

## **BREA Zoom Meeting Minutes 11/09/21**

Minutes recorded by L. Miller

Contact Information:

Brookhaven Retired Employees Association BREA

BNL Bldg. 400A

BERA Recreation/ Attention BREA Meeting

Upton, NY 11973

**Present:** A. Moodenbaugh, J. Baum, D. Cox, J. Falco, L. Feierabend, A.J. Feldman, L. Fishbone, V. Ghosh, R. Hackenburg, L. Hanson, M. Israel, L. Kouchinsky, J. Lemley, B. Leonhardt, B. Lin, L. Miller, T. Roser, M. Rowe, S. Shapiro, D. Sievers, B. Siskind, E. Sperry, G. Williams

**Officers 2020-2022:** President: Arnold Moodenbaugh, Vice President: Lillian Kouchinsky, Secretary: Laura Miller, Treasurer: Les Fishbone, Membership Secretary: Beth Lin, Newsletter Editor: Mona Rowe

### **1. Call to Order. Arnie Moodenbaugh**

Meeting called to order at 1:01 pm.

### **2. Minutes of October meeting. Laura Miller.**

The revised October minutes were sent to the Board prior to this meeting. The Board will send approvals to Laura separately after the meeting. If a majority of the board approves, Laura will have the minutes posted on BREA's website.

Poll to members present today: if a majority of those present approve, Laura can post future minutes after receiving a majority approval from the Board. Poll approved by show of hands.

### **3. Treasurer's Report. Les Fishbone**

Les was not sure he would be at this meeting, so he emailed his report to Arnie and Laura, which Laura read at today's meeting. Below is his report.

- a. I did give to TFCU the CD instructions previously adopted.
- b. Two checks written to BSA for newsletter costs for \$587.89 were presumably cashed.
- c. Dues payments of \$90 were deposited.
- d. Thus, with respect to the September balances, the checking account would be decreased by \$497.89, the savings account would not have changed, and the one of the three CDs would have changed.
- e. The grand total at the end of October was \$29,046.98.

Motion to accept Treasurer's Report given by S. Shapiro, Gwyn seconded by G. Williams. Motion passed by show of hands.

### **4. Membership Report. Beth Yu Lin.**

Number of current paid members is 291. Number of members with email is 262. Beth received eight dues checks since the 10/12/21 BREA meeting. We added two new members this month. Beth has received some ballots, nine by email and nine by postal mail. This week she hasn't received any, and she encourages people to submit their ballot. Arnie thanked Beth for her efforts. Q: Beth sent the membership list, but it isn't posted on BREA's website.

**Action:** Beth will talk to C. Carter and R. Wagner about the links to the membership list.

Motion to accept membership report by L. Fishbone and seconded by G. Williams. Passed unanimously by show of hands.

Mona reminded us of the two BREA members who lost their HRA benefits for life due to mistakes they made when signing up for or renewing their Medicare Supplemental coverage. One person enrolled incorrectly – the Medicare enrollment site for supplements invites people to sign up directly, so she did, which immediately locked her out of BNL benefits. The other person went to an oral, in-person presentation at her retirement community. The presenter (insurance agent) said he could change her for free and he did so, which immediately revoked her lifetime benefits. Is this the year to probe that issue with HR without causing too much of a ripple? Arnie isn't completely sure how to do this. Falco recently signed up for the benefit and said he was warned about this issue, but others also signed up recently and said they weren't informed about it. In the past Mona raised questions she proposed to submit to Denise DiMeglio, but decided not to send: Is this irrevocable punishment a DOE requirement, i.e., does it work the same way at other DOE labs? What does BNL gain? Benefits are about \$50k pp, so when someone loses this benefit, BNL gains. It was also noted by several members present that the 'BSA Benefits and You' packet was received Nov. 6, sent Nov. 5, but sent out after open enrollment, which only goes through 11/15 has started. Feldman, who is in FL, says he usually doesn't receive mailed documents until after deadlines have passed. Others mentioned not receiving this announcement at all. People are confused by it; it seems to apply to us, but it doesn't. Feldman: BREA may request advocates for us who can take a role in getting clear communications to retirees in a timely manner. If we have a tighter connection to HR benefits, perhaps we could get advance notice and Arnie could send a blast email out to BREA members saying, 'Look for this upcoming mailing...'. HR is required to send these out by US postal mail. The consensus is that we need an advocate at HR looking out for retirees.

**Action:** Mona and Arnie will talk off-line.

**Action:** Louise will look at old meeting reports to find members of previous group that had been formed to work with HR.

**Action:** Mona and Arnie will form a working group to meet with HR about these issues, which will include Steve Shapiro and David Cox.

## 5. CAC Meeting Report. Mark Israel

Mark isn't here today. The next CAC meeting will be held Thursday, Nov. 11. Mark sent Arnie two presentations that were from the last meeting. One was on nuclear medicine isotope generation, what they do and how they do it at BNL. The other was on the annual environmental report. Arnie couldn't find either on the CAC website and it wasn't clear to him that presentations are posted on their website. Sievers motioned to accept this report. Lin seconded. Motion passed by voice vote. Mark will provide a summary of both the October and November CAC Meetings at the December meeting. The CAC will not meet again until March 2022.

