

National Pensioners Federation

Minutes

Convention 2014

September 17 & 18, 2014

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

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.

MSC That the agenda for this Convention be adopted as circulated.

The singing of “O Canada” was led by First Vice President John Gatens.

The Seniors’ Prayer was read by Sandy Carricato.

The Delegates observed one minute of silence in honour of departed colleagues.

Mr. Zack Jeffries, Deputy Mayor of Saskatoon, welcomed the delegates to Saskatoon and brought greetings on behalf of the city and its residents. President Herb thanked Mr. Jeffries for his attendance and remarks.

President Herb, on behalf of the NPF and the delegates present, expressed thanks to our hosting organization (Saskatchewan Seniors Association Incorporated); Ms. Sheila Righi and Fern Haight of SSAI for taking the lead role in organizing Convention 2014; and the other volunteers of SSAI for the tremendous amount of work which went into the organizational aspects of the Convention.

In addition to SSAI, Herb also expressed thanks to others who contributed to the convening of the Conference, including:

- Jean Simpson for her ongoing work on our newsletters and for assembling all of the documents in the convention booklet;
- Members of the NPF Executive;
- Provincial leaders for participating in NPF Executive conference calls;

- Sheila Righi for her services while she served on the NPF Executive and, in particular, as Second Vice President;
- Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism for funding the wonderful “Meet and Greet” social;
- The Saskatchewan Federation of Union Retirees for funding the coffee and refreshments and Pat Trask for the baked goods set out for the coffee breaks;
- The volunteers for committees and others who gave of their time and funding in order to make the Convention a success;
- The delegates for attending and their member organizations for supporting the NPF; and
- All of the many individuals and groups which have built and maintained our organization for the past 70 years.

Special Guests

President Herb welcomed Mr. Justin Wood from the office of the federal Minister of State for Seniors and Ms. Adrienne Silnicki from the Council of Canadians. Both guests joined us for the full convention.

At this point, Herb addressed the delegates and remarked on the past and future of the National Pensioners Federation and, in particular, the modes of continued support which could be utilized by individual members and their member organizations. In particular, he noted that the Executive will be filling vacancies on four committees:

- Communications and Outreach
- Health
- Housing
- Finance

and asked delegates to consider putting their names forth for service on one of the committees. The NPF Secretary (Pat Brady) would be pleased to receive the names of volunteers and will pass them on to the Executive for consideration in the appointment of committee members.

In addition to individuals who were present at the meeting, delegates were asked to canvass others in their member organizations who may wish to serve on one of the committees and have those volunteers contact the NPF Secretary.

President Herb then spoke on a large number of issues which he/the Executive/NPF had dealt with over the past year.

On behalf of the member organizations and the NPF Executive, special thanks were extended to Barry Thorsteinson for his service to our organization over the years and, in particular, in his roles as President and Past President. Barry has agreed to continue attending various activities and functions in Ottawa that require NPF participation.

President Herb noted that there are three major challenges facing the citizens of this country, seniors and the NPF:

- Creating the political will to make necessary legislative changes;
- Changing the flow of national capital so that it is dispersed more equitably across the full spectrum of Canadian society; and
- Convincing others and ourselves that we do not have an unlimited amount of time and we need to ratchet up our impact on change quickly and effectively.

Convention 2014 Committees

MSC That the following committee members be appointed:

Resolutions Committee

Doug Edgar (Chair)
Alma Johnston
Peter Pellerito
Mike Kaminski
Pat Brady (NPF Executive Liaison)

Registration and Credentials

Jean Simpson (Chair)
Tony Sisti
Sandy Carricato (NPF Executive Liaison)

Tilers

Keith Dykeman
Army Vieira

Don Revoy
Les MacDonald
Arnie DeVaan
Wendy Rolfe

Elections

Barry Thorsteinson (Chair)
Virginia Crane
Cliff Boldt
Bob Crane

MSC That the minutes of Convention 2013 be adopted as circulated.

Sandy Carricato, NPF Treasurer, presented and spoke to her financial report.

MSC That the financial report be adopted.

At this point, Barry Thorsteinson, Past President of NPF, introduced Ms. Lynne Fernandez from the “Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives” and Ms. Fernandez addressed the convention.

Questions and comments followed.

Mr. Thorsteinson thanked Ms. Fernandez for her participation in the conference.

Convention 2014 Resolutions

MSC That this Convention adopt the proposed Constitution and Bylaws as presented in the Convention 2014 documents.

