

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

SPECIAL ELECTION – TUESDAY – SEPTEMBER 20, 2011

Many of you are eligible to vote in the Sept 20 election. As this is an “off season” election, there is likely to be a smaller than usual voter turnout and YOUR vote will count even more heavily than usual. Absentee ballots are available at the Town Clerk’s office the day before the election for anyone who cannot vote on Tuesday.

*Not sure if you live in the 12th Bristol District? Click the following link
<http://www.wheredoivotema.com/bal/myelectioninfo.php>*

If you are eligible, PLEASE VOTE on September 20th.

Candidates and their websites

Democrat: Roger Brunelle, Jr. www.votebrunelle2011.com

Republican: Keiko Orrall www.orrall2011.com

Keeping our position of not endorsing any candidate we sent out letters to both candidates asking for responses to the following questions. Following each question in bold is the candidate’s response.

As you are a candidate for public office, we are looking for a written statement of your position on the following questions:

1. Which version of the Municipal Health Insurance Law passed on July 11, 2011 – the original House version or the Senate version – would you have voted to support as a first choice?
(To refresh your memory the House version stripped out collective bargaining rights and left retirees unprotected and the Senate version kept some collective bargaining rights, protected retirees and included them in future decision making.)

Roger Brunelle response: The Senate version.

Keiko Orrall response: I would have voted to support the original House version.

2. What is your position on maintaining (“grandfathering”) retiree health insurance benefits to the premium percentage contribution rate they had when they retired (similar to the State system regarding retiree health insurance)?

Roger Brunelle response: I would want to maintain the percentage at the time of retirement.

Keiko Orrall response: I would favor grandfathering health insurance benefits however if we enter a situation financially as in the case of Central Falls, RI which went bankrupt we would need to revisit health insurance benefits.

3. If you were given the opportunity today, would you vote to increase the COLA base for all retirees (Plymouth County and Massachusetts Teachers Retirement systems) from the current \$12,000?

Roger Brunelle response: Yes

Keiko Orrall response: While it would be nice to increase the COLA base for all retirees from the current \$12,000, we do not have the money to do so unless other areas of state, county, and municipal government are adjusted. Given the difficulty the county and municipal budgets are having these days, it seems unlikely that funds will be available at those levels of government to afford an increase. Therefore my plan is to look for ways to cut state spending to increase local aid to relieve county and municipal budget constraints.

For additional information regarding candidate positions see the Massachusetts House of Representatives-AARP Voter Guide at this link. <http://vote.aarp.org/candidate-detail.do?jrssionid=OE2729429967C4C40273491F93FOE2D6?id=221328800>

If clicking on this link doesn't work, the link can be cut and pasted into your browser.

NOTE ON FLU SHOT COVERAGE

Gene Turney has been in touch with BC/BS and learned the information cited below.

BC/BS has advised they will cover Flu Shots with no co-pay as follows:

Primary Doctors Office if visit is for Flu Shot only. If Flu Shot is given in conjunction with an office visit then co-pay will apply.

CVS Minute Clinic only. Will not pay for Flu Shot at a CVS Pharmacy. Locations of CVS Minute Clinics can be found at WWW.CVS.COM

Mollen Immunization Clinics. Locations can be found at WWW.FLUSHOTSUSA.COM. It appears that all the Mollen Clinics are held frequently at various area Wal-Mart locations.

LEGAL ISSUES UPDATE

The joint hearing for the MTA and MRIG legal cases is now scheduled for 2:00 PM, November 7, 2011 at the Brockton Superior Court House, 72 Belmont Street, Brockton, Court Room 5. We will send out an email closer to the date for those who want to attend and carpool.

NEW MEDICARE ENROLLMENT NOW STATE LAW

Pending finalization of the new health care regulations regarding implementation of the new law, we are advising our membership that if anyone is currently planning to enroll in Medicare Part B, they may want to hold off as the new legislation contains language that says the Town shall pay any penalties incurred for late enrollment into Medicare Part B. This could save the retiree those penalties.

