

**July 15, 2009 Minutes of the Omaha Works Retiree Group  
At the IBEW Union Hall**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Lyle Nicholson called the meeting to order.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** We all stood for the pledge of allegiance.

**ROLL CALL:** Present were Lyle Nicholson, Dan Kovar, Pauline Lieth, Andy Barges, Jim Filipiak, John Barnes, Bill Love, Bev Opfer, John Pinkerton, Mary Jo Pinkerton, Edie Riester and Ray Sempek.

Absent were Howard Clark, Everett Peterson, Martha Ross and Cheryl Todd.

**DECEASED RETIREES:** A list of deaths was announced since our April 15<sup>th</sup> meeting. We all stood for a moment of silence.

**HEARING IMPAIRED INTERPRETER:** She was absent.

**MINUTES:** Pauline read a summary of the April 15<sup>th</sup> minutes. Motion was made by Charlie Newell to accept the minutes as read, seconded, all ayes, and motion was carried.

<b>TREASURER'S REPORT:</b>	Beginning balance -	\$1629.23	April 15, 2009
	Deposits -	468.00	
	Hall Rental -	<u>100.00</u>	
	Final Balance -	\$1930.48	July 15, 2009

**DONATION BUCKETS:** John Barnes and Bill Love passed the donation buckets.

**OLD BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR:** Stated by Lyle, we are still looking for some others to join us on the board. We need your help.

**NEW BUSINESS FROM THE CHAIR:**

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS:** Jim Filipiak gave this report: Lyle Nicholson, President; Dan Kovar, Vice President; Pauline Lieth, Secretary; Andy Barges, Treasurer; Executive Board members are Jim Filipiak, John Barnes, Howard Clark, Bill Love, John Pinkerton, Mary Jo Pinkerton, Edie Riester, and Ray Sempek. Supporters of our Executive Board are Everett Peterson and Martha Ross.

**JRHC REPORT AND DIABETES INFORMATION:** Ray Sempek gave this report.

**REPORT ON ALCATEL – LUCENT FINANCIALS:** Dan gave this report that they have a surplus that the healthcare committee is keeping that we think is around \$16 million if we can get the \$35 million that goes to the company for the Medi D subsidy we wouldn't have to pay monthly premiums. This has to go through Congress so that probably won't work to well. There was bad management of the money and they did a bad job of investing in which they ended up losing a lot of money; then they hired better outside sources that did a better job of handling the money, actually transferring it into bonds before the market fell apart and we came out better that way, they didn't run the company very good but they did hire someone took care of our healthcare fund.

There was a question from the floor if the government comes up with a plan to take care of us what then? They have a long ways to go on this issue and remember that the company has never used a penny of their own money for our healthcare because our pension is over funded and it is all out of our money.

**ACTION ALERT – Report by Pauline from an email from NRLN;** we are encouraged that the help committee has taken a step in our direction. With your ongoing support, we continue advocating our healthcare agenda with Senators who are drafting other healthcare proposals and with Representatives who are still working on healthcare bills in the House. This is where it's at the Senate and the House and this administration.

There was also another positive development in the Senate for retirees last week. The thousands of emails that NRLN Grassroots Network members have been sending to Congress opposing the taxing of employer-sponsored healthcare benefits have gotten the attention of some Senators. A recent news article reported that Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid said that taxing healthcare benefits is "dead". However, Senator Max Baucus, Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, is still insisting that everything is on the table, including taxing healthcare benefits. Therefore, we must continue to hammer away on this issue with Senators and Representatives in a effort to prevent the taxing of employer-sponsored healthcare benefits.

Addressing the issues affecting the uninsured is important, but Congress must not be allowed to take from middle-class retirees who have suffered losses and give to those who have less and call that "comprehensive" healthcare reform. Taxing workers and retirees for the employer-sponsored healthcare benefits they receive would be a step in the wrong direction.

Another fearsome proposal being considered is raising the threshold for taking itemized tax deductions on personal health cost to 10% of adjusted gross income from 7.5% currently; another tax hike aimed squarely at retirees and older Americans in general.

**We are also extremely alarmed over the proposals to cut the costs of Medicare and Medicaid between \$200 billion and \$400 billion during the next 10 years.**

**THE PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS:** We don't want any appointed commissioner telling us who can live or die.

**CSMI and AVAYA REPORT:** Edie gave the following; Avaya reached a tentative agreement on a contract are on the handouts at the door if it gets ratified. All the ballots have to be returned to the CWA no later than July 21<sup>st</sup> and the results will be announced July 22<sup>nd</sup>. Edie got an email from Steve Brockway, which is Avaya's healthcare coordinator, and that is where she gets all of her information.

**Edie was interrupted by retiree Vicki Gunderlap collapsing:** The rescue squad was called and she was taken to the hospital.

**Going forward, Edie informed us that Steve's position is being merged with a ERC and an Avaya transfer program coordinator since they only have 126 active IBEW members back in N.J. He will put her in touch with the person taking his job.**

**Steve has been just excellent and has gotten back with Edie on simply everything.**

**The company would never pay for a trip here like Lucent does for Bryan in which Ray was just talking about.**

**The plan will take effect January 1, 2010. There will be no premiums subjected.**

**Connectivity meeting was held here at the union hall on June 16<sup>th</sup> with Dan Beult, Connie Carlson, and VAS (Volunteers Assisting Seniors). Pam Roberts is very good with this program. Brad Schultz was there interpreting for the hearing impaired.**

**Dan Beult opened the meeting by saying how they want to help the Connectivity retirees during their transition period and they hope to hold more meetings in the future. We wanted to have VAS come to this meeting, but we thought it was just too soon and there may be a lot of confusion between Lucent, Avaya and Connectivity retirees, it also was just too soon after that meeting and people might get bored.**

**Connie Carlson was in the back after the meeting to answer questions. VAS has no charge for their services, Pam explained about how the program will help the Connectivity retirees with their legal assistance; educate people about Medicare, what happens when you loose your medical insurance. If anyone is on Medicare Part B they want to call Jay Vick and get that lined up. They will reimburse you 100% beginning July 1<sup>st</sup>. They do not want to pay you in advance in case you die.**

**If you are over 65 you may want to contact VAS and set up an appointment with them one on one. You loose your medical, prescription drugs and dental. This is very important because you have a 63 day window there once you loose your insurance to sign up for Medicare Part B. The clock starts ticking July 1 and if you don't sign up you have to pay a penalty. Edie had 6 or 7 handouts for Connectivity retirees and if she ran out they were to contact Connie Carlson and she was sure she could get you one. Once you are 65 you loose your life insurance, but you still have**

**supplemental insurance. Check your pension check to see if it is the right amount. There were about 70 Connectivity retirees at the meeting on June 16<sup>th</sup>. There is still an unfair labor practice lawsuit filed and we have to wait and see how that comes out. You might want to check and see if you are covered under your spouses insurance.**

**OTHER RETIREES: Lyle asked if anyone knows of other retirees from different states and if they belong to any associations like ours.**

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING: Lyle announced our next meeting will be October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2009.**

**MEETING ADJOURNED: Sue Dillinger made a motion to adjourn, it was seconded, all ayes, motion carried. Meeting was adjourned.**