

**Coalition of Retired Employees (CORE) Member Meeting
Minutes March 11, 2024
Como Community Center – 10:30 a.m.**

Committee Members in Attendance: Committee Appointments in Attendance:

Carol Brown - President

Alison Letnes - Membership

Alison Letnes - Vice President

Carol Brown - Program Chair

Marolee Lunsford – Secretary

Yolanda Gonzalez - HBAC Representative

Marsha Anderson – Past President

Absent: Deborah Duke – Treasurer, Joel Carrazana - Communications

Speaker: Nona Flippin – Works for the City of Fort Worth and with Seniors at the Como Community Center

Guest:

CFW Employee Retirement Fund: Linda Webb – ERF Executive Director

10:33 a.m. Welcome: Carol Brown, President, called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance. Carol began stating our attendance is down most likely because it's spring break for the schools. Next year we will change the meeting if it falls during spring break again. Carol then introduced our speaker, Nona Flippin, City of Fort Worth Employee, who will speak to us on personal safety, especially regarding older adults. Carol stated that we need to make ourselves safe.

Nona Flippin stated that we do not want to be another statistic. We get busy and we are not paying attention. She stated if we consistently do the same things everyday someone is probably watching. There is a crime committed every eighteen (18) minutes and many are against the elderly. We can learn how to prevent ourselves from becoming a crime victim and it doesn't require physical ability to keep us safe. Criminals look for the easiest opportunity to commit a crime. You can make your home safer by closing windows, locking doors, etc. When someone comes to your door for repair work, etc. ask for ID. Some of her other suggestions were to not open the door to strangers, get an animal for protection, secure valuables, keep an inventory of valuables and pictures of home and give no personal information over the phone. Nona further stated that there have been funding cuts to programs that helped with safety issues. Crime, however, has become rampant so it is especially important to be aware of our surroundings. Nona passed out a helpful information sheet regarding personal safety tips for older adults.

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Carol then introduced Linda Webb, ERF Executive Director. Linda stated that she has worked with public pension plans for over 30 years. She also stated ERF staff will never call for personal information over the phone. They do contact members by email. ERF's email is fwretirement.org. Criminals will go to great lengths to commit crime and another way to protect yourself is to set up direct deposit for your pension checks as elderly mail fraud is common.

March 1099 forms – we have one form for January 2023 and another for the rest of the 2023 retirement year. ERF CIO was not able to attend today, but currently the Retirement Fund is doing well and we have good investment returns. The annual report will be out soon.

Marsha wanted to let the members know that you can view the Retirement Fund Board agendas and minutes as well as attend the meetings. She stated one item on the March agenda concerns bonuses for employees. Marsha further said that Fort Worth has 3,100 general employees that are retirees. Twenty-five percent (25%) of them are at less than or at current poverty levels.

Linda stated that the ERF CIO has a bonus built into his job that is based on his performance. This raised questions as no one else has a bonus. Bonuses should be rare and based on performance. We need a market study as one has not been performed in about five (5) years. We want to make sure we are competitive regarding cost of living, pay, etc. in the market place. She is not in favor of bonuses for public sector employees, but also doesn't want to under or over pay, we want to be good stewards. Marsha stated we are the only pension fund in Texas where Police, Fire and General employees are in one fund. Marsha told the members that her replacement on the Retirement Fund Board is Kara Shuror and she represents only general retirees. Her Email is kara.shuror@fwretirement.org.

Alison is going to invite City Councilmembers to our next CORE meeting to be held in May. She stated that the average yearly pension for general retirees is \$33,974.88 and the average for Fire, Police and General combined is \$47,792.93.

A member had a question about having a compounded COLA instead of a simple COLA. Linda stated that compounded COLAs are better and she would love to see them come back.

A member and Alison had questions about the below poverty line retirees as many do

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not attend CORE meetings because nothing is for them. Linda stated that any changes to pensions cannot happen ad hoc, must be done through legislation. Another member stated they don't think the city will do anything and there needs to be a plan of how to approach the city. Alison stated that CORE is going to ask City Council to attend the next meeting. Another member stated we can then ask City Council "what can you do for our retirees", we need a plan. Carol stated that we are starting out by asking City Council members that question. Basically, councilmembers are mostly new to the job and do not know us. They need to be educated about CORE and its function and meet our members.

ELECTIONS:

Carol then began the election or re-election process of our board members.

No motion was made for election of a new Secretary; current Secretary is resigning.

Deborah Duke has agreed to serve another term as the Treasurer: **Motion made by Bobbie Montgomery and 2nd made by Minnie Hodge to re-elect incumbent Deborah Duke as Treasurer. Motion APPROVED unanimously by oral vote of members present.**

Alison Letnes has agreed to serve another term as 1st Vice President. She took over as 1st Vice President after the passing of Past President Karen Van Leuvan and Carol Brown 1st Vice President took over as President. **Motion made by Marsha Anderson and 2nd made by O. R. McClain to re-elect incumbent Alison Letnes as 1st Vice President. Motion APPROVED unanimously by oral vote of members present.**

No motion was made for election of 2nd Vice President, also helps with Programs.

Carol Brown has agreed to serve another term as President: **Motion made by Marsha Anderson and 2nd by Yolanda Gonzalez to re-elect incumbent Carol Brown as President. Motion APPROVED unanimously by oral vote of members present.**

Membership: Alison stated that we currently have 180 paid CORE members CORE after O. R. McClain renewed his membership today.

Carol made further comments concerning City Council by stating the we have to let them know we are concerned as retirees. A member stated that City Council did not

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come to talk to us in 2023. Another member wanted to know if we had contact information on those members at or below poverty level. We could have some of them come and tell their story. Alison stated she has no information on pensions, there is some information on Facebook. Carol stated that we as members need to reach out to retirees. Marsha stated that we need to get out meeting information sooner and ask people to come. She also stated general employees do not have a lot of support from upper management in the city. Member stated maybe we could get inserts with CORE info in checks like water gets info out in water bill.

Marsha stated we will now have refreshments with our meetings, like we did today. Yolanda suggested we put breakfast info in the flyer.

Carol then held drawings for the \$25 gift cards. Edna Paige and Gwen Hicks were our lucky winners.

Being no further business, the President adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:42 a.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by,

Marolee Lunsford, CORE Secretary