

**RETIRED EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION OF VENTURA COUNTY (REAVC)**  
**Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting on October 3, 2023**  
**Hosted by Roberta Griego at Bella Vista Clubhouse, 1724 Tanager St., Ventura, CA 93003**

**Call to Order and Roll Call** – Reddy Pakala, President, called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.

**Present**-Roberta Griego, Paul Callaway, Nancy Settle, Colleen Bruns, Anne Dana, Ben Emami, Art Goulet, Jacquie Richardson, Cindy Schneider, Kelly Shirk, Butch Britt, Bookkeeper, Dee Emami, and Tracey Pirie  
**Absent**-Kenneth Cozzens, Will Hoag, Colleen House, Tom McEachern, and Maryellen Benedetto.

**Approval of Agenda** – The order of the agenda was discussed and approved with “Discuss and Approve-Update on Amicus Brief and Legal Expenses” moved to be addressed after New Business.

**Minutes**- Approval of Revised Minutes from June 27, 2023, Board Meeting - Attachment 1 - Lyn Krieger moved to approve the minutes of the June 27, 2023 meeting and Nancy Settle seconded. Motion carried. Approval of Minutes from July 25, 2023, Special Board Meeting – Attachment 2 – Lyn Krieger made a motion to approve the minutes, with a second by Nancy Settle. Motion carried.

**Financial Report** – Butch Britt -The report in Attachment 3, contains 3 recommendations.

The first is to receive and file subject to review by the Audit Committee the financial report, which consists of items 1-5 (pages 1-6) of the attached report. There is 1 new report, item 4 (page 4) Litigation Activity.

Income from Member Fees is running slightly higher than anticipated, income from donations for litigation are currently at \$9,475. Scholarship awards were \$4,000 less than budgeted this year. Litigation expenses are currently \$25,911.

The second recommendation is the tentative budget for 2024 and is item 6, (page 7). This version replaces the Tentative budget previously distributed. I am asking for the Board’s direction. Today’s action is not an approval. The 2024 budget will be brought back in December and in February if necessary for further comment and final approval.

The third recommendation is for the REAVC CD which matures on February 15, 2024. Recommendation is to reinvest for 1 year (the current VCCU rate is 5%). VCCU requires a signed copy of the minutes with the Board’s direction to reinvest. Butch indicated that time is of the essence and Paul Callaway informed the Board that the 5% interest rate will be lost if minutes are not finalized quickly.

Butch said that REAVC should not need access to the funds in this CD in 2024, unless additional litigation expenses occur. He also noted that additional funds should be budgeted for being a host or co-host of the CRCEA conference in 2025.

1. Financial Report - Receive and file subject to audit committee review. Roberta Griego motioned, and Jacquie Richardson seconded. Motion carried.
2. Tentative 2024 Budget – Discussion included a reference by President Pakala that actual total income exceeded expenditures by 10 percent and that donations received so far were \$9,475. Ben Emami made a motion and Cindy Schneider seconded approval of receiving and filing the 2024 Budget, prior to further review in the upcoming meetings.
3. CD Maturing February 2024 – The Treasurer Paul Callaway and Bookkeeper Butch Britt were advised to roll over the CD in February 2024 to receive the 5% rate. Ben Emami made a motion to approve roll over of the CD. Cindy Schneider made a motion with an amendment to include a recommendation for approval with the option of revisiting if rates go down or change. Jacquie Richardson seconded approval as amended, and the motion passed unanimously to roll over the CD. The Executive Assistant

will provide the Bookkeeper with a signed copy of the minutes authorizing this reinvestment of said funds.

**December Luncheon Status and Other Luncheon Updates** - Anne Dana – Anne reported that around 100 members and guests attended the last luncheon. She mentioned that there were 10 late cancelations. Her understanding was that only repeat offenders would be billed. It was noted that those who missed had good reasons such as Covid, surgery, or other illness. Roberta Griego commended Anne for setting up the room to include an aisle between the tables, which allowed for better movement. Reddy Pakala mentioned that one member requested a table setup for disabled members. Ben Emami shared that he helped move chairs to better accommodate her. The Board considered how to make the setup more accessible for those with wheel chairs. It was determined that setting up a single table would not allow people to sit with their friends, so a Board member will help move chairs when this occurs. Ben Emami said we might consider an article in the newsletter about requesting accommodation ahead of time. Paul Callaway also suggested that members request accommodation on the RSVP form. Anne Dana expressed concern about adding information to the RSVP form because it barely fits on a page and takes up room in the newsletter.

### **Committee Reports –**

*Retirement Board/Legislation* – Art Goulet said the legislature is out of session with bills to go to the governor to sign, veto, or allow to become law without signature, by October 14. The governor's most notable action to date was to veto a bill allowing Unemployment Insurance for strikers. He stated that Unemployment Insurance funds are already at a deficit and are not meant to be used in this manner.

