

Retired Firefighters of Washington

9134 207th Pl SW • Edmonds, WA 98026-6659

Phone: 425-775-9080

Email: info@rffow.org • www.rffow.org

Richard C. Warbrouck

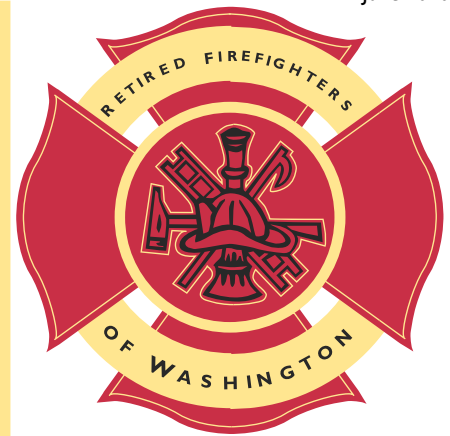
President

Jim Adsley

Vice President

June 2020

For, About, and in Support of all Retired Washington State Firefighters



Next Meeting: Wednesday, September 9, 2020 - 11 AM; Calvary Christian Assembly 6801 Roosevelt Way NE Seattle, WA

President's Message - By Richard C. Warbrouck



Today is Saturday June 6, 2020 and we are still under the restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. I hope that you and your family have

not suffered any major illness or death and only the usual inconveniences. It has been reported that King County had 8,318 confirmed cases and Snohomish County reported 2,999 confirmed cases. We had our last meeting in March. We are now in our summer break with no meetings scheduled in June, July and August. The next regularly scheduled meeting is in September.

I am disappointed to report that we have only received about 1800 survey responses. When we first discussed the general mailing to 6,900 LEOFF I members, law enforcement, fire and surviving spouses we were advised that we would only receive a 10 to 15 percent response. We felt that a 10 to 15 percent response might be a normal response in a general public mailing but because we are mailing only to LEOFF I members we should receive a higher percentage in return. Eighteen hundred returns in a six thousand nine hundred mailing is about a twenty-six percent

return. The first impression is that we had a great response but when you consider that the Retired Firefighters of Washington (RFFOW) and the Retired Seattle Police Officers Association combined have about two thousand members or twenty-nine percent of the LEOFF I members. The results indicate that we did not receive a response from each of our members. This is confirmed by the fact that we received responses from several LEOFF I members who were not members of the RFFOW or the RSPOA organizations.

We do want to thank those of you who forwarded a response and to those of you who included a donation even though donations were not requested. As an example one LEOFF I member complemented our effort by including a \$1,000.00 check with his response.

I don't know if the message put out by the Washington State Retired Deputy Sheriffs & Police Officers Association (WSRDSPOA) and the LEOFF I Coalition instructing LEOFF I members not to return a survey response had anything to do with the response or not. It may only be due to the complacent attitude of the LEOFF I members. I now have to ask why any respected leader or organization would want to discourage a member from exercising their

voice by giving their opinion on how they want to be represented or the type of organization they would join. The next question is why would the WRSPOA and the Coalition not want the results from as large a group of LEOFF I members as possible. The WSRDPOA put out the following email dated 3-17-2020 with my name and Senator Schoesler's name misspelled:

Brothers and Sisters. Many of you have already received or will receive a letter / survey from Dick Warbruck, President of the Retired Firefighters of Washington.

For years, RFFOW & RSPOA have been at odds with LEOFF I Coalition over little things like not publicly announcing the total amount of our "Warfund", no individual membership and the Executive Board positions not being elected. Currently, LEOFF I Coalition is the only organization that fights for all LEOFF I members, Fire and Law Enforcement.

RFFOW & RSPOA are looking to start another LEOFF I organization. What we need to do is to stick with what we have. At one time, I talked to State Senator Mark Schoesler of Ritzville about a LEOFF I issue. He told me that LEOFF I needs to combine into ONE organization to

(Continued on page 2)

President's Message

(Continued from page 1)

form a solid voice the Legislature will listen to. At that time, and I think still, there are too many organizations that claim to represent LEOFF I members. Each has their own agenda. You cannot go to the Legislature and ask for something if you do not have a UNITED front. NOW, this is the part where I recommend that you do nothing with the Survey for the moment. The LEOFF I Coalition is in the process of revising their By-laws to correct these issues mentioned above. Give them a week or two to complete these changes and publish them. If after that time period, please feel free to complete the Survey, if you so desire.

I'M NOT GOING TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY DCM

- 1) Allow me to dissect this message. First the Survey was not from me. It was drafted, mailed and paid for by the RFFOW and the RSPOA.
- 2) We never criticized the Coalition for not publicly announcing the total amount of their "Warfund". We don't make our financial statement available to the public. We do provide a copy to our Board of Directors, give a complete report at each monthly meeting and have a copy for members to exam at each meeting.
- 3) Yes, we do think the Coalition should be more transparent particularly when continuing to request donations.
- 4) An organization should have a membership particularly when you state you represent a group.
- 5) Yes, any group who is represented by an organization, a union a guild or any other type of member organization should have a voice, to give direction, establish organizational positions, and to hold the elected officers accountable. Any organization should have elected

representatives and full transparency.