Note 1: The motion carried without dissenting vote.

Note 2: The new Constitution and Bylaws may be viewed on the NPF web site.

At this point, the meeting adjourned for lunch.

The meeting reconvened and Zoe Kopetsky, Member at Large on the NPF Executive, introduced Ms. Celia Sankar from “Diversity Canada” as our next guest speaker. Ms. Sankar addressed the delegates and outlined a number of issues on

which Diversity Canada and NPF are pursuing jointly. Ms. Kopetsky thanked Ms. Sankar for her presentation.

Credentials Committee

Jean Simpson (committee Chair) reported on the number of delegates registered to date:

■ BC	21
■ Ontario	33
■ Sask.	13
■ Nfld. & Lab.	1
■ Nova Scotia	5
■ PEI	1
■ NPF Exec.	<u>8</u>
Total	74

MSC That the report of the Credentials Committee be adopted.

Convention 2014 Resolutions

MSC That wherever the standing rules of order of the NPF are silent, Roberts Rules of Order shall apply to all proceedings of the NPF.

Health

MSC That the federal, provincial, and territorial governments be urged to negotiate a new Health Accord that protects, transforms and strengthens our National Health Care System to include adequate and stable financial resources (including at least a 6% escalator), as well as a national seniors' health care plan and a national pharmaceutical strategy that will improve health outcomes for Canadians; and

That this meeting of the members of the NPF ask other seniors organizations and individuals to join us in declaring our commitment to use all democratic means before us to ensure that the above proposals are implemented in a new Canadian Health Accord.

MSC That the NPF demand from the Harper government a commitment to a re-negotiated Canada Health Accord, including a continuing care plan that integrates home, facility-based long-term care, mental health care, dental health care, palliative care, a universal drug plan, and stable funding.

MSC That the NPF urge both the federal and provincial governments to advocate on behalf of the public by exposing (where found) the pharmaceutical industry's exploitation of the sick to contrive higher drug costs.

MSC That the government of Canada negotiate a new exemption to the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA) that reads: *"Nothing in the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement be construed to apply to measures adopted or maintained by a party with respect to health care, health services or health insurance.* and

That the government of Canada remove all matters related to pharmaceutical patents from the CETA and from all future trade and investment agreements.

MSC That the NPF urge the federal government to open the doors to all of the secret meetings, allow citizen input into all trade deals, and allow parliament to be involved in debating the issues; and

That the NPF demand accountability to the citizens of Canada on free trade talks and public hearings on issues which have lasting effects on living standards.

MSC That the NPF urge the federal and provincial governments to require increased public accountability and transparency from all those entrusted with the lives of vulnerable seniors while they are in care.

MSC That the NPF lobby the federal government to phase in a national prescription drug strategy which would begin with coverage for key catastrophic drug costs with gradual expansion of coverage as finances permit until the plan is universal in application; and

That the NPF lobby the federal government to phase out the "ever-greening" of patent drugs so cheaper generics are available, saving money for the health care system, patients, hospitals, and provinces; and

That the NPF lobby the federal government to ban the direct-to-consumer advertising of pharmaceuticals so there is less unnecessary prescribing of drug therapies.

MSC That the NPF lobby the federal, provincial and territorial governments to support and promote the “Primary Health Care Model” of health care delivery across the country.

MSC That the NPF lobby the federal, provincial and territorial governments to provide free or low-cost community-based training initiatives for individuals on the needs and care of older adults.

MSC That the NPF lobby the federal, provincial and territorial governments to establish a publicly administered body to implement standards, accreditation, regulation and supervision (with public reporting) of care in long term care and personal care facilities.

MSC That the NPF lobby the federal, provincial and territorial governments to act immediately to restore funding and safe staffing levels in the health care sector.

MSC That the NPF lobby the federal, provincial and territorial governments to make health and wellness programmes for seniors and retirees a priority; and

That the NPF lobby the federal, provincial and territorial governments to provide tax incentives for seniors and retirees who participate in health and wellness programmes.

MSC That the NPF petition the Canadian government to adopt as a principle that charges for transferring medical and/or dental records be limited to the actual cost of postage or courier service.

At this point, Bernie LaRusic, NPF Executive Member at Large, introduced Inspector Rick Penny and Sergeant Dave Kozicki of the Saskatoon police and invited them to address the convention on the subject of “Seniors and Crime”. After questions and comments, Bernie thanked the two presenters.

