

# National Pensioners Federation

## **Minutes** **Convention 2017**

**Dartmouth, Nova Scotia**  
**October 3 & 4, 2017**

**Note:** “**MSC**” within these minutes indicates that a particular item was Moved, Seconded, and Carried.

President Herb John called the meeting to order at 9 a.m., October 3 and welcomed all Delegates and visitors.

**MSC** That the agenda for this 73<sup>rd</sup> annual NPF Convention be adopted as circulated.

Following the adoption of the agenda, the delegates and visitors sang O’Canada; heard the reading of the NPF’s “Seniors’ Prayer”; observed a minute of silence dedicated to those who have passed on since our last meeting; and then received welcoming greetings from First Nation’s representative Keigan Sack.

The Deputy Mayor of the city of Dartmouth, Steve Craig, brought greetings and welcomed the delegates to the city. Mr. Craig was introduced and thanked for his remarks by NPF President John.

Alma Johnston-Tynes, the President of our hosting organization (The Federation of Senior Citizens and Pensioners of Nova Scotia) welcomed all attendees on behalf of the Federation.

Pat Trask of the Saskatchewan Seniors Association Incorporated (SSAI) announced that the SSAI would be pleased to host NPF’s Convention 2018 in Saskatchewan.

**MSC** That the following committee appointments be approved:

Resolutions

Doug Edgar (Chairperson)

Alma Johnston-Tynes  
Katarzyna Kaminski  
Bob Such

Registration and Credentials

Jean Simpson (Chairperson)  
Mary Forbes (Executive Liaison)  
Donna Sutherland  
Tony Sisti

Elections

Dave Tremblay (Chairperson)  
Bernie LaRusic (Executive Liaison)

**MSC** That the minutes of NPF Convention 2016 be adopted as circulated.

**MSC** That the Financial Report for the fiscal year 2016 be adopted as circulated.

Registration and Credentials Report

Jean Simpson expressed the committee's thanks for those who assisted in putting the Convention kits together and then presented her Credentials report:

Delegates: 19 British Columbia  
              3 Saskatchewan  
              33 Ontario  
              13 Nova Scotia  
              1 PEI

Executive: 6

Guests: 5

At this point, the Chair declared a 15 minute break in the proceedings.

Following the break, President Herb John presented his President's report and was thanked by the Delegates through their applause during a standing ovation.

Kathleen Jamieson, Chair of the NPF Health Committee, presented a report to the Delegates entitled “Tough Love – Health Care for Seniors in Canada” and also outlined significant points contained in reports by two other Committee members – JoAnn Lauber and Alma Johnston-Tynes.

Questions and comments from Delegates followed Kathleen’s presentations.

**MSC** That the Health Committee’s report (including its recommendations) be adopted.

At this time, Mary Forbes introduced Trish Harkins (Johnson Affinity Accounts Consultant, Atlantic Region) who outlined the types of insurance Johnson Insurance offers to NPF members and supporters as well as individual members of NPF’s affiliated organizations.

On the conclusion of Trish’s remarks, Mary expressed the thanks of the meeting’s participants for the information provided.

Doug Edgar (Resolutions Committee Chair) took the chair and outlined the general processes involved when consideration will be given to submitted resolutions.

The meeting recessed for lunch.

After the lunch break, President Herb called the Executive together for a quick discussion prior to reconvening the meeting to announce some news he had just received. He asked for the Executive’s input and approval which was given. He had received an offer of professional assistance in fundraising which would provide the opportunity to hire an executive director and possibly some staff. This possibility was substantive enough for Herb to withdraw his resignation and complete the next year of his term as President. This help in conducting the business of the NPF would make an enormous difference.

**MSC** That the Convention support the pursuit of significant funding to enable the employment of an Executive Director for NPF plus additional staff.