**Action:** Arnie will send copies of the presentations to anyone who requests them.

## 6. Newsletter Report Mona Rowe

The latest newsletter isn't in print yet, but hard copies should come out soon. Next year, Mona will give them the draft earlier in October. The need for timely distribution happens every two years because of the BREA Board elections. The electronic issue has gone out. Beth welcomed Thomas Roser, who recently retired and sent his membership in yesterday. He stated that he wasn't told he had to sign up for Medicare Supplemental through SelectQuote or he would lose his benefit, only that he *should* sign up through them. Jennifer Froelich is very helpful to Mona and others. She's sympathetic to us. It would be good to have one main contact at HR and perhaps Jennifer is the one

to request.

For the next newsletter, if Mona gets the top ten science highlights of the year, she'll run it with them. If not, she may need the piece about dancing from Vinita.

US government has relaxed travel arrangements.

**Action:** Mona will look into quarantine issue for traveling to Hawaii.

**Action:** If there's anyone who does ballroom dancing, please let Mona know.

**Action:** Once the above-mentioned working group is formed, they may suggest to HR that JF become our advocate, and that it be included in her job description, or R2A2.

7. **BREA election discussion.** The current issue of the BREA Newsletter is to be mailed to all members, including those who opted for on-line access only. This will put a ballot in the hands of all members. Also, it may help with retention of members who don't regularly get the mailed newsletter.
8. **Assurance of continuity for BREA activities and records. We do not now have a plan for backup of our records. Our minutes and newsletter are published on the BNL world website, so are fairly secure. (A change in BNL webpages caused a glitch on the website in October, but our primary contact Christine Carter and our web page publisher Renee Warno helped restore the information.) We don't have complete backup for Treasurer, Membership Secretary, or Newsletter Editor.**

As part of the succession planning procedure, when Arnie became BREA president, he signed up for access to BREA banking because we need to keep accounts up to date with signatures. We also need backups for others: Beth Lin (Membership), Mona Rowe (Newsletter editor).
9. **Retiree Health Benefits / SelectQuoteSenior. A. Moodenbaugh . A reminder for the less-than-65 retirees that BNL open enrollment for health benefits is Nov. 2 through Nov. 15. Open enrollment for 65+ retirees in Medicare begins Oct. 15, ends Dec. 7. We have heard from one retiree who has been unable to contact SelectQuoteSenior (SQS) using the BNL-provided phone number. He contacted BNL HR, and they said that they would have SQS contact him. See above for discussion that took place earlier in this meeting.**
10. **WHPP (Worker Health) program. A. Moodenbaugh. I sent draft letter to the BREA officers and local WHPP manager and a BNL retiree liaison for review. I also asked whether a WHPP could give a ZOOM presentation as a part of a BREA meeting.**

Arnie drafted a letter about this program that should go out to retirees in this area. He also asked the manager of the WHPP to provide some information on access to the program for retirees who have moved outside the NY state area, which they agreed to do. This exam is not an annual exam, retirees would be given an exam approximately every two-three years.

**Action:** Arnie will send a letter explaining the program and why people should take it more seriously.
11. **Charitable Donations. Discuss potential donations by BREA.**

BREA hasn't done any recently. According to Les, our treasurer: my checking account records are that BREA donated to the food bank LI Cares in May of 2020 and to LI Cares and United Way in December of 2020. Thus, BREA only donated to one food bank in 2020. Feldman: This is a good time to make a donation between United Way or a really good food bank on LI. Arnie suggests at least some donation be given to United Way because they are BNL's corporate conduit for donations and BNL gets credit. A question about what Stony Brook University does came up, and

also the possibility of combining BNL and Stony Brook, which could make for a sizeable contribution, but it's not up to us. Making a contribution to Tesla Science Center was discussed. In the past we agreed to fund or partially fund a window on the Sanford White building. At that time, BREA was contemplating a donation of \$10k.

*Action: Think about donations for December meeting.*

*Action: Arnie will go through records from the last year to see what we did for donations.*

## 12. New Business

a. Is there anything about BNL retirees being allowed back onsite? No, 65% of employees are still working on offsite. When DOE and the government (and CDC guidelines) allow it, then BNL may look into allowing retirees on site. The Lab is a federal contractor and will follow federal guidelines.

b. BNL lectures have restarted. It's important that BNL retirees know about them. Shapiro suggested that retirees be sent a notice when a BNL lecture is taking place. These are televised, they are open and given as a Webinar, so there shouldn't be a problem. Lecture announcements are included in the News briefs that Chris sends out, retirees receive these notices.

*Action: Arnie will include BNL lecture dates in his monthly meeting announcement.*

c. Sievers: His son became engaged on 7/26 to someone he's been dating for four years. Last Wednesday his son gave him a pocketknife and a bottle of peanut flavored whiskey. The lid of the box called him 'Best Man' and he will be the best man at his son's wedding. Yesterday he (Don) turned 72.

d. Les: He is in Seattle now, visiting family. It only took him 10 minutes to get Zoom operating on his new computer, and it's actually been sunny there while he's been on this meeting.

Motion to adjourn by Sievers, seconded by Williams. None opposed.

Meeting adjourned at 2:22pm.

Next meeting: December 14 at 1:00 pm via Zoom.