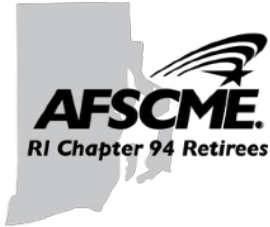


# **RI CHAPTER 94 NEWS, MAY 2023**

## ***Legislative and Executive Board Report By the Chapter 94 Leadership***



Last month, Bob Jacquard of Capitol Strategies Group, our lobbyist at the State House, updated the Chapter Executive Board on our bill's progress and other proposals to restore annual COLAs for state retirees. The Finance Committees of both chambers are expected to hold hearings on the eleven COLA-related bills (eight in the House and three in the Senate) in mid-May.

Jacquard, a former General Assembly member who voted against "pension reform," emphasized the importance of retirees contacting their state representatives and senators via phone to urge support for the COLA restoration. According to Jacquard, email and electronic petitions are less effective in capturing legislators' attention.

After our May meeting, we are organizing a Chapter 94 Call Your Legislator Phone Bank. Members are encouraged to bring their cell phones, enthusiasm, and speaking skills, as we provide pizza, drinks, and a list of legislators to call. Let's ensure our COLA messages are heard loud and clear.

In other news, Chapter 94 leadership is considering hosting a candidates' forum for the fifteen candidates running for David Cicillini's CD-1 seat, with the possibility of more candidates entering the race before the next newsletter. Stay tuned for more details in the June edition.

## ***Next Chapter Meeting***

***Tuesday, May 9 @ 1 pm***  
**RI Council 94, Lower Level**  
**1179 Charles St, No. Providence**

**Special Guest**  
**State Representative Scott Casey**  
**D-50, Woonsocket**

**Questions?**  
Contact Chapter 94 Vice Presidents  
Russ Marsocci and Ron Pepin

**Russ Marsocci, Muni VP**  
401-339-9224  
[pbruins49@verizon.net](mailto:pbruins49@verizon.net)

**Ron Pepin, State VP**  
401-323-8021  
[ron.pepin.chapter94@gmail.com](mailto:ron.pepin.chapter94@gmail.com)

**Cindy LeBlanc, Office Manager**  
401-642-2434  
[clebanc@ricouncil94.org](mailto:clebanc@ricouncil94.org)

***Can't attend meetings in person?***  
*Join us via Zoom to attend meetings online.*  
*Email State VP Ron Pepin to receive monthly*  
*invitations and log-in instructions.*

## ***Save the Dates***

***May 18, 2023***

Chapter 94 Day of Golf  
at Kings Crossing Golf Course  
Shotgun start 10 am, Lunch at Noon  
***RSVP by May 4***

***June 13, 2023***

New meeting added to schedule

***July 27, 2023***

Summer Outing at Wright's Farm  
Reservation Form on Back Page

**(Leg report)** As previously mentioned, an extra Chapter meeting has been scheduled for June, during which lawyers from the ACLU will discuss the RIPTA data breach and the status of the planned lawsuit. Members affected by the breach are reminded to complete the ACLU survey and may contact Russ Marsocci to obtain a copy.

### **State Report, Ron Pepin**

We apologize for the poor audio quality during our April meeting. It was our first off-site meeting in the virtual era, but we have taken steps to ensure this does not happen again. We have acquired a new 360-degree conference room camera that allows us to hold meetings anywhere with high-quality audio and video, making it possible for all attendees, whether in person or online, to follow the proceedings.

With this new technology, we are now seeking potential sites for remote meetings, and we need our members' help in identifying suitable locations. The space should have at least 30 people capacity, be handicap accessible, and provide ample parking. We encourage members to contact Russ Marsocci or us with their recommendations.

Recently, I had the opportunity to tour and learn about the services provided by the RI Food Community Bank. They are doing an excellent job of responding to the increased demand. Unfortunately, last month, emergency SNAP benefits were cut, disproportionately affecting seniors and retirees. The SNAP program is the region's most effective hunger prevention program, and non-profits such as the RI Food Bank step in when benefits run out.

We collect donations for the RI Community Food Bank at every meeting near the sign-in

**(State)** table. We accept bills, coins, and checks, and we thank all Chapter 94 members for their generous support in raising funds for the food bank. **RP**

### **Muni Report, Russ Marsocci**

Greetings from President Mike Connolly, who looks forward to joining us in the future as he focuses on his cardiac rehabilitation. As Mike continues his recovery, Ron Pepin and I have taken on most of the Chapter's leadership duties, and we are grateful for all the positive feedback we have received from our members. We would also like to acknowledge the hard work of the members of the Executive Board, who work tirelessly behind the scenes to support our efforts.

