compared to normative benchmarks which contributed to the higher rates.

ACERA will be sending out the Open Enrollment packets in October, prior to the Open Enrollment period which begins in November. The rate increase information will be one of the items included in Open Enrollment the packets.

The second Information Item was a discussion regarding Kaiser's Senior Advantage Plan Optional Riders for Plan Year 2024. For Plan Year 2024, Kaiser is offering the Silver & Fit benefit in the base renewal, which equates to a charge of \$2.80 per member per month (PMPM) which is no change from the previous year. Kaiser did provide a summary of the Silver & Fit utilization in 2023. Roughly 10% of the Kaiser Senior Advantage members utilized the program. The program included a free gym membership, at thousands of participating gyms, and a home fitness kit, or both. ACERA will be sending out a survey to all the Kaiser Senior Advantage members, for whom they have email addresses, regarding their opinions of the Silver & Fit benefit. Cynthia also mentioned that the Retirees Committee asked ACERA staff to provide them with some cost figures as to what the program is actually costing, and is it cost effective.

Charo asked if any consideration was being given to allowing the Early Retirees, who are not yet Medicare eligible, to participate in the Silver & Fit program, assuming there was sufficient interest.

Mike thought it would be useful to also survey Early Retirees, to determine if that was a program they would be interested in using. He will investigate a bit more and let us know.

In addition to Silver & Fit, Kaiser has offered ACERA additional Kaiser Senior Advantage Rider options. The first rider was an Over-the-Counter (OTC) Benefit which would cost \$1.75 PMPM. It would include a \$70 quarterly benefit limit for OTC products. The next rider was a Meals Rider which would cost \$2.00 PMPM and allow up to 84 meals (3 meals per day for up to 4 weeks) post discharge from an inpatient or skilled nursing facility. Kaiser also offered a Transportation Rider which would cost \$2.50 PMPM. It would provide routing and post-discharge transportation coverage up to 24 one-way trips per year to medically-related appointments. There would be a 50-mile radius per trip. These riders were offered by Kaiser for Plan Year 2023, but the Board declined to add them. Given the sharp increase in our Health Plan rates, it does not seem likely the Board would elect to add those costs.

Kaiser also offered Hearing Aid Benefit options to the HMO Early Retiree Plan as well as the KPSA Plan. Unfortunately, given the rate increases in our Kaiser 2024 Plan, it was felt that the additional cost would be too high. Kathy mentioned that there was some discussion regarding the possibility of having some sort of Ad Hoc Rider, which would allow individuals to participate. Perhaps they could be reimbursed for a portion of the cost, through something like a Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) account. ACERA will send a request to Via Benefits to see if something like that could be arranged. They should hear back sometime in October.

Treasurer's Report: Liz presented the August 2023 Treasurer's Report.

The check book beginning balance was \$113,012.55. Total receipts were \$8,116.41 and total disbursements were \$7,253.96. We received membership dues totaling \$7,614.00 and \$500.00 from the 1st United Credit Union for their advertisement in the Newsletter. Disbursements included officer stipends, Newsletter Layout, and Select Staffing payments. In addition, Red Arrow, who did not submit an invoice for last month, submitted two invoices this month which brings them current. The total amount was \$4,131.37. We also made a \$200 deposit to the Fairview Metropolitan Golf Course facility which will be used for the October 16, 2023 Fall Luncheon. Liz and Alicia were able to transfer \$50,000 from the REAC checking account into a 13 month CD at 4.05%. The ending check book balance was \$63,875.00 and our total assets are \$245,260.80. Paul moved that the August 2023 Treasurer's Report be approved as submitted. Linda seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

CRCEA (California Retired County Employees Association): Connie provided her CRCEA report. The August Executive Committee meeting was held on August 16, 2023. During the meeting the CY 2024 Proposed Budget was presented. The total Budget was \$48,698.00. The total Budget for CY 2023 is \$46,058.00. The Proposed Budget will be voted on at the Fall Conference Business meeting. Jerry Jacobs submitted his resignation as Chair of the CRCEA Audit/Finance Committee. Melanie Seton (Contra Costa County) volunteered to step in as Chair for the Audit/Finance Committee. Jerry Jacobs is a member of REAC and was formerly a REAC Board member.

Everything is on schedule for the CRCEA Fall Conference. At the time of the August 16, 2023 meeting, the Conference Brainstorming Subcommittee had not met. The Conference Brainstorming subsequently met on September 5, 2023. They reviewed the Spring Conference Survey results. They discussed the feasibility of Associations working together to host conferences, ways to pay for conference expenses,

conference format, etc. Lots of discussions, but no decisions were made. Another meeting will be scheduled soon. The Conference Brainstorming Subcommittee, of which Connie is a member, is expected to provide recommendations for the CRCEA Fall Conference.