Carried unanimously

## Resolutions

**MSC** That the list currently called Objectives be removed from the Constitution and Bylaws of the NPF, and that the word “Objectives” be omitted from the phrase “Constitution, Bylaws and Objectives” in any subsequent section of the constitution, and that the list of concepts be reclassified as the NPF’s “General Aims and Long-Term Goals” and be made available to the membership.

*Note: The Chair declared that the enriched majority required for this amendment had been achieved.*

The “NPF Task Force” report on a proposed constitutional amendment which would see the NPF hold its convention every two years was presented to the Delegates.

The members of the Task Force included:

Barry Thorsteinson (1<sup>st</sup> Vice President of NPF)  
Pat Trask (Saskatchewan)  
Diane Wood (British Columbia)  
Mary Forbes (NPF Treasurer)  
Terry Donovan (Nova Scotia)

Members of the Task Force commented on their written report.

Questions and comments followed.

President Herb John thanked the Task Force members for their contributions to the report.

Pat Brady introduced (and later thanked) Josh Bizjak (Broadbent Institute, Director of Development) who addressed the Delegates on the establishment of the Institute; its goals, objectives and policies; and noted a number of activities planned for the future.

The meeting recessed for 15 minutes.

Bernie LaRusic introduced Amy Fogarty (Business Development Officer, Mental Health First Aid Canada) to the meeting. Amy outlined the programmes and work being done by her organization and responded to questions and comments. Bernie, on behalf of the meeting, thanked Amy for her presentation.

## Resolutions

Doug Edgar, Chair of the Resolutions Committee, directed the attention of the Delegates to the Convention's resolutions document.

**M&S** That the NPF meet every second year with the next Convention being held in 2018.

### **Defeated**

**MSC** That the NPF call on all levels of government to stop charging parking fees at Canadian hospitals and work with other organizations such as senior citizens in each province and territory, the Council of Canadians, Unifor Retirees and others to reach this effort for free parking at hospitals.

**MSC** That the "Housing" report be adopted as circulated.

**MSC** That the meeting adjourn until 9 a.m. Thursday, Oct. 5.

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The meeting was called to order at 9 a.m. Thursday, Oct. 5 by President Herb John.

Herb called upon the Resolutions Chair to proceed with consideration of the resolutions.

## Resolutions

**MSC** That the NPF urge the federal government to enter into meaningful discussions with the provinces to provide a National Pharmacare Programme so that all Canadians have equal access to prescription drugs at a reduced cost.

**MSC** That the NPF continue to demand that the federal government pass legislation to provide a National Public Drug Plan, and that the NPF write directly to the Canadian Minister of Health requesting the Minister to take a positive stance towards promoting a National Public Drug Plan and advocate for such a plan to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health Study on the development of a National Pharmacare Programme.

**MSC** That the NPF work with our allies to demand that the federal government develop a national dementia plan which will focus on:

- Increasing funding for research into all aspects of dementia
- Promoting earlier diagnosis and intervention
- Strengthening the integration of primary, home and community care
- Enhancing skills and training of the dementia workforce
- Recognizing the needs and improving supports for caregivers.

**MSC** That the NPF encourage provincial and federal governments to increase research funding in order to find a cure for Alzheimer's and dementia.

**MSC** That the NPF urge the federal government to establish a national dementia plan.

**MSC** That the NPF call upon the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Health, if deaths are determined to be due to carcinogens in the workplace, to ensure that those deaths are recorded and investigated, and that legislation be put in place to banish all materials and sources of carcinogen exposure from the workplace.

**MSC** That the NPF call on the federal government to work with the territorial and provincial governments and their municipal counterparts to provide funding and guidelines for the immediate construction of affordable (that is 30% of family income) rental housing in areas of the country with the most pressing need; and that the NPF call on the federal government to work with said groups to develop a plan for affordable housing provisions and roll out that plan across the country; and that the NPF call on the federal government to insist that territories and provincial governments set guidelines in place and organizations staffed to enforce those guidelines to protect the interests of the tenants and landlords.

