

FIVE COLLEGE LEARNING IN RETIREMENT

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

December 8, 2016

Five College Office, 97 Spring St., Amherst, MA

The meeting was called to order by President Gordon Wyse at 2:15 p.m.

Council Members Present: Gordon Wyse (President), Marybeth Bridegam (Vice President), Sheila Klem (Past President), Kathy Campbell (Treasurer), Mike Brooks (Secretary), Jim Averill, Joanne Creighton, Chris Hurn, Jonathan Jay, Bobbie Reitt, Terry Rosenfeld, Tyll van Geel

Committee Chairs and Others Present: Nancy Clune, Nancy Denig, Chuck Gillies, Ilene Rosenfeld, Nina Scott, Sara Wright, Tisha Ferguson (Office Manager)

Council Members Absent: Jake Greenburg, Ann Hartman

Minutes of the November 10 Council meeting were approved.

Publicity/Public Relations Committee: Nina noted that LIR's December newsletter includes two "Tasting Circle" articles that were published earlier in the Daily Hampshire Gazette, specifically in the Hampshire Life supplement which is published every Friday. Nina did the writing and Katy van Geel handled the photography. Three additional articles have been written about the three ethnic markets visited by the "Tasting Circle;" one was published in Hampshire Life on November 25 and two more will appear in December and January. An article about our Fall Preview was submitted to the Gazette in advance of the event, but did not appear in print; a post-Preview article, however, was indeed published. All of the above-mentioned articles will be available in the 5CLIR Newsletters. Nina and Nancy Denig (chair of the Summer/Winter Programs Committee) are considering a field trip to the Gazette.

Officers' Reports:

President: Gordon raised several issues for discussion. First, he noted that the minutes of Council meetings are archived on a password-protected site (under Documents) on the 5CLIR website. He asked if anyone knows the policy underlying this procedure--and whether anyone knows the password? Tisha said she has recently reset the password. Chuck recently accessed the site, and found that no minutes have been entered since 1990. (LIR's Office does indeed retain all of our minutes, of course, but we have not been using this particular site for this purpose.) Several issues related to the minutes were discussed, including whether we need both paper and electronic versions; what should go into the minutes; whether the minutes should be readily available to all LIR members (the consensus on this issue appeared to be "yes"); and the circumstances under which motions passed at Council meetings should be placed in the Operations Manual (the answer: this occurs when Council specifically votes to do so).

Second, Gordon reported the Executive Committee's decision to rescind the earlier-announced \$2 fee for participation in the Tech Committee's January workshop. Such fees have been recommended in the past, he said, in order to discourage people from enrolling in events but failing to attend. Chris spoke in favor of charging fees on the grounds that people tend to value more highly those goods that they pay for. On the other hand, Bobbie expressed the opinion that the task of writing a \$2 check might discourage attendance. Gordon concluded that the matter needs further consideration.

Third, Gordon raised the possible need for recruiting a new Assistant Treasurer, since John Gaustad has indicated that he will serve in that role for one year only and does not intend to become the Treasurer. John is willing, however, to continue in the Assistant role for the remainder of the current year. If we take no action at this time, the matter will be left in the hands of the Nominating Committee. Following discussion, **Kathy Campbell moved that we not appoint a new Assistant Treasurer this year. The motion was seconded, and passed unanimously.**

Fourth, Gordon noted that there has been some uncertainty surrounding the acceptance of Emeriti auditors in seminars. Many

moderators have expressed a willingness to accept auditors "if space is available;" does this refer to physical space or to the number of people allowed to take a particular seminar? The consensus appeared to be that most moderators are referring to physical space--i.e., the number of seats available in the room to which they have been assigned. Tisha suggested that it would be helpful if moderators could identify in advance the number of auditors they are willing to accept; Tyll reminded, however, that moderators can't know the number of seats available until later. Following discussion, there was general agreement that moderators should continue to have the major role in making these decisions, and that the Curriculum Committee should continue to monitor this issue as a part of its evaluation of the auditing experiment.

Fifth, Gordon reminded committee chairs that their reports are important elements of our meetings, providing critical exchanges of information. Reports may be either oral or written. (Mike expressed an interest in receiving copies of written reports when feasible.)

Sixth, Gordon urged timeliness and accuracy in the submission of Catalog information. We have had problems with a few inaccuracies, necessitating errata sheets and corrective emails.

Vice President: Marybeth urged all present to develop potential questions for the proposed membership survey, and to submit them to her by January 15. The survey will focus on opinions relevant to matters affecting the entire membership.

Past President: Sheila distributed a list of those who will be remembered at the memorial service to be held at Amherst College's Alumni House on January 5 at 10 a.m. She urged attendance, and asked those interested in speaking about particular individuals to let her know as soon as possible. If there are other names that should be on the list, please send them to Sheila.

Secretary: Mike reported that he and Sara Wright have begun the task of updating the Operations Manual, and that officers and committee chairs will be invited to comment on the Manual's accuracy as it relates to their functions.

Treasurer: First quarter (ending September 30) numbers for all four of our accounts were distributed by Kathy prior to the meeting. She noted that we have allocated \$1500 for Membership Assistance for each of the past two years, and that this may not be enough in the future.

Old Business:

Tyll reported that the Preview went well. Based on Catalogs mailed out afterwards, Tisha estimated that a little over half our membership attended the event. Some 25-30 packets were passed out to non-members, and 14 people signed up as guests. Sheila said that our "cabinet wall" for committees and special programs worked well, though could accommodate more users in the future. The event generated no negative feedback, and Tisha thanked all volunteers for a job well done.

