



**New York City DC 37 Retirees Association
General Membership Meeting Minutes
January 23 2025, at 10AM (held virtually via Zoom)**

The moderator began the meeting at 10AM and introduced Administrator, Ann Widger who began the meeting. Deputy Administrator Terri Brady gave welcome remarks and called the meeting to order. She led the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence and reflection for those we have lost and the victims of the California wildfires was led by Deputy Administrator Brady.

REMARKS from William Whalen

Terri Brady introduced Bill Whalen, Director and Chief Counsel at DC 37 Municipal Employees Legal Services (MELS).

Bill spoke about the Municipal Employees Legal Services, which is a team of 120 lawyers and legal assistants representing DC 37 working members and retirees. It is a free legal benefit service that is available to DC 37 members. He mentioned that they handle civil cases in New York at no cost to members including retiree members. These include help with issues such as housing, debt and bankruptcy, identity theft, rent subsidies and public housing/benefits (Medicare/Medicaid, Section 8, etc.) wills, life planning documents, real estate, divorce/domestic violence, and help applying for citizenship. This MELS benefit is available to members in the city of New York, Nassau County, Suffolk County, Westchester County and Rockland County. If you are not located in these areas, they can recommend someone in your area that is free in your state/county. You can contact MELS at 212-815-1111 with any questions.

MELS is hosting four free webinars coming up that are virtual and available to any DC 37 member regardless of location:

Tax Filing Tips Webinar on January 29th from 6-7:30pm.

Co-Parenting Educational Virtual Workshop on February 13th from 6-7:30pm.

Bankruptcy Webinar on February 26th from 6-7:30pm.

Matrimonial Law and Divorce Webinar May 15th from 6-7:30pm.

If you register but cannot attend, you will still get a copy of the slides discussed. Registration is available on www.DC37MELS.com. Bill took a few questions about MELS.

REMARKS from Khalia Kweli

Ann Widger introduced the Program Coordinator for the DC 37 Political Action Department, Khalia Kweli. She gave a DC 37 political action update on what to expect this year.

Wednesday, February 26th DC 37 is hosting a Mayoral Candidate Forum at BMCC Tribeca Performing Arts Center at 199 Chambers St New York, NY 10007 from 6-8pm. This event is for DC 37 members only and you must register beforehand [here](#).

DC 37 Lobby Day is our day to go to Albany to speak to our state legislators to talk to them about our Legislative Priorities. It is scheduled for Tuesday, March 4th 2025. The bus will be leaving from DC 37 HQ and spending the day in Albany. [Register for Lobby Day here](#).

This year we have an opportunity to influence and impact who the next Mayor will be, and for most of our members, who our next employer will be. We want to expand our VMO program to have over 100 DC 37 members phone banking and door knocking for our endorsed candidates. Members who join us will be given a stipend of \$22 an hour. Please use [this link](#) to sign up if you are interested. Khalia took a few questions from members.

REMARKS from Stephanie Darrisaw and Michelle Blackstock from Local 371

Stephanie Darrisaw, a member of Local 371 and a member of the Black History Committee, introduced the Chair of the Black History Committee for Local 371, Michelle Blackstock, to discuss the Black History Celebration on Friday, February 7th from 5-11pm at DC 37 Headquarters. The event will have guest speakers, dinner, and dancing. Any questions please call Michelle Blackstock at 347-533-0274. Local 372 is also holding a Black History Celebration event on February 21st 6-11pm at DC 37 Headquarters.

REMARKS from Norman Isaacs

Administrator Widger introduced Norman Isaacs, the Benefit Coordinator who works at the DC

37 Health and Security Fund. Please update Health and Security with your current information: marital status, new address, update them with beneficiary information. More information can be found at https://www.dc37.net/benefits/benefits_all. Please be sure to update your Beneficiary Information if you are looking to change your Beneficiary at dc37.net and fill out the Change of Beneficiary form [here](#).

Optical Benefit Increase: Effective February 1, 2024, all participants will now have a \$250 optical benefit to be utilized every 24 months based on your last date of service for all optical services. There are three ways to use your Optical Benefit: request an Optical Voucher, Optical Direct Reimbursement or a combination of both. Sunglasses fall under optical benefits. More information can be found [here](#) or by calling 212-815-1234.

Enhanced Dental Benefits: Beginning February 1, 2024, dental coverage was expanded to cover 105 additional dental procedures with cost sharing and price protection as well as enhancing the coverage of five existing dental services – periapical X-rays, periodontal cleanings (up to 4 per year), occlusal guard, posterior composites and root canals – at 100% (up to the \$1,700 annual maximum) when you visit a Delta Dental dentist within the preferred Delta Dental network. There are additional costs if you see a dentist out of network.