AB 1020 provides for all injury categories presumed to be caused by the job in the Labor Code to be transferred into CERL. This may cause a lot more applications, but they can be disputed. There has not been a lot of retirement legislation this year.

Art is resigning from his role as the legislative chair for CRCEA. Nancy Settle asked if CRCEA has a replacement in mind and if Art will be training anyone. Art said that someone may be determined for the role at the conference. He is not training anyone and will provide the next (and his last) report for CRCEA after the Governor's deadline of October 14.

Art referred to the President's message in the recent newsletter. The Interim Administrator, Rick Santos sent an email to Reddy expressing concern that referring retirees to VCERA causes more work for staff and impedes progress in implementing the proposed reductions. Reddy's response to Rick's email stated in part that retirees have the right to receive the requested information from VCERA. Various Board members commented that there is no one else for retirees to ask. Art responded he had included general information in his previous newsletter article that helped clarify whether retirees would be impacted by Alameda and PEPR. The article pointed out that all would have to be dealt with individually, which will be a 2-year job. Lyn Krieger asked for an update regarding the RFQ for an outside firm to assist. Art said the cost of the contract was such that the Retirement Administrator could not authorize it, so it was approved at a recent Board meeting. Roberta Griego said that it was her understanding that retirees would be touched first, but as far as she knows that is not happening now. Some received a letter that their benefits may change. She expressed concern that a firm was not yet hired. Art said a firm has been hired and the Retirement Administrator has negotiated with the Pension Administration System consultant for additional support hours to make revisions necessary for implementation of the Alameda Decision. VCERA staff is well-versed in the calculations for retirement and determining benefits for retirees going forward. Lyn Krieger agreed that it is very complicated to recalculate pension for retirements occurring since 2013 because each retiree was under a specific contract with their own specific benefits when they retired. Lyn and Jacquie Richardson were concerned about whether those who retired during the same year might have pension reductions beginning at different times. Art indicated that although he could not provide specific details about how reductions would be processed, he believed that retirees in similar circumstances, retiring in the same year, would be treated the same and receive their reductions at the same time. Lyn asked whether the VCERA Board had directed that this be the case, at its last meeting. Art said that he thought approval happened before the last Board meeting.

*Newsletter* - Dee Emami indicated that the deadline for articles to be submitted will continue to be the 15th of the month. She said the vendor is doing a pretty good job of getting the newsletters out. Ben Emami said that he had been asked by the vendor to reformat some of the information needed to send the newsletters to members. Ben also said that it is very helpful when Board members respond promptly with reviews and submissions. Colleen Bruns noted that she was receiving a hard copy of the newsletter. Ben explained that the vendor adds in Board members to round out the 200 newsletter recipients required for the bulk rate. Nancy Settle announced that Amy Towner of the Health Foundation of Ventura County (HCFVC) had approached her about placing an announcement for free online estate planning in the REAVC newsletter. The Board deferred making a decision until its next meeting.

*Communications* – Ben thanked the Board for their responses regarding the sample websites he sent them to review. He said that Butch had asked questions about various parts of the website. Ben is working with Gabe for details about cost to rebuild the webpage. Reddy Pakala asked Ben if he would bring the expenditure back to the Board for review prior to taking action. Ben explained that he was working to keep costs within the amount that the Board had already approved and budgeted for updates to the web.

*CRCEA* – Jacquie explained that she is Will's CRCEA Alternate. She was unable to attend the conference this time, but Will was in attendance at the time of this meeting. Nancy said that she had updates from recent conversations with Will. One item discussed at the conference is how often it should be held. Currently there are two large conferences per year. Nancy agreed with the option of one large conference and one smaller Zoom conference per year. The Board concurred with her idea.

*Nominations/Elections* – Nancy informed the Board that Ken Cozzens will not be returning to the Board.

*Program/Social* – Anne Dana reported that a member expressed concern about only being able to pay for REAVC luncheons with a check or cash. Anne said that she shared that implementing new methods of payment would require additional costs that would probably have to be passed on to members. Because of that it is not feasible at this time. Roberta Griego said she understood why members might be asking because the trend is not to carry cash or checks but to pay electronically. Unfortunately, costs to implement new payment methods is too costly at this time.

*Membership Report/Courtesy* – Nancy thanked Dee Emami for including a report in the agenda that provides the number of dues-paying members to date (Attachment 4) Nancy said that membership is trending upward. She also noted that there was an upward spike in February. Art Goulet attributed it to the PGA insurance drive. Nancy agreed and said that our own membership drives generally target new retirees, while PGA sends information to all retirees.