The CRCEA 2023 Fall Conference will be held October 1, 2023 thru October 4, 2023 at the Hilton Hotel in Stockton. The host county is Retired Public Employees of San Joaquin County (RPESJC). Hotel room rates are \$159 per night plus taxes (includes self-parking). The Draft Agenda and Registration Form were sent to Delegates. The deadline for the Conference Registration and Hotel Reservations passed on September 8, 2023.

The registration form is now available on the CRCEA website (www.crcea.org). Some of the topics for discussion are: Senior Fraud and Prevention, Senior Health Care & Insurance Information, National Parks-Senior Passes, and Senior Homelessness, and Legislative Updates. Kathy mentioned that she has signed up for the Conference, but she has not yet seen a finalized conference agenda. Connie mentioned that they only have a draft agenda, but they should have a final version soon.

As a reminder, it's REAC's turn to host a CRCEA Conference in the Fall of 2025. It's not too early to start planning. A lot of ideas were picked up at the most recent CRCEA Spring Conference. Connie is planning to convene a conference planning meeting sometime this month.

CalPERS Lawsuit Update: There was no new information to report.

SACRS (State Association of County Retirement Systems): Paul reported that SACRS has added two new topics to the SACRS 2023 Fall Conference. One will be a session on "Sexual Harassment Prevention Training for Local Agency Officials" and the other will be "Ethics Training for California Public Officials: More than a Concept." The Conference is being held November 7-10, 2023 at the Omni Rancho Las Palmas Resort & Spa in Rancho Mirage, California. Kathy mentioned that she will be attending the Conference and will be presenting on a panel. That is great news. We will be well represented.

New Business: There was no new business to report.

Retirement Board: There was no additional information to report.

Investment Committee: There was no new information to report.

Health Care (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention): Linda reported that the CDC Website is now saying that the total number of hospitalizations and deaths from COVID-19 are now very low Nationwide. CDC also reported a new variant was identified. It is referred to as **BA.2.86**. It has now been detected in 5 States, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Texas and Virginia.

The CDC is continuing to recommend masking any time you are in public areas or when you are traveling. Linda recommended that we remind our members to sign up for ACERA Health Alerts. ACERA sends them to all members who have provided ACERA with their email addresses. The updates contain valuable information regarding health-related issues. The CDC is also advising people to get their annual flu shots.

Activities: Dawn reported, on behalf of Alicia, that invitations have been sent out for the Fall Luncheon. There will be two guest speakers. Someone from ACERA will provide updates and answer questions and Amanda Burton from 1st United Credit Union will speak about online Fraud and Prevention.

The planning for REAC's Fall Luncheon, which will be held on October 16th, is proceeding nicely. Charo reported that she has received 33 responses from individuals who will attend the luncheon.

Membership and Recruitment: Charo reported that as of August 31, 2023, membership stood at 3,821 members, which is slightly lower than the previous month.

REAC Website: Dawn had several questions regarding the "Upcoming Events" portion of the Website. She wanted to know who added Upcoming Events to the website, and what events could be added? She also wanted to know, in the Calendar section of the website, where it says, "Check Back for Details" who is responsible for adding that additional information. Since Paul is the liaison with our webmaster, all that sort of information should be sent to Paul and he will see that it is added to the website. Since the website is still evolving, a number of Dawn's suggestions can be added to the website, and additional discussions need to take place to clarify any duplication on the site, and to make it easy for our members to use.

REAC News: Dawn will be creating the Presidents Message for the next REAC News. She will introduce herself, and provide some information about her County work history. She will mention the Fall Luncheon, some information regarding the hearing aid benefit, information on the ACERA Health Fair, some information on ACERA's internal audit process, a big Thank You to Suman for his service, and that we appointed Liz as the next Treasurer.

Other Reports: No information to report.

Old Business: No information to report. .

For the Good of the Order: The Board thanked Dawn for covering for Alicia in her absence.

Meeting adjourned at: 10:48 am

Respectfully submitted by Paul Reeves, Board Secretary

Next Board Meeting: Monday, October 9, 2023, 9:30 am
Zoom Video Conferencing Board Meeting

REAC Fall Luncheon: Monday, October 16, 2023
Fairview Metropolitan Golf Course, 10051 Doolittle Drive, Oakland
11:30 am – No Host Cocktails
12; 15 pm – Buffet Luncheon