Following a break, the Convention delegates reconvened to consider additional resolutions.

Income

MSC That the NPF continue the fight against Old Age Security changes and coordinate a mass mobilization in Ottawa of seniors and retirees.

MSC That the NPF Convention 2014 call on all Canadian governments and Statistics Canada to take a hard look at “the fixed basket of commodities” used to determine the CPI and urge the use more realistic goods and services items to come up with a Consumer Price Index fairer to all Canadians; and

That the NPF urge governments to ensure that the minimum wage is boosted to a sufficient amount to be a living wage.

Housing

MSC That the NPF urge the federal, provincial , and territorial governments to accelerate plans to ensure that all seniors’ residences are equipped with the necessary systems and adequate staff in order to provide an efficient and timely evacuation; and

That the NPF urge the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to ensure that any residence constructed in the future have a method of closing off sections of a building when fire occurs (e.g. a fire wall) as well as adequate staff on duty, especially during the evening hours so as to assist in a speedy evacuation.

MSC That the NPF request the federal and provincial governments to assist with financial options to allow seniors to be able to afford to stay in their residences.

MSC That the NPF lobby the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to create more low-income and affordable housing units across Canada; and

That the NPF work with other national and provincial seniors/retirees organizations and other allies to lobby federal, provincial and territorial

governments to increase and support low-income and affordable housing units;
and

That the NPF work with other national and provincial seniors/retirees organizations and other allies to lobby federal, provincial and territorial governments to implement rent controls in provinces and territories where there are currently none in place.

Transportation

MSC That the NPF urge the federal government to make it mandatory that car manufacturers make sure that tail lights are always lit.

MSC That the NPF urge that in-car cellular services providers be mandated to offer access to 911 service to customers whose vehicles are so equipped; and

That vehicle manufacturers be mandated to equip vehicles such that the 911 emergency service through the in-car cell phone be automatically activated in the event of the air bags being deployed.

MSC That the federal and provincial governments enact regulations to ensure fair and equitable gasoline prices throughout Canada.

NPF First Vice President John Gatens introduced Ms. Adrienne Silnicki, Executive Director of “The Canadian Health Coalition” and Ms. Silnicki then addressed the Convention. Comments and questions followed. John then thanked Ms. Silnicki.

The meeting adjourned for the day.

September 19

President Herb John called the meeting to order and then invited Mr. Curtis Standig to bring greetings on behalf of First Nations. On the conclusion of Mr. Standig’s remarks, President Herb expressed the thanks of delegates for Mr. Standig’s comments.

Mr. Justin Woods was unable to stay for the balance of the Convention.

At this point, the meeting was introduced by NPF President Herb John to Mr. Larry Hubich, President of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour who, in turn, brought greetings on behalf of his membership and commented on a number of policies that the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour and NPF have in common. On the conclusion of Mr. Hubich's remarks, President Herb thank Mr. Hubich for attending our Convention and sharing his thoughts with us.

Additional Resolutions

MSC That this meeting of the affiliates of the NPF urge the federal government to stop the drastic cuts and rate hikes proposed by Canada Post and instead use the Postal Service Charter review to consult with the public and key stakeholders about alternatives (such as expanding parcel post delivery and providing banking services at post offices) that would generate new revenue and ensure a financially viable and service-oriented postal service for the future.

MSC That the NPF demand that the federal government live up to its responsibility for all of its citizens and recognizes the sacrifices of seniors, retirees, our veterans, and members of the public services; and

That the NPF, our allies, and all good citizens recognize October 1st, 2014, and on October 1st, 2015 have a mobilization of seniors in large numbers to let the government know seniors matter and vote to make changes for the betterment of all citizens October 15, 2015.

MSC That the NPF approach and drive seniors of all walks of society and like-minded seniors' organizations to hold a conference in Ottawa to plan and act on the many concerns of seniors.

MSC That the following resolution be withdrawn:

That the NPF support all efforts to stop the Fair Elections Act, demand that the Harper government consult with all Canadians and have a fair debate in parliament; and

That the NPF and its members lobby all Conservative MPs stating our opposition to this Bill – that denying Canadians their right to vote is not the right thing to do. Elections belong to us, not politicians.

MSC That the NPF insist that the federal government withdraw the Fair Elections Act as presented and entrust the writing of a new “Fair Elections Act” to a committee of the provincial and federal Chief Electoral Officers, to ensure that the Act is crafted for the good of democracy.