**MSC** That the NPF urge the federal government to increase direct funding for affordable house programmes to invest in targeted programmes to house homeless people.

**MSC** That the NPF urge both the federal and provincial governments to expand funding to "at home" personal health care.

**MSC** That the NPF urge the federal and provincial governments to enable a means-tested allowance, whether through Employment Insurance or other medium, to be paid directly to these informal caregivers to allow them to care for family members without the stress of financial hardship.

**MSC** That the NPF urge the federal and provincial governments to carefully monitor situations to be sure that the safety, security and well-being of residents of residential care complexes is maintained, and that the NPF urge the federal and provincial governments to carefully monitor the residents of residential care complexes with regard to staffing levels to ensure that those levels are maintained with the goal of providing all residents with dignity, respect and well-being and that provincial and territorial standards are enforced, and that the NPF urge the federal and provincial governments to retain public possession and ownership of all care facilities in the provinces and to block any future foreign investment or influence by private secular interests wishing to purchase or invest, to any degree, in the ownership or control of said facilities.

**MSC** That the federal government secure the future of affordable housing through a dedicated funding programme to protect the existing stock of 600,000 social housing units, and that the NPF support the development of a National Housing Strategy that includes incentives to preserve and expand rental housing and co-operative housing, at a cost not to exceed 30% of income, for moderate income earners, and that the NPF urge the federal government to determine how a National Housing Strategy can deliver housing projects with accountability and specific timelines for completion, and that the NPF urge all levels of government in partnership to address the serious housing crises which is due to long-term underinvestment in affordable housing, and that the NPF work with our allies to lobby the federal government and all other levels of government to pass into law provisions for a federal housing strategy and provisions for adequate and affordable housing for all Canadians.

**MSC** That the NPF lobby the federal government to provide funding for additional housing and the maintenance of that housing.

**MSC** That the NPF urge the Canada Revenue Agency to rectify the injustices that taxpayers face regarding their inability to claim significant medical expenses because they may not have income in a specific category.

**MSC** That the NPF urge the federal government to create a Consumer Price Index for Seniors, revamping the list of items included in the “basket of items” used in the calculation of the Consumer Price Index and give extra weight in the calculations to essentials like food, electricity, heat, etc..

**MSC** That the NPF urge the federal government to index senior pensions to the cost of living, inflation rate, only in the positive.

**MSC** That the NPF urge the federal government to increase the Canada Pension Plan death benefit to “equal to six months” worth of calculated retirement pension up to a maximum of \$5000 immediately, with incremental increases every year thereafter at no less than the cost of living and that this benefit be made non-taxable.

**MSC** That the NPF work with all seniors groups, pension and social justice organizations to carry out campaigns to ensure that federal and provincial governments enact legislation that will prohibit both public and private sector employers from making any change to defined benefit pensions which do not enhance such plans, and that the NPF work to move forward with a suitable representation on October 1<sup>st</sup> (United Nations Day of the Older Person) for Canadians around the pending pension crises.

**MSC** That the NPF demand that the Prime Minister keep his promise made to the National Association of Federal Retirees in writing that defined benefit plans which have already been paid for by employees and pensioners should not be retroactively changed.

**MSC** That the NPF urge the federal government to make the new combined Caregiver Tax Credit refundable.

**MSC** That the NPF urge the federal government to change the formula for increasing all benefits paid through Canada Pension Plan.



**MSC** That the NPF urge the federal and provincial governments to collaborate in producing and distributing with the T4A slips an information sheet outlining the following:

- Income supports available, such as the Guaranteed Income Supplement, Medical Plan Premium Assistance, Shelter Aid for Elderly Residents, etc.,
- Household income required to be eligible for such income support, e.g. under \$42,000 or ?
- Contact information to obtain application forms for such income support.

**MSC** That the NPF urge the federal government to increase the amount of CPP, OAS, and other monies so that people who are on fixed income and low income families or the disabled can live in their homes comfortably.