6) The LEOFF I Coalition is not the only organization that fights for all LEOFF I members, fire and law enforcement officers. The RFFOW has been established since 1935. First as the Seattle Retired Firefighters then after the LEOFF I Retirement System was established as the Retired Firefighters of Washington, RFFOW. Prior to the establishment of the LEOFF I Retirement System they represented only firefighters under the Prior Act retirement systems, RCW 41.16, RCW 41.18 and the original retirement system established in 1909. They had a loud voice along with the WSCFF, WACOPS and individual fire unions and police guilds. The RFFOW was involved in the passing of LEOFF I retirement and in getting many favorable attorney general opinions. Since the year 2000 the RFFOW has had 21 bills introduced and passed to amend the LEOFF I Retirement System. How many bills has the coalition passed, drafted or had introduced? All of this legislation that amended the retirement law benefited all LEOFF I members, fire and law enforcement. For example the first bill we had introduced and passed in the year 2000 or 2001 when I became President of the RFFOW was to amend the surviving spouse benefit in RCW 41.26. At that time to qualify for a surviving spouse benefit the member had to be married one year before retirement. The amendment allowed the member who married within the twelve months before retirement or after retirement an option to select a surviving spouse benefit for their spouse. The Coalition was opposed to this but after two years of lobbying we got the bill passed. Now just imagine how many police and fire surviving spouses have benefitted from this amendment!

7) The RFFOW & RSPOA are not looking to start another LEOFF I

organization. We are trying to look to the future and do as I and Senator Schoesler, Senator Conway and others have suggested that we form a LEOFF I retiree association. That was the sole purpose of the survey. Even Bill Dickinson of the Coalition has mentioned the need for one organization.

In another email from the WSRD-SPOA titled "Urgent LEOFF I Coalition members": **Don't be fooled on the survey you have received. Do not fill out the survey.** I have to assume the Coalition was also advising their donors not to return the survey unless the WSRDSPOA has hijacked the name of the Coalition and is putting out information in the name of the Coalition that is not the position of the Coalition. The problem is that the WSRDSPOA is the only group that belongs to the Coalition. Joyce Willms sends information to the WSRDSPOA and they email it to their members without checking it for accuracy. The WSRDSPOA is sending out information using the Coalition's name that has not been fact checked by the Coalition.

What a quag-mire we're in!

The sad thing is that the members of the WSRDSPOA and the donors to the Coalition are in many cases receiving incorrect information and believing it's correct. As an example Joyce Willms recently incorrectly posted on 3-17-2020 that HB 2051 which was our bill in the first place passed with a Coalition amendment that only active and retired firefighters and police officers living in a community served by a pension or disability board can be elected to serve on the board if they are members of a Washington State Retirement System. This is totally incorrect.

(Continued on pg.3)

President’s Message

(Continued from pg. 2)

Joyce as a lobbyist should have known that we killed that amendment.

When the bill was passed by the Senate on 3-6-2020 and again in the House on 3-9-2020 it was passed without the amendment that required those active and retired firefighters and law enforcement to be members of a Washington State Retirement System to be eligible to serve on a board. The bill was passed with the original language that any active or retired firefighter or law enforcement officer living in a community can be elected to serve on a board. The only amendment that was passed that we agreed to was to allow a surviving spouse to be eligible for election to the board. Joyce again reported incorrectly that I testified against that amendment which I did not. In fact, that issue only came up when I was testifying at the Ways & Means Committee and I was asked by the Chair if a surviving spouse could serve on the board and I answered “No” not at this time. I was later asked by a staff member if I would be opposed to the amendment and I definitely said “No.” When I first brought this issue to the SCPP Committee two years ago the Coalition didn’t even know we had a problem getting members to serve on these boards. It took us two years to pass this bill that we could have passed in the first year we brought it to the attention of the SCPP Committee.

Joyce once reported in the so-called Coalition newsletter that the RFFOW Board of Directors are all retired from Seattle. This was again incorrect as our board at the time had 3 members from Seattle and 5 members from other fire departments or districts. Why would

she print that without checking or verifying that it’s true? We have been told that Joyce has other clients but when we examine her State Public Disclosure reports she only has one, a small horse owners association. Joyce once requested the SCPP Committee to introduce a bill to increase the population requirements from 20,000 to 30,000 for a city to establish a LEOFF I disability board. We had just killed a similar bill with an amendment in the session that had just ended.