Barry Thorsteinson, as Chair of the Elections Committee, drew to the attention of the delegates various matters respecting the conduct of elections for NPF Executive positions.

Executive Member Zoe Kopetsky outlined a proposal for an NPF fundraising walkathon and encouraged member organizations to consider participation. Questions and comments followed.

President Herb noted that this subject would be placed on the agenda of the next expanded Executive conference call.

NPF Treasurer Sandy Carricato introduced Ms. Irene Mathyssen, MP, “Official Opposition Critic for Seniors” and invited Ms. Mathyssen to address the assembly. Ms. Mathyssen outlined the NDP’s “National Strategy on Ageing in Canada”. Copies of that document were provided for delegates and is also available on the federal NDPs web site.

Questions and comments followed Ms. Mathyssen’s presentation.

Sandy expressed the thanks of the delegates for the wide ranging and detailed address.

Resolutions (continued)

MSC That the NPF demand that the Canadian government launch a full and open inquiry into crimes against aboriginal women and prosecute to the fullest extent of the law those who have committed those crimes.

The meeting recessed for lunch.

On the resumption of business, NPF Secretary Pat Brady introduced Mr. Garry Neil, Executive Director of “The Council of Canadians” and invited Mr. Neil to address the assembly.

Mr. Neil addressed a wide variety of subjects, including fiscal transfers to provinces for health care; the legal actions of Dr. Day re private health clinics; and the effects of free trade agreements (particularly drug patents).

Questions and comments followed.

Mr. Neil's complete remarks will be placed on the NPF web site.

On behalf of the delegates, Pat thanked Mr. Neil for his in-depth presentation.

Resolutions (continued)

MSC That the NPF urge both the federal and provincial governments' Ministers of Justice to consider the provision of free legal services for those earning under a certain income and offer a reasonable sliding scale of fees for those with greater needs.

MSC That the NPF urge the federal government to re-examine its policies and show appreciation for the services of men and women on the front lines by reinstating all of the cut services as well as improving access to them.

MSC That the NPF urge the federal government to require the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to work toward standardizing all food labels, with clearly stated additives and nutritional values.

MSC That the NPF urge the justice system (both federal and provincial) to provide more recognition, resources, treatment and assistance to the traumatized victims of crime.

MSC That the NPF urge the federal, provincial and territorial governments to encourage development and implementation of the "Dementia Buddy Programme" in medical school curricula and give approval for first year medical students participation in this programme across Canada.

MSC That the NPF urge the federal and provincial governments to mandate a ban on the use of the identified pesticides that are killing off bee colonies.

MSC That the following resolution be withdrawn:

That the NPF agree that the National Energy Board stop the use of the Line 9 pipeline immediately and order an environmental assessment ; and

That the NPF lobby local, provincial, and federally elected officials to put an end to the use of Line 9 and force Enbridge Pipelines Inc. to look for safer ways to transport dilbit.

MSC That the NPF call upon Roma Ambrose and provincial Ministers of Health to cease using the same global lump sum approach as in the 1960s and to move to a model which allows a hospital to run efficiently and without a need to charge for parking fees.

MSC That the NPF encourage its members to support (where possible) “Idle No More” organizers to further their environmental protection and indigenous rights activities.

MSC That the NPF urge the federal government to reverse the decision to sell and continue with its ownership of significant equity in shares of General Motors to help ensure that the company maintains its manufacturing base in Canada and provide paying jobs for Canadian taxpayers and ensure the pensions of the retirees who sacrificed so much to build that profitable company.

The consideration of resolutions was concluded at this point and Convention delegates expressed their thanks to the members of the Resolutions Committee for the time and effort expended while working on the resolutions.

Executive Committee Elections

The following were elected to fill vacancies on the NPF Executive:

- President Herb John
- 2nd Vice President Mike Kaminsky
- Secretary Pat Brady
- Member at Large Zoe Kopetsky
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Note: All of the above positions are for 2-year terms.

NPF Third Vice President, Winnie Fraser-Mackay introduced Ms. Sheelah McLean of “Idle No More” and Ms. McLean addressed the Convention.

Ms. McLean spoke on issues that her organization is dealing with and the relationship and interaction of her organization with other Canadians.

After questions and comments, Winnie expressed the thanks of the delegates for Ms. McLean's presentation.

Past President Barry Thorsteinson administered the NPF "Oath of Office" to the newly-elected members of the NPF Executive.

The meeting adjourned at 4 p.m.