

March 1 2011

THE Fergus Falls Retirees met at the VFW with 35 members and 12 guests present. Following the common table grace, a meal was served by the VFW Auxilliary.

The meeting was called to order by Elroy Maack, filling in for the President and Vice President who were on vacation.

Our first speaker was Dave Beaver , our new liaison from the MSRS. He will have this position for three years. He is from Anoka. He stated that our retirement was not given to us, we earned it. It is not like the situation I Wis. He said some people think we were given everything. He got information from Dave Bergstrom, director of MSRS about the financial status of our funds. In 2009, we were 65% funded. As of Dec.2010, we are 84% funded. The reason for the change is that we are getting 2% raise instead of 2 ½% and employees are paying in 2 ½%. There is a lawsuit against this and if the state loses, we will go backward again.

The legislature has mandated a study of all the retirement funds in the state with defined benefits , to find out what the impact would be to change over to a 401k type of system. It would cost the state a billion dollars because then there would be no money coming in from the employees. It would not impact us right now, but the new retirees later may have an impact. He will keep us up to date on the events in the cities.

The annual spring meeting in St Paul will be Wed. May 11. We have 5,700 members who pay \$15 dues in the state. Expenses are being cut but we are still in the red.

Our next speaker was Dale Johansen, who spoke to us about Camp New Hope, a camp that is for vets suffering from PTSD and their families. He came back from Vietnam suffering with it and his family didn't understand why he was the way he was because he would not talk about it. He has been working to get the camps going with the help of the Lions and other organizations. It is now in several other state and countries. The suicide rate among vets is four times the rate of other people. Many are homeless and millions have no insurance. Because the current wars has vets who are a lot older than the Vietnam vets, they have career and jobs and families. They also have multiple deployments. This leads to worse conditions for them to come home to. Losing jobs, spouses and many of them suffering from brain injuries and other serious injuries and health problems, the situation is compounded.

At the camp, they are self paced. There are councilors available and baby sitting for the young children. The Duluth VA has sponsored camps at McGregor and help a lot. There are many volunteers who also help at the camp

Obituaries were Merlyn Ordal, Mrs . Ullman, Mr. Hilden (I forgot the first names)
Birthdays Ginny Paulson and Wanda Durham

The Secretary's report and the treasurer's reports were read and approved.

The new business was the announcement that There was a retirement party for Nora Randklev on Wed., Mar 2.

Meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Judy Hensch, Secretary