When I asked her why she wanted to change the population requirements she said that some city managers had stopped by her office and requested her to do so. I had to ask her in front of the committee who she represented, the employees or the employers. Now why would some city manager stop by her office and make such a request when they have the Association of Washington Cities, the Association of Washington Counties, two State Representatives and one State Senator who represent their city, and if they did ask her why would she agree to oblige them?

During the 2019 Legislative Session when Senator Van de Wege had the last meeting to discuss his proposal to merge the LEOFF I and LEOFF II Retirement Fund he requested we submit a written letter or statement. Jerry Taylor and Ken Crowder submitted a letter in advance. I brought my letter to the meeting and was permitted to read the letter out loud. Bill Dickinson, Joyce Willms and Andy Wilson didn’t submit a letter. Bill Dickinson asked the Senator “why are you doing this,” when it was quite obvious. Andy asked if this would be the end of the LEOFF I system. The answer was no, just the LEOFF I fund as stated in the outline under consideration. Joyce Willms said

that she was receiving letters from members in opposition. She didn’t have any letters to present to the Senator and I asked her why the letters are not sent to the Senator.

The reason I mention all this and there is more, is because we have to look to the future and develop the best organization that we can to protect and represent the members of the LEOFF I Retirement System. I have been addressing this issue for the last two years. I don’t have a big salaried position to protect and I announced in January that I am not running for re-election. This is the month of June. If someone doesn’t come forward the RFFOW may come to a close. The RFFOW or the RSPOA don’t have a huge government grant we are trying to protect. We just want to prepare for the future. That is why we developed and paid for the survey to enlist your thought and ideas. When the WSRDSPOA and the Coalition discouraged LEOFF I members from responding it was a hard pill to swallow. Just silence the mob and we will appoint one another to do what we want regardless of our qualifications or ability.

Dues Paid by Payroll Deduction

- Ron Schilling
- Gail Swan

New Members

- Michael Epler
- Camille Walls
- Donna Card

Welcome to the RFFOW!

**To: Bill Dickinson,
President LEOFF1 Coalition
Joe Dawson,
President WA State Retired Deputy Sheriffs and Police Officers Assoc.**

We have not met to my knowledge. I sent a much longer description of my background in the earlier email. I have included copies of some of your mailings I have received from other sources and wish to respond to excerpts which illustrate my concern with them. I am currently the vice president of the RFFOW, however, these are my comments personally and exclusively.

First is an excerpt of the last official mailing I received from the Coalition. Note it was published in July of 2017. Over the years I have received about 6 mailings from your organization. All have as illustrated on the second page here were solicitations for money. No opportunity to join as a voting member. My lack of notices from you seem to correlate with my joining the board of the RFFOW. I know you have sent other material out, some of which is included here, but also provided by others.

Second are excerpts from your most recent newsletter in February. The first two pages are out of order. The first page illustrates the start of a hit piece that resonates throughout the document which suggests the RFFOW is proposing to merge with the state firefighters council. Nothing could be further from the truth and your claims are based on material from the firefighters council. The truth is they have decided to create a retirement group for LEOFF 2 members and decided to offer LEOFF 1 participation in that program. They invited us to attend a meeting with them in Olympia. We asked a series of questions at that meeting and I would say a majority of us were not happy with the answers. Those discussions have stopped as we wanted to hear from a broad spectrum of LEOFF 1 beneficiaries and that is what the survey we com-

missioned was about long before this meeting. MY own personal opinion has been if that happened as currently offered I would look at another group for participation. I have never expected others to speak for me and certainly would not join something that sacrificed my ability to speak for myself to the powers to be. Frankly I had considered the Coalition if your organization was changed to include membership and voting privileges beyond just your board. Based on what you have done this Spring to interfere with the survey intended to benefit all beneficiaries, that possibility is no longer viable to me.

I included the second page of your February newsletter to point out the disclaimer below the comments from your Executive Director/lobbyist. I have belonged to many organizations during my career and since and have never seen anything like this. It will be a cold day in hell before I ever join an organization that stipulates I have to hold it harmless if I am lied to or misinformed. Based on what you have put out after this years session I can see why you have such a requirement. Frankly, I am very surprised retired police officers would ever buy into a program that did not provide complete transparency.

The third page I sent from your February 2020 newsletter illustrates you still were only asking for donations. I am not certain how you can provide consistent administrative and lobbying support on donations, which is why we have had dues from the beginning in the RFFOW. Only your solicitation this time to seems to founded on making the RFFOW the boogey man by suggesting we are promoting a merger with the State firefighters council when you have been told by Dick Warbrouck we only listened to their pitch, and now you have been told by me as well. I do see that lately you have mailed out an opportunity for membership in the Coalition. Interesting that as long as we have raised that concern, now after slamming us you seem to agree with the need for consistent funding. Again that mailer did not come to

me even though I have been at the same address for 25 years.