The new Health Care Reform act also states that the Town shall set up a PEC (Public Employee Committee) of which one member shall be a representative of the retirees and named by the Retired State, County and Municipal Employees Assoc. of Mass. The Executive Committee will submit

names to Mass. Retirees requesting appointment to this Committee as required by law. Gene Turney has worked with Bill Rehrey of Mass Retirees on several of our issues and we would expect his cooperation.

The Town will save considerable money when retirees are forced one Medicare Part B. We hope to work with the Town on passing on some of those savings back to the retirees to help defray the cost of the Medicare Part B monthly premiums.

A copy of the new regulations for Chapter 69 can be downloaded here:

http://www.massretirees.com/images/stories/muni_health_draft_regsposted8-2-11clean.pdf

BEACON HILL AND PENSION REFORM

The Senate will be discussing “Pension Modernization” this week in Boston. The following is taken from a message MTA President Paul Toner and Vice President Tim Sullivan sent to their membership:

The Massachusetts Senate is scheduled to vote on a pension “modernization” bill on Thursday, Sept. 15, that would substantially reduce pension benefits for future preK-12 and public higher education members, as well as other public employees. ***The Senate bill contains a provision that would only increase the COLA base to \$13,000! That translates into a \$2.50 increase per month! The MTA is strongly opposed to this bill.***

For more information and updates as this issue progresses, go the MTA website (www.massteacher.org) and refer to Pension Talking Points in the new “Pension Toolkit” area of the MTA website and to the Retired State, County & Municipal Employees Association website (<http://www.massretirees.co>).

MIIA WELLNESS PROGRAM

MRIG recently received the following letter from:

Claire Alemian, H.S.M.I.
Wellness Representative
MIIA Health Benefits Trust
One Winthrop Square
Boston, MA 02110

asking us if we would include this in our next newsletter for any retirees who might be interested.

“The MIIA Wellness Program is providing 25 pedometers and tracking logs/information on a first-come, first-served basis to Middleborough retirees. Pedometers and packets will be available for pick up the week of October 3, between the hours of 9 am to 5 pm, at the Middleborough Town Hall in the Town Manager’s Office. Retirees may request just a pedometer or if they want to track their steps/miles for 3 weeks with the opportunity of winning prizes that will be awarded to the top 3 walkers who send in their logs, they may pick up a tracking log and info as well. Just email Caroline LaCroix in the Town Manager’s office at clacroix@middleborough.com.”

COA MY LIFE MY HEALTH PROGRAM

MRIG recently received the following letter from:

Andrea M. Priest, Executive Director
Middleborough Council on Aging
558 Plymouth Street, Middleborough, MA. 02346

asking us if we would include this in our next newsletter for any retirees who might be interested.

Attached is a flyer for an exciting class we're offering here at the Middleborough COA – "My Life, My Health" is a six-week course which focuses on living better and fuller lives with chronic disease, or being a caregiver of someone with a chronic disease. The self-management aspect of the course makes it particularly attractive to people who want to actively participate in their health.

We have two fully trained & experienced volunteer peer leaders for this upcoming session which starts on Wednesdays in October, and this will be the third session we're offering here in Middleboro. The workshops are funded with support from the Mass. Executive Office of Elder Affairs, the Mass Dept. of Public Health, and the Mass. Assoc of Councils on Aging through a grant from the National Assoc of Chronic Disease Directors, Arthritis Integration Dissemination Project. The course is open to all – please post the flyer at your agency or department, or mention the course to people who might be interested in joining us. The cost of the course is FREE, but registration is required.

ORIENTATION – WED, OCT 5TH AT 9:00

Dates: Six Weeks of Workshops are scheduled on
consecutive Wednesdays from 9-11:45.
October 12, 19, 26 & November 2, 9, 16

Location: Middleboro COA - 558 Plymouth Street
Transportation and lunch available

No cost to participants - Registration required
For more information or to register contact:
the COA at 508-946-2490

DUES / CONTACT INFORMATION

If you are still receiving this newsletter via the U.S. Postal Service and have an e-mail address please share it with us as we can't produce notices and mail them as rapidly as we can e-mail information.

In case you need to change any information or you don't know whether or not your dues 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