As we plan for upcoming events, we need your help. Our newsletter needs editorial support and regular content. We require several volunteers for the May golf event to greet participants, work the check-in table, take photos, and handle last-minute errands. Many hands are also needed if we sponsor a candidates' forum. Please get in touch with Ron or me if you have the time and interest to volunteer for the Chapter.

Our April meeting at the Warwick Central Library was a huge success, with many members joining the Executive Board for lunch at the Greenwood Inn. The conversations were lively and illuminating, covering topics such as family, gardening, traveling, music, and, of course, politics. We received several suggestions for future Chapter events. Since leaving public service, I learned that many members remain active and lead whole lives.

We hope to have more members attend as we schedule Chapter meetings around the state. If you know of a site near you that can

**(Muni report)** accommodate both Executive Board and general membership meetings, and please let us know.

Our lawsuit against the West Warwick Schools regarding changes to spousal health care is ongoing. We are pursuing further discussions with West Warwick police and firefighters to challenge the Town's decision to alter disability benefits. We also expect to resume meeting with the retired Coventry Police.

Now that budgetary information for 2022 is readily available, I have restarted my review of the viability of local OPEBs. The growing unfunded liabilities for retiree health care could lead to unpopular changes, and we welcome anyone interested in helping with this research. With so many local budgets, there is plenty of data to review. **RM**

#### **Medicare Card Scam Has Resurfaced**

*“Many older Americans are receiving emails or phone calls purporting to be from Medicare either offering new plastic cards to replace their paper cards or new Medicare cards with microchips. All the targeted victim has to do is merely verify their Medicare number. And while your Medicare number is no longer your Social Security number, giving it to an identity thief can cause you substantial problems when you try to access Medicare.*

*Medicare won't contact you by email, text message or by phone, so anytime you are contacted in this manner, you can be confident it is a scam...you should never provide your Medicare number, Social Security number, credit card number or any other personal information to anyone who calls you on the phone because you can never be sure they are legitimate.” **Source: Scam of the Day, Steven Weisman, Esq.***

#### **When SKU meets YOU, Dolores Bresette**

Computers are supposed to make our lives easier. Data systems tell vendors what's in stock or what's on backorder. But what happens if the data is wrong? Unintentional keying errors, for example, can make companies look disorganized and inefficient. And impacts customers like me.

It took six months to get a replacement faucet. The first set leaked, and so did the second set I got from the plumbing supply company. Six months later, I received the correct faucet. Six months! Why did it take so long? Because an incorrectly entered SKU number showed that my faucet was discontinued when it was in stock.

I will sound like a grouchy baby boomer, but the more technology “improves” our lives, the more problems it creates. It minimizes knowledge. Gone are the days when you visited a local hardware store, told a staff member what you needed, and he (back in the day, hardware clerks were primarily men) found it and then told you how to use or install the product.

It's easy to blame poor customer service on today's workforce. Where is good help? This a question we've heard many times. But, when tech and people interact, the answer is complicated. In today's world, finding and keeping good workers requires a combination of factors, including a defined recruitment strategy, decent wages and benefits, and practical training and mentoring programs. And a union?

The post-pandemic job market may have changed how employers invest in workers. I hope so; for who wants to be viewed as a replacement part, just like my faucet with the wrong SKU? **DB**



**2nd Annual RI Chapter 94 Retirees Summer Outing  
Thursday, July 27, 2023 @ Wright's Farm**

*Join us at this famous venue for  
family style food, fun and a chance  
to win a 50/50 raffle.*

**Wright's Farm Restaurant**  
84 Inman Road  
Harrisville, RI

**Check-in @ 11:30 am**  
**Lunch served @12 pm**

**Costs: \$10 per person**  
**Members, spouses and guests**  
*fee includes lunch & raffle ticket*

**RESERVATIONS REQUIRED**

***No payments accepted at the door!***  
***Reservations and payment***  
***due by July 20, 2023***

**Send form and payment to**  
**AFSCME RI Chapter 94 Retirees**  
**1179 Charles St**  
**North Providence, RI 02904**

**Questions?**  
**Russ Marsocci, Muni VP**  
*pbruins49@verizon.net*  
**401-339-9224**

**Ron Pepin, State VP**  
*ron.pepin.chapter94@gmail.com*  
**401-323-8021**

**RI Chapter 94 Retirees Office**  
**401-642-2434**

**Reservation**  
**RSVP by July 20, 2023**

**Remit to**  
**AFSCME RI Chapter 94 Retirees**  
**1179 Charles St, North Providence, RI 02904**

Member (\$10) \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone with area code \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse (\$10) \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone with area code \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

Guest (\$10) \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone with area code \_\_\_\_\_  
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Guest (\$10) \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone with area code \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Total amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_**