**MSC** That the NPF continue to work with the Canadian Labour Congress, the Congress of Union Retirees of Canada and the BC Retired Teachers' Association, our allies and union affiliates to oppose Bill C-27, an act to amend the Pensions Benefits Standards Act, and that the NPF continue to educate members and the public on the dangers of Bill C-27.

**MSC** That the NPF continue to:

- Oppose changes to the age of eligibility for either/or and both the Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security; and
- Work with our allies to oppose these changes.

**MSC** That the NPF call upon our Prime Minister, the federal government, and Canada Post Corporation to establish a task force to deliver new financial products and new services through the Post Office, and that the NPF urge the national government to establish a publicly-owned postal bank.

**MSC** That the NPF highlight the unfairness of the present compensation paid to CEOs and other corporate executives while workers experience wage and pension stagnation.

**MSC** That the NPF call upon the Prime Minister along with the federal and provincial governments to establish a guaranteed annual income scale for the benefit of all citizens, and

That the scale of benefits be such that it would reduce the income gap through annual guaranteed income and lift all Canadians out of poverty.

**MSC** That the NPF oppose the federal government's proposed taxation of health benefits.

**MS** That the executive of the NPF strike a task force whose mandate is to immediately research and recommend ways to ethically fund-raise in order to support NPF activities.

### **Defeated**

**MSC** That the NPF lobby the federal government and the standing committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development to support the development and implementation of a national seniors' strategy for Canada.

President John welcomed (and later thanked) Scott Duvall (NDP Member of Parliament and NDP critic on pensions) to the Convention.

Scott addressed a significant number of issues in respect to pension income including changes to CPP, GIS, bankruptcy legislation, and Bill C-27.

Questions and comments followed.

The meeting returned to the consideration of resolutions with Doug Edgar in the chair.

### Resolutions

**MSC** That the NPF call upon all levels of government and the Prime Minister to conduct a non-partisan process involving citizens and experts to determine the best model of proportional representation, and

that this model be implemented in time to make every vote count in the 2019 election.

**MSC** That survivor benefits are not combined with the Canada Pension Plan at 60 to reduce the overall benefits but that both benefits are maintained.

**MSC** That the NPF engage the federal, provincial and territorial governments for affordable childcare programme to increase the number of low cost spaces at a cost of no more than \$15 per day, and that these spaces be offered in safe government-regulated facilities for the wellbeing of our children and grandchildren.

Barb Mikulec, Chair of the NPF Housing Committee spoke on the issues and recommendations outlined in the Housing Report contained in Convention documentation.

President John thanked Barb for her work on the committee and the quality and depth of the housing report.

### Credentials Report

Jean Simpson reported on the number of delegates present:

- 19 British Columbia
- 3 Saskatchewan
- 33 Ontario
- 18 Nova Scotia
- 1 Prince Edward Island
- 6 NPF Executive members

A representative from Collette travel outlined some of the opportunities/benefits available to NPF supporters and members of NPF affiliate organizations.

The Chair drew the attention of the Delegates to several reports included in the Convention documentation.

Questions and comments followed.

Doug Edgar (NPF Executive member) introduced (and later thanked) Darryl Mabini (Senior Director, Growth and Stakeholder Relations, Healthcare of Ontario Pension Plan). Darryl addressed the meeting in respect to “Seniors’ Poverty and Defined Benefit Pension Plans”.

Questions and comments followed.

### Elections

Dave Tremblay, Chair of the Elections Committee, conducted the elections.

Results:

Treasurer	--	Mary Forbes
First Vice President	--	Trish McAuliffe
Third Vice President	--	Bernie LaRusic

President John thanked the members of the Election Committee for their assistance in conducting the elections.

**MS** That the NPF strongly condemn classifying pensions under the federal Bankruptcy Act as unsecured creditors and demand that the federal government include worker pensions as secured creditors.

**Carried Unanimously**

**MSC** That the meeting adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

