



**New York City DC 37 Retirees Association
General Membership Meeting Minutes
February 26, 2026 at 10:30AM
125 Barclay Street**

Administrator Ann Widger called the meeting to order at 10:40 AM. She led the Pledge of Allegiance and observed a moment of silence to honor members unable to attend or those who have passed away.

REMARKS from Henry Garrido, DC 37 Executive Director

Henry Garrido, DC 37 Executive Director, welcomed the retirees in attendance, noting their strong commitment and tenacity, despite the recent New York City blizzard. He expressed gratitude to the Retirees Association and past union organizers for their steadfast dedication to DC 37.

Garrido addressed several key updates:

- Leadership Changes: AFSCME President Lee Saunders has announced his retirement after 14 years. Garrido highlighted Saunders' significant legacy, particularly his leadership during the late 1990s when DC 37 was under administratorship. He encouraged members to offer their sincere regards as Saunders prepares for his retirement and suggested Saunders sign up to join the DC 37 Retirees Association.
- Healthcare: The launch of the new PPO in January has been generally successful, though challenges remain with one major healthcare provider and the misassignment of approximately 150 Transit workers to incorrect plans.
- Prescription Drug Plan: DC 37 remains committed to renewing the prescription drug plan. Despite anticipated tariffs and increased costs under the "Big Ugly Bill," the Union intends to cover these expenses to protect members. A new Prescription Service Program is also in development for a 2027 launch to better manage costs and secure rebates.
- Real Estate and Revenue: The renovation of the DC 37 Headquarters at 125 Barclay Street is complete. He reminded members that we are now a landlord. The building is 70% occupied by non-profit tenants, generating millions in revenue. The rooftop event space and the renovated Health Center at 115 Chambers Street are also contributing to the Union's financial stability.

Garrido reminded members that March 4 is DC 37 Lobby Day. He emphasized the importance of retiree participation to join DC 37 in advocating for a Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) for pension benefits, noting the impact of rising food and utility costs. He stressed that representatives need to hear directly from retirees to understand their needs. He thanked everyone for staying in the fight to make our Union stronger.

Garrido took questions from members. He reiterated that the DC 37 Retirees Association's monthly meetings are the best source for updates. He encouraged all members to remain engaged and attend regularly.

REMARKS from Khalia Kweli, DC 37 Political Action & Legislation

Khalia Kweli, Program Coordinator, DC 37 Political Action & Legislation Department, provided an update on Lobby Day and ways to get involved with PEOPLE and our Political Action Committee (PAC) program.

She reminded members that DC 37 2026 Lobby Day is scheduled for March 4. Check-in begins at 5:30 AM, with buses departing from DC 37 Headquarters at 6:00 AM and leaving Albany at approximately 3:00 PM. Retiree participation is essential to advocate for our legislative priorities, including Tier 6 Reform, taxing the wealthy, and worker safety. As space is limited, members with scheduling conflicts were encouraged to contact Kweli directly at 212-815-7561.

She continued by reminding members that we have a busy election year. Primary Day is June 24. Key offices up for election include Governor, State Comptroller, State Attorney General, State Senators, State Assembly Members, and Members of the House of Representatives. She underscored the crippling impacts of the “Big Ugly Bill” and said it is vital to elect officials who support a working-class agenda. She stated that members should make sure that they are registered to vote. Members should confirm their registration status and polling site by calling 311 or their local Board of Elections.

She thanked retirees for their unwavering commitment to the PEOPLE (Public Employees Organized to Promote Legislative Equality) campaign. The Political Action Committee (PAC) cannot use membership dues for political activities, making the PEOPLE campaign critical. Recent retirees must renew their commitment by completing a new donation card. Contributions can be made easily via voluntary pension deductions. Donors contributing at the VIP level (\$100+ annually) will receive an MVP DC 37 hoodie; please include your size on the donation form.

She concluded by sharing that The Political Action Department is seeking retirees to serve as Volunteer Member Organizers (VMO). For more information, please contact the department at 212-815-1550 or via email at politicalaction@dc37.net.

REMARKS from Manuel Gómez-Rosa, DC 37 Education Department

Manuel Gómez-Rosa, Program Coordinator, DC 37 Education Department, presented the Spring 2026 Retirees’ Education Program. The curriculum includes 12 classes of varied disciplines such as Creative Writing, Computer Fundamentals, Intermediate Computer Technology, Black History, Health & Fitness, Jewish History, Digital Literacy, Dance Exercises & Movement, Drawing Basics, and Spanish I & II. Classes will be held online via Zoom or at the DC 37 Headquarters. Membership with the Retirees Association is required for attendance, and registration involves completing and returning the full application coupon. Gómez-Rosa highlighted the positive impact of the Health & Fitness sessions on our seniors’ balance and fall prevention. He also noted that suggestions for new courses, such as guitar, public speaking, and ESL, will be considered for future funding based on demonstrated group interest and the identification of qualified instructors.

For more information about the Program, he asked that members contact him directly at 212-815-1679 or call the Retirees Association at 212-815-1781.

Administratorship Update from Ann Widger

Widger introduced the AFSCME DC 37 Retirees Association team who were facilitating the event, including Stephanie Darrisaw (Coordinator), Emily Bateman (Eastern Region Organizer), Trena Banks (Membership Specialist & Bookkeeper), and recent hire, Brandon Blackmon (Office Assistant & Receptionist). She shared that Blackmon comes from a strong union family. His mother recently retired from the Social

Security Administration and his grandmother was a NYCHA employee. Widger encouraged members to welcome him to the team.

Additionally, she stated that Jillian Garcia from the DC 37 Health & Security Plan, was available in the lobby to provide important information regarding dental, optical, prescription drugs, legal services (MEL), audiology, personal counseling (PSU), and death benefits.

Widger stated that the minutes and financial statements from this meeting will be posted on the DC 37 Retirees website at dc37retirees.org.

She then introduced Darrisaw to kick off the Black History Month Program.

DC 37 Retirees Association Black History Month (BHM) Program

The DC 37 Retirees Association Black History Month Program, “Our History Matters: The Untold Stories,” commenced with a reading of the history of Black History Month by Committee Member Martine Ortiz. This was followed by a reading of the poem “Family Reunion,” which was written by Ortiz and recited by Committee Member Barbara Riley. Fellow members Page Best-Hardy, Diana Verna, and Deborah Tyson shared brief biographies of Committee Members Zelma Brown, Anna Berry, and Sallie Robertson. The event concluded with a monologue performed by Denise McLain of the Neighborhood Theatre Production Group (Voices).

CLOSING REMARKS

Darrisaw thanked the members for their attendance at recent meetings and the upcoming DC 37 Lobby Day. She acknowledged the Social and Community Engagement Committee for their dedication in organizing the Black History Month event. Members were encouraged to save the date for the Holiday Hill trip on July 25, 2026. Darrisaw also noted that she looks forward to welcoming retirees at the upcoming informational sessions held in the boroughs this spring. Darrisaw stated that retirees interested in serving on the Social and Community Engagement, Membership, or Political and Legislative Committees are encouraged to contact her directly at 212-815-7585 or via email at sdarrisaw@dc37.net.

The meeting was adjourned, followed by lunch.