Excerpts from the next two pieces from you I sent were specific hit pieces to deliberately interfere with our survey which was intended to offer ALL LEOFF 1 beneficiaries opinions about the best way to maintain security of the plan. If retirees you mailed to refrained from responding due to your bogus hit pieces they have been short changed. More importantly, the RFFOW and Retired Seattle police have funded much of the concerted effort to save or improve the plan over the last two decades. Warbrouck has been the consistent leader of the RFFOW and effort to support legislation to accomplish that. He has been paid a stipend for his work to provide consistent management. When I used Joe Fischnaller on my case many years ago he was charging \$300 per hour and it was worth every penny to me. Dick has also provided many hours of assistance to retirees who have had trouble with retirement funding or disability medical issues, even helping firefighters get into better assisted living environments, for no charge. Coming from a strong union background he has suggested more LEOFF 1 beneficiaries should participate in that regard. I totally understand that opinion and I agree we could be much more effective if more were involved. This was one of the objectives for sending out the information and survey piece. We did not specify who would lead such a consolidated effort, just some parameters of how it should work to be effective. Many of the RFFOW members donated specifically to the survey effort, some very large amounts. YOU JUST SPIT IN THEIR FACE. We have many very good people as members. I am pretty sure they will not be impressed to see what you have done.

The last piece I included is your lobbyists comments after the session. It includes some significant misinformation such as Warbrouck opposed including spouses on the potential membership boards which is very wrong.

(Continued on pg. 5)

To: Bill Dickinson

(Continued from pg.4)

You should be able to view the TV coverage of the hearing she derives this comment from. Even though we had not specifically thought of including them in that vein we wholeheartedly supported that when HB2051 was amended to include them. We have always included mailings of our monthly newsletters to surviving spouses and also asked for their opinions about the future direction of security on the survey, long before the issue came up on the bill. Your piece specifically attacks those who supported the original version of HB2051 which allowed any retired fire fighter from serving on local disability boards. It is stated the version passed does not allow that. That is very inaccurate and if thanks went out to Legislators for something they did not do, it was not only stupid but potentially affects many years of trust built up between the Legislators and participants in LEOFF 1.

Finally, I see you are promoting giving LEOFF 1 beneficiaries a large payout of the supposed surplus money in the funds. I go into detail in the other email I am sending you. Some of our members agree with this individual division of potential assets also. We have felt media criticism in the past a few times when someone was caught abusing the system. Sadly I knew a couple of chiefs who did so that were identified in these pieces. Our retirement and medical coverage is amazing. It is far better than anything 99 % of the population enjoys. I personally think it would be a big mistake to request some sort of personal division of potential assets, particularly with conditions on main street currently and in the foreseeable future. I never thought I would see any LEOFF1 organization do what you did to interfere with something intended to lead to benefit of all LEOFF 1 beneficiaries.

Frankly it feels to me like being sucker punched by your best friend. I am certain you are by today tired of hearing

from me. Now you have someone new to attack.

Sincerely, Jim Adsley

Dear LEOFF I

Members,

On April 8, 2020, some of you received an email from WSRDSPA, that appears to have been written and forwarded by Joyce Willms to them to send to their members. I am disappointed that Joe Dawson, President of WSRDSPA, allows his organization to be manipulated by Ms. Willms and the Coalition. By not fact-checking what they disseminate lessens their credibility. Ms. Willms, on the other hand, has no credibility as far as I'm concerned and has demonstrated a lack of truthfulness as well. The most accurate way to describe this is the disclaimer in the Coalition annual report, which is produced by Ms. Willms company Washington Media Services. It reads in part, "the LEOFF I Coalition, Washington Media Services and Joyce Willms assumes no responsibility for the correctness of the information supplied herein". Sounds like to me that truth and facts don't matter to her. This brings me to the point of this letter.

On April 8, 2020, Ms. Willms sent an email to WSRDSPA for forwarding to their members attacking the Washington State Retired Police Officers Assoc and me. (WSRPOA). Without doing any fact

-checking, she claimed that WSRPOA has no Board, secretary, or treasurer. It appears from conversation the only research done was checking for a website that we do not have. Had she actually checked with the WA Secretary of State, she would have found that WSRPOA is, in fact, registered, and the Board of Directors, myself included, is listed. WSRPOA has been in existence since the 1970s. Our filing complies with all requirements and suggestions of the SOS office. WSRPOA is an organization of local police organizations and does not collect dues from individuals. But Ms. Willms probably knew that but chose to put out false information instead because that suited her purpose, which is to disparage any legitimate LEOFF organizations other than the Coalition. I'm sure her BOD eats that up and apparently that's what they pay her to do. Since they don't disclose their financials, we don't know how much they do pay her.

