

**Statement of Qualifications
Candidate for Executive Vice-President – RPEA**



I am a PERS retiree. I had a rewarding public service career with the Municipality of Anchorage, holding several positions, including Finance Director for the Anchorage Telephone Utility. Since retiring, I have consulted for over 20 years in business management, corporate, regulatory, and financial planning for government entities, Oil, Nonprofit, and Alaska Native Corporations. I have continued my public service as a former or current Board member of five Alaska Nonprofit Corporations. I also was a member of the RPEA Executive Board as Membership Director from 2014 to 2015 and brought prior service and experience with the RPEA Board to this position.

Like you, I rely on my PERS retirement and the associated medical benefits. I joined RPEA to ensure I remained informed on retirement issues and support advocacy to sustain our benefits. I am asking for your vote to serve in a leadership position with RPEA to strengthen RPEA's capacity to achieve these objectives.

Here's why I'm Running.

I am a candidate for a leadership position because I am concerned about RPEA's effectiveness and future. My concerns arise from several facts.

First, RPEA membership is declining, and RPEA's leadership has foundered in response.

It was reported at the January 2021 Board meeting that membership in the largest chapter of RPEA, the Southcentral Chapter, has fallen by 259 members since September 2020 and was at its lowest number since July 2018. Despite reports of declining membership and calls for the membership committee to meet and focus on membership issues, the membership committee has not met.

As a former Membership Director of RPEA, I know that Board leadership must remain focused on recruiting and retaining members even in good times. During Covid times, it is *essential* to sustain the organization.

Second, RPEA is on an unsustainable financial path. We are spending our savings.

Even nonprofits must be self-supporting. We cannot survive if we spend more each year than we collect in dues and legal defense contributions.

The IRS Form 990 tax filing, a public document on the IRS website, shows a loss for RPEA of (\$133,611) for the year ending December 31, 2019. RPEA has not yet filed its Form 990 for 2020 with the IRS, and only Executive Board members have access to current financial reporting. However, on 4/12/2021, President Sharon Hoffbeck provided the "RPEA APPROVED BUDGET SUMMARY for July 1, 2020, to July 30, 2021", showing a projected Net (Loss) for those 13 months of (\$90,810).

RPEA spends more than \$15,000 monthly on operating expenses and two major lawsuits to protect retiree benefits. When RPEA initiated the litigation, RPEA received ongoing support of thousands of dollars from APEA/AFT because of its affiliation with this union. That support is no longer possible because of Supreme Court rulings hindering union fundraising and contributions.

RPEA now relies entirely on membership dues and member contributions to fund its operations and lawsuits. One lawsuit related to the Dental, Vision, and Audio benefits, will likely be decided

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soon. The other, related to retiree medical benefits, is the most expensive, costing \$10,000 per month and is likely to continue long into the future. With falling membership and the ongoing litigation cost, REPA will spend all its cash reserves and face financial hardship in only a few years unless we can generate more regular membership revenue and unless we conscientiously contain expenses.

RPEA was established in 1998 as a chapter of APEA/AFT. APEA/AFT is a rich source of potential new RPEA members. However, RPEA's current leadership has substantially reduced the ties between the organizations. The APEA/AFT Board dedicates a seat to the RPEA President or Vice President. Attendance by RPEA President or Executive Vice-President is a duty listed in our Bylaws. However, according to the APEA/AFT Board meeting minutes (public upon request), the current RPEA President last attended a meeting in February 2018. The current RPEA Executive Vice-President last attended in August 2017. RPEA leadership is not fostering this essential relationship.

Without regard to conscientious expense containment for our small organization, RPEA leadership abandoned highly subsidized office space at APEA/AFT in Anchorage. It nearly tripled its office expenses by leasing from the Alaska Association of General Contractors. This move was not a conscientious containment of costs, especially during Covid when much of the workforce was working from home and Board meetings are held by Zoom.

Finally, Board leadership in a membership organization must strive to be inclusive and supportive of its members while making its actions transparent. It is a critical ingredient to maintain their membership and engagement. That is not currently the Board's approach.

The result is that members are prevented from being informed on matters being considered or acted upon by the Board, do not have access to records of Board actions or how membership dues are being spent, and cannot even know the policies and processes by which the Board operates.

Rather than struggling with members regarding needless confidentiality, I will promote Board transparency. Technology in 2021 offers opportunities to make this possible:

- 1) Post the board agendas on the website well in advance of the scheduled meeting,
- 2) Post the Board meeting minutes on the website (presently a member must request them),
- 3) Post the Policies and Procedures on the website for members' understanding of the Board's operational guidance.

Consistently maintaining these three membership outreach tools will provide new information and create additional interest for members, all at their convenience. Unlike the current Vice President's recent suggestion, it is impractical that members appear in person at the REPA office to review these documents. If there is proprietary information on the agenda that should not be available to the membership, Roberts Rules of Order affords the propriety of such actions in Executive Sessions.

As Executive Vice-President, I will assure that the Board actively recruits and retains members while providing the abundance of education and advocacy aimed at protecting and defending the benefits that I know RPEA can offer. I will assure that the Board is listening to its members and transparently operating in their best interests.

I'm happy to respond to your questions by email or phone at the contact information listed above.

 4/15/2021