

TOWN OF MIDDLEBORO RETIREES INSURANCE GROUP (MRIG)
MIDDLEBORO.RETIREES.INS.GROUP@GMAIL.COM
JANUARY 2011

UPDATES ON MTA AND MRIG LAWSUITS

Since we last sent you an update on the two lawsuits the Town's Attorney had filed a motion with the court to combine the two lawsuits into one case. Our Attorneys wrote in opposition to combining the suits (a lengthy 6 page brief). On January 13th our attorney advised us that the Court had allowed the Town of Middleborough's Motion to Consolidate.

We (MRIG) will be notified when a date for the filing of motions and a date for oral arguments is set. We will notify our membership so anyone interested may attend the court hearing.

HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM

Governor Patrick has made it a priority of his new term of office to do something about controlling health care costs. He is still advocating that all cities and towns join in with the States GIC insurance plan and while maintaining collective bargaining, supports the lowering the percentage of union approval needed to join GIC from 70% to 50%. He has also stated "Moving municipal employees to Medicare, which cities and towns can do right now, is worth hundreds of millions of dollars in the aggregate," Patrick said. "We need to encourage more cities and towns to do just that."

"Gov. Deval Patrick wants local officials to rethink how they want to fix their top funding headache: rising employee health care costs. The solution they solidly back – provision called plan design – doesn't have the governor's backing despite aggressive lobbying from officials and the Massachusetts Municipal Association."

"Patrick said that while the push for plan design has "a lot of sense in it", it doesn't tackle the bigger problem driving the health care increases, which the Massachusetts Municipal Association estimates have increased 150 percent over the past 10 years.

"I understand folks wanting to make a change, but beyond that, I will say we need to talk about more than just cost-shifting, because that's all it is," Patrick said. "We have to be talking about how we get system costs down."

The source of this information is <http://www.patriotledger.com/features/x2135346303/Rising-health-care-costs-a-priority-for-Gov-Deval-Patrick>

Note: Joining G:IC requires those eligible to enroll in Medicare.

You may want to contact your local state representatives and state senator regarding any upcoming legislation regarding health care changes that will impact your health insurance. You should ask your legislators not to allow cities and towns to take away promised retirement benefits that the retirees have earned. And strongly suggest that they keep in mind that retirees should be exempt from any changes as retirees planned their retirement on benefits promised by their city or town.

Because some legislative actions can be taken on a very short time frame, it is vital that MRIG members follow the news closely so that they can communicate with their legislators quickly when necessary.

If you are a Middleboro resident and would like to express your concerns to your state legislators regarding this and/or other health insurance issues facing municipal retirees, the e-mail addresses are listed below:

Thomas.Calter@mahouse.gov
Stephen.Canessa@mahouse.gov
William.Straus@mahouse.gov
Marc.Pacheco@masenate.gov

If you are a Massachusetts, but not Middleboro, resident your concerns about these issues can be addressed to your State Representative or State Senator whose e-mail address can be found at the following link:

<http://malegislature.gov>

For those preferring the postal service, the mailing address for all State Representatives and Senators is State House – Room ____, Boston, MA 02133. Their room numbers are as follows: Rep. Calter - Room 237, Rep. Canessa - Room 489, Rep. Straus - Room 473F and Sen. Pacheco - Room 312-B.

COLA BASE INCREASE

When the State voted “Chapter 188 of the Acts of 2010, Municipal Relief Act Sections Other Than ERI, Section 16, 17, 18, 19 and 71” this moved the question of increasing the COLA base from the State to the local Retirement Boards for most retirees. Teachers are still under the State for any COLA increases.

The Plymouth County Retirement Board will be meeting on January 25th and at that time will vote on the 3% COLA for this coming July. Also, at this meeting they may discuss the possibility of increasing the COLA base as allowed by the above legislation. If the Retirement Board decides to consider an increase in the base then the Advisory Board (made up of the Treasurers of each member community) would cast the deciding votes. The interesting part is that this is a weighted vote based on the size of each represented community.

For those who may question the amount of money involved: for each thousand dollars the COLA base is raised above the current \$12,000 you would receive an additional \$30 a year or \$2.50 per month.

Our Selectmen in the past have voted “NO” on any increases for retirees. We are not optimistic of any change at this time.

ANNUAL TOWN ELECTIONS

It’s hard to believe but Town elections are right around the corner. This year the Selectmen seats currently held by Marsha Brunelle and Muriel Duphily are up for election. The Finance Committee seats currently held by Richard Pavadore and Jason Ruth are also open for election.

As has been our practice, we will again be sending out questionnaires to the candidates and will forward to the membership copies of all correspondence received. We will also remind you of the past positions and voting records of incumbents, running for re-election, that were related to retiree issues.

It is notable that the candidates (Representatives Thomas Calter and William Straus and Senator Marc Pacheco) who responded to our questionnaires for the November 2010 election, all won their respective

elections. It would be good to think that the MRIG members' evaluation of their responses to our questions contributed to those results.

ANNUAL MEETING – SAVE THE DATE

We are already looking ahead to our annual meeting to be held May 17, 2011, the third Tuesday in May, you will receive the names of nominees for the MRIG Executive Committee and any By-law changes at least 10 days in advance of the meeting.

If there is anything you would like to see discussed at the Annual Meeting please drop us a line and let us know your suggestions.

Mail: MRIG
c/o Gene Turney
4 Pearl Street
Middleboro, MA 02346

E-Mail: MIDDLEBORO_RETIREES_INS_GROUP@GMAIL.COM

DUES / CONTACT INFORMATION

If you are receiving this newsletter in paper format via the U.S. mail but have an e-mail address, please take a moment now to share that e-mail address with us, this saves on postage and printing as well as providing you with quicker information and more frequent updates than can be accomplished by our periodic paper mailings. In case you need to change any information, or haven't paid your dues for the current year we have again included a dues form. If you don't know whether or not you are paid please contact our Treasurer, Mary Cook, at richard.cook2@verizon.net or 508-821-2112 and she will verify the information for you.

TOWN OF MIDDLEBORO RETIREES INSURANCE GROUP (MRIG) **MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION – 2011 - \$5.00**

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
CITY/TOWN: _____ ZIP: _____
E-MAIL: _____
TELEPHONE: _____

(This information is confidential and will not be shared with any other person or organization.)

Make checks payable to: MRIG
c/o Mary Cook
130 Scadding Street
Taunton, MA 02780