In conversation with Bill Dickinson, President of the Coalition, he admitted he didn't know anything about the email Ms. Willms sent out. He further stated that his BOD doesn't want to micromanage Ms. Willms. They don't have to micromanage her; just make sure she puts out accurate information. Her untruthfulness reflects negatively on their organization and the WSRDSPA for sending it out to their members without

(Continued on pg. 6)

Dear LEOFF I Members

(Continued from pg. 5)

Next, Ms. Willms takes credit for passing HB2051 with an amendment to not allow anyone other than LEOFF I members to sit on local boards. The Coalition stated they would not support any bill without that amendment, yet they did just that. Apparently, they don't know what they want, and more importantly, they don't know what they did. I guess she missed the part about the bill being passed by the Senate and House and signed into law by the Governor without the amendment she claims to have championed. What is correct is that Dick Warbrouck and I testified against the amendment. We believe that every LEOFF I member should have the right to select whomever they feel will best represent them on their local board. Ms. Willms and the Coalition apparently do not support your right to choose. Contrary to what Ms. Willms would have you believe, Mr. Warbrouck and I also supported Sen. Rolfes's amendment to make surviving spouses of LEOFF I members eligible to be elected to the boards. Sen. Rolfes staffer even contacted Mr. Warbrouck to ask if we would support the amendment and she was told absolutely we would.

If Ms. Willms wants to show any level of truthfulness and integrity, she will admit she misspoke and print her admission the same way she printed her lies. Remember, Ms. Willms.....you're dealing with

law enforcement and firefighters, and TRUTH matters to us.

Sincerely,

Ken Crowder

June Pension Report

By: Ray Sanderson

Rebecca Moore of Plansponsor (www.plansponsor.com) on May 15, 2020 filed the report PUBLIC DEFINED BENEFITS MAY LOSE GROUND ON FUNDING PROGRESS.

"If markets remain at their current levels until June, most state and local pension plans will end fiscal year 2020 with negative annual investment returns, reduced asset values, lower funded ratios and higher actuarial costs," says a report from researchers at the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College, with support from the Center for State and Local Government Excellence (SLGE).

However, the researchers note, while this outcome is a step backward in public defined benefit (DB) plans' funding progress, most plans will have enough to pay benefits indefinitely. They estimate that the ratio of assets to liabilities for public plans slipped from 71% in 2019 to 69.5% in 2020. As a result of this drop in the funded ratio, the average actuarially determined contribution is estimated to rise from 18.8% to 19.7% of payroll.

Pension researchers-and some practitioners-have questioned the adequacy of actuarially determined contributions as they are commonly calculated. The report says they question the use of "overly optimistic investment return assumptions and relatively lax methods for amortizing the unfunded liability." According to the researchers, if plans were to use investment return assumptions that more closely reflect their actual performance since 2001 and use more stringent approaches to amortize unfunded liabilities, the average actuarial contribution in 2020 would rise from 19.7% of payroll to 37.6%. "The future trajectory of plans' funded status will depend crucially on the ability of governments to meet contributions based on more conservative investment return assumptions and more stringent amortization methods," they say.

Projections from 2020 to 2025 show that the average funded ratio for public plans will steadily decline but, even if markets do not fully recover until 2025, most plans will emerge with enough assets to pay benefits indefinitely. The researchers extended projections under two possible market scenarios. Under the first, markets remain at current levels until June 2021 and then steadily climb to their previous peak by 2023 and, from that point forward, plans achieve their assumed return-roughly 7.2%.

(Continued on pg. 7)

June Pension Report

(Continued from pg. 6)

Under the second, more pessimistic scenario, markets remain at current levels until June 2021 but the recovery takes longer, with markets steadily climbing to their previous peak by 2025.

The result of the first scenario is that the aggregate funded status of public plans declines to 62.7% in 2025, and the actuarially determined contribution rises to 25.1% of pay. Under the more pessimistic scenario, the funded ratio drops to 55.5% and required contributions rise to 29.1% of pay. In addition, the average ratio of assets to benefits -what the researchers say is a rough measure of trust fund health-drops from 11.6 in 2020 to either 9.4 or 7.9 in 2025-meaning public pensions will have on hand assets equal to roughly eight to nine years of benefits in 2025.

However, the researchers say it is important to note that plans can sustain asset levels as long as annual investment returns exceed their cash flow. The projections show that cash flows fall from negative 3% of assets to either negative 3.8% or negative 4.5% in 2025. "Given these relatively attainable thresholds, no plans are projected to exhaust their trust fund within the next five years," they conclude.

That conclusion is for plans in the study sample, but the researchers also looked at what

would happen for plans with already extremely low funded ratios in 2020 if markets are slow to recover. For the 20 worst-funded plans, the average ratio of assets to benefits is projected to decline slightly from 5.6 in 2020 to 3.9 in 2025. That figure means that, in 2025, they will have on hand assets equal to roughly four years of benefits. Two plans in particular which have severely negative cash flows, will see their asset-to-benefit ratios deteriorate even more dramatically ending the 2020 to 2025 period with assets equal to less than two years of benefit payments. Five plans will end up with less than three years of benefit payments saved as assets. The researchers add that for plans that exhaust their assets soon after 2025, the potential pay-go costs are significantly greater than current contributions-in some cases, more than 50% higher.