### **Continued Business**

1. 2025 CRCEA Conference – Nancy said that Santa Barbara is excited about holding the conference at the old Day's Inn in Buellton. However, the Crowne Plaza has not been ruled out, yet. Costs will be weighed into final decision-making about the venue.
2. Report on venues for Board meetings, average meal cost, parking, etc. – Cindy said that the Sheraton is no longer serving lunch so it cannot be an option for meetings. Reddy mentioned that a Chinese restaurant was mentioned at a previous meeting. Some felt that the variety of food was not adequate. Black Bear was another suggestion, but Roberta expressed concern about privacy at Black Bear and most other restaurants. Since no agreement was reached on a venue, President Pakala asked the committee to continue to explore venues. He also asked Anne Dana to explore whether Sterling Hills would host. Ben Emami said it might be expensive. Roberta Griego agreed to continue hosting in the interim.
3. REAVC Luncheon menu and costs – Anne Dana said while there were compliments about the luncheon menu, there were also several suggestions. Some wanted chicken instead of beef. Others wanted chicken and beef. Adding another meat would remove the vegetarian options. Some like

chicken, beef, and salmon. Tortellini could be added as a main dish for vegetarians but there would be an additional \$2.00 per plate cost. A member wanted to have at least one meeting as a BBQ. This would mean no vegetables other than salad, or possibly beans. It would probably cost more. Anne said that we are getting the best value at this point. Anything else will mean either less options or a higher cost. Colleen Bruns said that two of her friends came to the luncheon and enjoyed it. One was a vegan and the other loved beef. Several Board members pointed out that there are currently a lot of options for people. Reddy appointed Anne Dana as head of a committee to explore options. He suggested that Cindy and Jacquie also sit on the committee. Based on the member's recommendation for a BBQ, Reddy made a motion that REAVC host one BBQ per year. Cindy seconded and the motion passed.

4. Consider declaring a Board position vacant per REAVC Bylaws, Section 5 – Nancy, Reddy, Roberta, and Lyn discussed procedures when a Board member is unable to attend meetings. Section 5 of the REAVC Bylaws designates the position as vacant. One position was declared vacant according to Section 5. Another position will be vacant due to a Board member choosing not to reapply for the upcoming term. However, the fourteen-position minimum designated by the Bylaws is met without filling both positions. Roberta Griego said that Tracey Pirie expressed interest in serving on the Board. Nancy also mentioned that Henry Solis might be interested. Nancy will bring more information about nominees to the next meeting. Reddy Pakala indicated appointments would also occur at that meeting.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Waive Election Process for Board of Directors Nominees and Declare Nominees Elected for January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2025, Term: Colleen Bruns, Ben Emami, Will Hoag, Roberta Griego, and Nancy Settle. Paul Callaway moved approval and Lyn Krieger seconded. Motion passed.

Butch Britt brought up the Christmas luncheon as a discussion item. Gift baskets and other donations are made by Board members in addition to items purchased from the budget. Butch encouraged the Board to assist Anne Dana, who ordinarily picks up much of the work for putting together items to give away as well as ensuring decorations at the venue. Entertainment options such as carolers were discussed as possibilities. Reddy asked if the budget should be increased to accommodate expenditures for entertainment and other items. Butch said that there are sufficient funds to allow for entertainment and the usual giveaway items.

**Update on Amicus Brief and Legal Expenses** – Will Hoag was absent, and Art Goulet recused himself from both hearing about and voting on this item. Reddy reported that the Alameda committee met several times and held seven zoom meetings regarding this item. The committee first met on April 10, which was a week prior to the meeting when VCERA made its decision regarding retirement reductions. The Board approved filing an Amicus Brief at its Special Meeting on July 25. Michael Walker, our counsel, filed the Amicus Brief on August 29. Lyn Krieger and Roberto Orellano spent countless hours researching the issue. Roberto Orellano assisted without compensation. VCERA filed an opposition to REAVC's Amicus Brief on September 12. Reddy Pakala, Lyn Krieger, and Roberto Orellano of the Alameda committee held a conference call with Michael Walker on September 20. Roberta Griego was unable to attend the call. Legal fees have exceeded the expected amount. On September 22, 2023, Michael Walker successfully filed permission to argue in court. Also on September 22, the last Alameda committee meeting unanimously approved suggesting an increase to the litigation budget from \$15,500 to \$25,000. Lyn said that Michael Walker described how the attorney for the unions wanted REAVC to join because safety unions sue all the time, but retirement associations never do. Reddy shared that donations from retirees total \$9,475 so far and more checks were received at today's meeting. Retirees have been especially generous with some donations as large as \$2,000 and \$5,000. Reddy proposed that the litigation budget be increased from \$15,500 to \$25,000 and authorizing a transfer of \$9,500 from a money market fund into the litigation fund. Ben Emami made a motion to approve, and Cindy Schneider seconded. The motion passed unanimously among those who voted.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:38 p.m. and the next regular meeting was set for Tuesday, December 12, 2023, at 11:30 a.m. to be hosted by Roberta Griego.

Respectfully submitted by,

Reviewed, and approved by,



**Dee Emami,  
REAVC Executive Assistant**

**Reddy Pakala  
REAVC President**