Any inquiries about DC 37 Health and Security Fund benefits should be directed to them by calling 212-815-1234. Isaacs took a few questions about these benefits.

Administratorship Update from Ann Widger

Ann Widger gave an update on the Retirees Association Administratorship.

She thanked DC 37 Retirees for all the work that DC 37 retirees did for the election. The new administration has swiftly started to implement their agenda. Most concerning to our union includes launching several attacks to harm workers who are federal government employees. Trump signed several executive orders to create merit based hiring programs, ban DEI, and put in place a hiring freeze to massive cuts to the federal work force. He rolled back Biden Executive Orders to hurt workers' rights. He signed an Executive order to stop a planned \$2 generic drug program for Medicare recipients. While there has not been a direct attack on the Inflation Reduction Act yet, the Republican congress introduced a bill to repeal the IRA. They are looking at cuts for Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. AFSCME will be working for a seat at the table and to protect our members' rights. We need to be prepared to fight. The sum of our strengths are bigger than the result of one election. You know from experience of our union's resilience and grit.

Henry Garrido sent out a letter to retiree members about Healthcare in December. That memo is on our website. The letter was sent out prior to a December court of appeals decision on changes

to Retiree healthcare so it did not include info from that decision. The court did affirm the injunction prohibiting the city from charging retirees for any plan up to a statutory cap. The court left unresolved what the statutory cap was. Judge Frank correctly assumed Senior Care was below the cap, but did not say what that cap was. There is an additional lawsuit in regard to changes that is pending, expect that to be heard this year.

There is a group of retirees promoting legislation in the city council that would amend the administrative code that would preserve healthcare choice for retirees who retire from city service. The legislation says that the city must offer Medicare eligible retirees at least one medigap plan with benefits equivalent to city retirees as of December 1st, 2021. DC 37 is opposing this legislation because it tries to unlawfully restrict the rights of workers and unions to negotiate health care. It violates state and local law which requires health benefits to be a mandatory subject of bargaining. It is the statutory duty of unions and employers to negotiate the benefits received in retirement. The New York Courts have affirmed this as defined by collective bargaining agreements. More importantly, this bill fails to address the underlying issue of controlling and funding healthcare costs. Removing the union's ability to negotiate healthcare and mandating equivalent care could lead to unnecessary restrictions and could put premium free healthcare benefits at risk. Call your city council member and tell them to not support this legislation - Intro #1096-2024.

For those retirees covered by Senior Care, a \$15 copay was suspended and did not go into effect. In accordance with a court order, copays have begun as of Jan 1st, 2025. The copay is a set dollar amount that you pay for various health services. Retirees are still responsible for the annual part B deductible and GHI deductible. A new ID card should have been mailed out to you prior to January 1st, 2025.

We are working to get financial affairs in order. Audits from 2018-2024 have been completed. A copy of the final auditor's reports will be posted on the DC 37 website. All relevant paperwork to get tax status back has been submitted, and we are waiting for the IRS to respond. We will continue to share monthly financial statements.

The DC 37 Office at 125 Barclay Street re-opened at the end of October. The Retirees will have space in this new building. Monthly membership meetings are attended by 3-4,000 members each month and are simulcasted in Spanish. We plan to continue these meetings. February's meeting will be virtual, but we are looking to do hybrid meetings starting in March.

Cash dues: You can send a check in for 2025 now, but we are working on annual renewal invoices for 2025 which will be sent out shortly if you are not on dues deduction. If you think you should receive one and don't by the end of February, send a check in. Please sign a dues deduction form if you are able, as it is automatically renewed each year. We are also launching a new digital membership form that will include paying cash dues if you choose to do so online via credit card.

We are looking to connect deeper with Retiree members across the country who want to get involved and build the strongest Retirees Association we can. Anyone interested in getting more involved with the union, please go to getinvolved.dc37retirees.org and fill out the membership engagement form. Will be looking to put together committees and getting folks more involved

REMARKS from Terri Brady

The financial statements mentioned will be available on the Associations website. The statements are unaudited at this time. She gave a report from January 1st, 2024-December 31st, 2024, stating that the association's total revenue is \$1,275,986.66 which accounts for \$1,203,375.20 in dues income. For 2024, we spent \$777,133.38 in expenses, leaving the Association with a surplus of \$498,853.28. Statement of Financial Position as of December 31st, 2024, which states the total assets are \$4,304,750.44 million. The Association's Liabilities are \$20,107.50 leaving the Association with equity of \$4,284,642.94.

CLOSING REMARKS

Anyone with further questions can call the Retirees Association office from 9:00AM - 5:00PM Monday-Friday at 212-815-1781 or email dc37retirees@afscme.org. The meeting was adjourned.