The full report is found at <https://www.slge.org/assets/uploads/2020/05/market-decline-public-plans.pdf>. Also see www.cypen.com

Survey Mailing Donations

- Dan David \$1,000
- Claude Harris \$500
- Ron Shilling \$500
- Michael Epler \$440
- Ken Bjorklund \$103
- Louis Miles \$100 (Police)
- Joe Stapleton \$100
- Clyde Nihiplai \$43

Dues Paid

- Robert Bettzig
- Ken Bjorklund
- Ken Bohren
- Don Carscadden
- David Hansen
- Claude Harris
- Jim McGough
- Chuck Newbury
- Richard Radtke
- David Thatcher
- Terry Thrall

PAC Donations

- Robert Bettzig \$500
- Ken Bohren \$500
- Jim McGough \$243
- John Tong \$201
- Gary Lievense \$100
- Walter Peddeferri \$200
- Gail Swan \$200 in memory of husband Ed Swan, Seattle F.D.

In Memoriam

- Daryl Barsness passed away on 4/17/2020
- Roger Finley passed away on 4/23/2020
- Richard Malloy, retired Fire-fighter, passed away on 05/21/2020.
- Ruth Walsh, widow of retired Lieutenant James (Jim) E. Walsh, passed away on 6/2/2020.

History of ESB5873

By Sonja-Ericson-Russell

This is a letter we received some time ago from a surviving spouse of a King County deputy, and a member of the WSRDSPA who we helped get a survivor pension.

I want to thank Dick Warbrouck and the Retired Firefighters of Washington for their work on ESB 5873 and for being my main support as a stakeholder invested in the amendment to this bill.

Beginning in May of 2009, just after my husband David Russell passed away, I began a concentrated effort to obtain my survivor benefit. I spent several years in appeal to the Department of retirement systems and in Superior Court. After being denied every step of the way, and exhausting all available avenues and resources, I thought that was the end of the story until February of 2015 when I learned that a new bill had been initiated.

In November 2014, Dick Warbrouck received a call from Norm Lofgren, a retired Pierce County Deputy Sheriff, asking for his help. Norm was married after he retired and had missed the original filing period to sign up his wife for a survivor benefit. Dick told him that there was little he could do. One option was to get a divorce and then remarry, or possibly, a bill could be introduced and the legislator to reopen the filing period. He ex-

plained that changing the law would take time and a great amount of effort.

When Dick noticed that norm was a resident of Senator Steve Conway's district, he suggested that he call the senator and ask for his support. Dick also contacted Senator Conway who said he would introduce a bill if Dick would get some co-sponsors and lobby the Bill. SB5873 was introduced in the 2015 Legislative Session sponsored by Senators' Conway, Bailey, Schoesler, and Kohl-Welles.

I found the information about this bill while browsing the internet and checking up on retirement issues. I went to LEOFF1.net and found a brief article about SB5873. It appeared to me this bill could possibly give me another opportunity to secure my future. I didn't have any experience with this sort of thing, so I called a friend with political savvy who advised me to get an appointment with my Senator. My good fortune began right then. It happened that my District Legislator Senator Kohl-Welles, was one of the co-sponsors of the bill. The primary sponsor was Senator Steve Conway who gave Dick the bill to lobby.

I contacted Senator Kohl-Welles who was very sympathetic to my cause and she immediately had an amendment drafted. I was thrilled and encouraged, but didn't know what else to do, nor did

I know how they system works. I contacted my savvy friend who suggested I give Dick Warbrouck a call. I had no idea I was going to call the President of RFFOW and a lobbyist with many years of experience.

In our phone conversation Dick explained that you don't usually amended a bill unless you contact the primary sponsor or the lobbyist who is lobbying the bill. He said he would support the amendment as drafted, with a very limited impact, but he didn't want the amendment to kill the bill. (I get the feeling my mistake in protocol was very much in my favor. Sometimes being naïve is beneficial) After that phone call, Dick took me under his wing, and I joined his effort to get the bill passed. We spent many hours writing letters and many days in Olympia visiting Legislators...he more than I. I think he was very pleased to have me accompany him on those trips to Olympia, because he now was able to use the commuter lanes.

In 2015, the bill was passed unanimously in both the Senate Ways and Means Committee, and on the Senate Floor, amended as Engrossed Senate Bill 5873.