Concern had been expressed at a previous meeting about the Yiddish Book Center charging LIR for the use of its auditorium to show a film. Terry Rosenfeld spoke with Center personnel and determined that there had been a space scheduling problem. Chris Hurn said that all seminar participants contributed \$4 each, and the problem was easily resolved.

Bobbie Reitt is chairing the Nominating Committee, and identified its members as Larry Ambs, Betsy Loughran, Lise Armstrong, and Jim Harvey. **Marybeth moved that the committee's membership be approved. The motion was seconded, and passed unanimously.**

New Business:

A. Tyll reported the Curriculum Committee's unanimous recommendation that the Council adopt a rule that no seminars or workshops should be scheduled in conflict with Yom Kippur. Following extensive discussion covering many aspects of the issue, Jonathan moved to amend the Curriculum Committee's recommendation to include all LIR programs and activities. He asked that the question be called. **The vote to call the question was approved with 7 in favor, 2 opposed, and no recorded abstentions. The vote to approve Jonathan's suggested substitution of language was approved with 9 in favor, 2 opposed, and no recorded abstentions. Finally, we voted on the amended motion, adopting the policy that no LIR programs**

and activities should be scheduled in conflict with Yom Kippur. The motion was passed with 8 in favor, 3 opposed, and 1 abstention. The Council then voted unanimously to add this policy to the Operations Manual. The policy will go into effect beginning with the 2017-18 year.

B. On behalf of the Finance Committee, Kathy moved that Council transfer \$25,000 in the third quarter and \$25,000 in the fourth quarter from Campaign for the Future funds to our investment funds. Chuck suggested that the motion be amended to omit reference to the fourth quarter, and to make only one transfer at this time. Kathy accepted this amendment. As amended, then, it was moved that Council transfer \$25,000 from Campaign for the Future funds to the investment fund. The motion was seconded, and passed unanimously.

Committee Reports:

Curriculum. Tyll reported that the Committee generated questions for the upcoming survey, has rated them, and has sent them to Marybeth.

Plans are under way for the annual Moderators Meeting, scheduled for March 3. Attendance by new moderators has been disappointing in recent years, and the event is being redesigned in an effort to generate a larger attendance.

A subcommittee is at work on the development of procedures for offering short-term seminars and workshops. Tisha will be consulted regarding possible logistical issues.

The Committee is also at work on next year's calendar. Extra Curriculum Committee meetings will likely be scheduled, so as to ensure that all proposals are reviewed in a timely manner.

Development: Chuck Gillies provided the latest numbers for LIR's Campaign for the Future: total commitments are \$210,886.14 (up about \$1300 since last month); the amount actually received to date is \$187,886.14 (up about \$22,400). Chuck reported that the Campaign is beginning to wind down; Newsletter articles will continue to appear noting our progress and needs, but no new solicitations are planned for

this academic year except for new members. Reminders will be sent to those who have pledged but not yet paid.

The Committee is developing a Legacy Campaign, aimed at encouraging members to consider including LIR in their wills and estate plans. A brochure will be developed and disseminated. The Committee is also working with the Membership Committee to plan LIR's annual membership event; the search is on for a featured speaker.

Great Decisions: Jake reports, in absentia, that the Committee's work is on schedule.

Member Services: Nancy Clune reported that a New Member Coffee has been planned for Friday, February 17, 10 a.m. at Lathrop in Northampton. Another event will be planned for April, once a speaker and date have been determined.

Special Programs: Upcoming events include a performance of "Jersey Boys" at Hartford's Bushnell Theater on March 25 at 2 p.m. Bus transportation is provided at a cost of \$35. Those wishing to attend should call 860-987-5959 to order tickets, and should identify themselves as part of "5CLIR" so as to receive the group discount.

"An Afternoon of Poetry and Prose" will be held on April 7, 2-4 p.m., at Lathrop in Northampton. Council members are urged to spread the word to authors who would be willing to read their works on this occasion.

Finally, the Committee is forming a new group called "Favorite Poems," stemming from a seminar co-facilitated by Martha Nelson and Lise Armstrong. They plan to meet on the fourth Thursday of each month, 2-4 p.m., beginning in January. The group will be limited to 12 members, and will meet in members' homes.

Summer-Winter: Nancy Denig emphasized that the Committee needs additional members, since only two people are working actively at present. Ilene noted that Special Programs needs more members as well. These comments led to a discussion focused on whether LIR has enough members to staff all of its many committees; have we become spread too thin? Historically, new committees were sometimes created

when the workload for existing committees became too heavy--yet our membership numbers have remained reasonably constant over the years. Tyll suggested that it may be time to engage in a more extensive process of strategic planning for our future. Hopefully the upcoming survey will provide useful information in this regard. Chuck noted that he has been involved in at least three strategic planning efforts over the years, and the results always seem to focus on the need for more/better marketing and public relations. Perhaps, he said, we should devote more attention to growing the organization. Marybeth suggested that we are experiencing good participation in our events, but not in helping to plan for them. (We are apparently better at consuming than we are at producing.) It was agreed that more attention to these issues is needed.

Technology: We were reminded that the workshop on email management, organizing one's computer, and internet security will be conducted January 10-12.

Office Manager:

Tisha reports that over 20 new members have joined LIR recently, and that 10 former members have re-joined. She feels that we need to do more to integrate new members into our activities. A new intern has been hired, and is "terrific so far." Given Smith's desire to vacate the Library by May, Tisha is beginning to inventory our equipment and documents with an eye toward identifying things that might be discarded.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Mike Brooks, Secretary
December 10, 2016