After the bill was passed in the Senate, there were many obstacles to overcome in the House of Representatives, and because time was running short,

(Continued on pg. 9)

History of ESB5873

(Continued from pg. 8)

and the priority was on the budget, it was close to impossible to get appointments with the key people who could help the cause. Sometimes the only contact we could get was a chance meeting in the hallway, where we could have only a minute or two to press the issue. We seemed to be on an endless treadmill seeking support and strategy. That was a very difficult part of the process, because so often they would not commit one way or the other. For me, the lack of certainty was nerve racking. At the end of the Legislative Session, the bill had gone to the House of Representatives, but was not read in the Appropriations Committee, chaired by Representative Ross Hunter. This effectively stopped its progress. Dick and I talked with Representatives Hunter, several representatives on the committee, and key staff people, but could not get a hearing. It was a great disappointment especially since it had such overwhelming support in the senate.

Dick explained that it sometimes takes two years to get a bill passed, so our next step was to prepare for 2016. We spent several months of the rest of 2015 with that in mind. The bill was now in the purview of the Select Committee on Pension Policy. Again, we made many trips to Olympia to attend their meetings to make sure the bill was kept on

their agenda, and to hear discussion and ask for a hearing. Finally, in December, they held a hearing and we both testified. The committee endorsed the bill unanimously. I'd like to add that there were no other LEOFF 1 representatives at any of these meetings nor at the hearing. I found that to be very disappointing. There is a big difference between supporting a bill and actively working to get it passed. From what I have seen, Dick is well known and highly respected by the legislators, and he certainly is the go-to person for actively advocating for LEOFF 1 issues.

Often times when a bill is given a hearing, the people who testify are given very little time to talk, sometimes only two minutes we discussed the need to be prepared, to be brief and to present the most important points of the issue. Just saying the bill is good or bad is very ineffective for the legislators who need to be convinced. In reality the bigger part of the work of communicating those important points has to be done before the committee hearing. That isn't easy to accomplish, so one has to have a strategy. Sometimes it's impossible to get an appointment with a legislator to get those important points across. The next best thing to do is contact the legislator's key legislative staff member, key committee staff or caucus staff member. Dick was able to open many doors that I didn't know existed.

When this year's legislative session began, we had to overcome some new obstacles and the hold-over difficulties from the previous year. There had been a misunderstanding about the bill and fiscal issues that needed to be addressed, and there was a change of legislators in some of the committees. The bill also had to go through part of the process with the Senate once again, before it could go to the House of Representatives. This was tedious and time consuming. It was a short session and it was even more difficult this time to speak to the legislators, let alone know whether or not they would support or cause.

They were very busy with a number of bills with varying priorities, so the task of staying visible was very important. The other critical issue was that there are a number of steps each bill goes through to be passed- our work was to convince them to take us through those steps, one at a time. It was not unusual to find out the very last minute if that would even happen, and which legislator would do it.

To be effective, a lobbyist must be recognized, trusted, tenacious and respected. That was obvious in the legislator's response to Dick's efforts. Our success was the result of a lot of hard work and a lot of time making contacts in Olympia.

The original bill that was passed

(Continued on pg. 10)

History of ESB5873

(Continued from pg. 9)

by the Retired Firefighters of Washington to allow those members who married after retirement to select a survivor option was a huge success and has been a benefit to many spouses who married firefighters or law enforcement officers after they retired.

This bill is a great benefit for LEOFF 1 retirees and their spouses, but it is more than that to me. I have been a widow and have lived without the survivor benefit for seven years. To have it now is truly remarkable and a great gift. It has changed my life.

I cannot thank the Retired Firefighters of Washington enough.

-Sonja Ericson-Russell

Drive-In Theaters

Making a Comeback?

When COVID-19 hit the U.S., it hit the movie industry hard. Many of the spring and summer blockbusters have had to either postpone their releases or be released on demand and to streaming platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Disney +. Many are wondering if they will be able to see a movie on the big screen anytime soon. Luckily, for some moviegoers across our nation, outdoor cinemas have popped up all over the country in the last few

weeks. Some business owners have reopened old drive-ins or built their drive-ins in parking lots. Now while they can't yet show new releases, they have been playing old movies to customers. Business owners hope to see a more significant profit off their temporary drive-in theaters and have the ability to show new releases.

Here is a list of 5 drive-in theaters

In Washington

- Rodeo Triple Drive-in
7369 Washington Highway 3
Bremerton, WA 98312
- Auto Vue Drive-in Theatre
444 Auto View Road
Colville, WA 99114
- Blue Fox Drive-in
1403 North Monroe Landing Road
Oak Harbor, WA 98277
- Wheel-in Motor Movie
210 Theatre Rd
Port Townsend, WA 98368
- Skyline Drive-in
182 S.E. Brewer Road
Shelton, WA 98584

go to <https://www.driveinmovie.com/> to find a drive-in near you.



Retired Firefighters Of Washington

Published once a month by the Retired Firefighters of Washington: 9134 207th PI SW, Edmonds WA 98026-6659. Phone: 425-775-9080, Fax: 425-776-7939, website: www.rffow.org. All articles and classifieds need to be received by the **20th of the month**. Classifieds are for personal property of members only – not personal business. The Retired Firefighters of Washington reserves the right to reject or cancel any classified. For any questions, please contact Amalia Akagi (contact information below).

Retired Firefighters Board of Directors:

President:

Richard C. Warbrouck
(home: 425-775-9080, cell: 206-406-9823, email: mwarbrouck@comcast.net)

Vice President: Jim Adsley
(home: (360) 730-1985)

Directors:

Patrick B. Bartlow
(home: 206-523-0325, kbartlow@earthlink.net)

Jim Fisher
(home: 206-362-0412, fishers@talldude.net)

John Kinsella
(home: (425) 248-3421, john.kinsella31@yahoo.com)

Roy Orlando
(home: 253-759-7040, arorly@gmail.com)

Alan Stanford
(home: 206-935-6185, abcdstanford@comcast.net)

Curt Vandver
(home: 253-208-0118, cevandver@comcast.net)

Administrative Assistant:
Amalia Akagi
(email: Amalia.Akagi@outlook.com)

Letter's We Like To Receive



- Please accept the enclosed donation to help save LEOFF 1– Warren
- Thank you for a super job– Jim
- Thanks for all the hard work you have put into the RFFOW throughout the years. It has made all of our retirement years much better. R.G.
- There is nothing more valuable than our pension and we truly appreciate all that you and our organizations have done to protect it and improve it. Ken & Mary Kingman

Thank you all for your kind words!

2020 Retired Firefighters of Washington Membership Dues

Mail to: RFFOW 9134 207th PL SW Edmonds, WA 98026

☐ Dues paid by payroll deduction, only updating contact information

Name of current member: _____

Name of spouse: _____

Department Retired From: _____

☐ Prior Act ☐ L-1 ☐ L-2

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Name and date of death of
former member if deceased:

2020 Dues: \$57 Legislative Fund Donation: \$3 Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Retired Firefighters of Washington

9134 207th Pl SW
Edmonds, WA 98026-6659
www.rffow.org
Tel: 425-775-9080
E-mail: info@rffow.org

Please Save the Date...

GARY WHITISH turns 90!!!

Celebrate with him on

Saturday, October 17, 2020.

More details to follow...

NON-PROFIT ORG.

U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

SEATTLE, WA

PERMIT NO. 1577

Date Sensitive Material—Please Deliver

**The next Meeting will be on
Wednesday, September 9th
at 11:00am;
Calvary Christian Assembly,
6801 Roosevelt Way NE
Seattle, WA**

Why Not Attend a Meeting in Your Area?

BELLINGHAM

WHEN: 2nd Friday of the month
WHERE: Squalicum Yacht Club
TIME: 10 AM
INFO: Call Jim Burton
360-734-6572
All are welcome to come and join us, family and friends.

RENTON

WHEN: 1st Wednesday of the month
WHERE: Station 13 in Renton
TIME: 10 AM
INFO: Call President Ray Barilleaux
425-255-7992 or
french1e@comcast.net
We invite you to join us! All are welcome!

YAKIMA

WHEN: 1st Monday of the month
WHERE: Waffles Cafe, 1501 N 1st St.
TIME: 8:30 AM
INFO: Call Bob VanDyke
509-452-8380
All retirees and wives from any Fire Department are welcomed and encouraged to attend!

VANCOUVER

WHEN: 3rd Thursday of the month
WHERE: Union Hall, 2807 NW Fruit Valley Rd V
TIME: 8 AM
INFO: Call President Orbie Scott
360-834-1726
scotty38@comcast.net

All are invited and encouraged to attend. It is a good time to hear and give the latest information, conduct our business and share time with friends.

EVERETT

WHEN: 2nd Tuesday of the month
WHERE: Buzz Inn, Arlington
TIME: 8:15 AM
INFO: David Neyens
dneynens@aol.com

TACOMA

WHEN: 1st Wednesday of the month
WHERE: Local 31 Union Hall
TIME: 11 AM
Bring a sack lunch, except August and December, which are potluck – everyone's favorite!

SPOKANE VALLEY

WHEN: 3rd Thursday of the month
WHERE: Conley's Restaurant
TIME: 9 AM
INFO: Call Buck Haney
509-922-0708
Anyone interested is encouraged to attend! Come, and give us a try!

ABERDEEN / HOQUIAM

WHEN: 1st Monday of the month
WHERE: The Aberdeen Duffy's Restaurant
TIME: 10 AM
INFO: Call Don Hirschman
360-533-4795
All are invited to join our get-together!

SOUTHWEST LUNCH BUNCH

WHEN: Last Friday of the month, October through May.
WHERE: Ling & Louie's Restaurant in the Wild Horse Pass Casino, Chandler, AZ.
TIME: 11 AM
INFO: Bob Burtch, 206-550-9987 or email, bocato2@yahoo.com