**COPRA BOARD ELECTIONS**

It is election time once again for the COPRA Board of Directors. In the October issue of the Chronicle, we asked if any members were interested in becoming a candidate for a Board position. There are twelve elected positions on the Board, each serving a two-year term. There are four incumbent members seeking re-election, and two new candidates seeking election to the Board this year for a term covering 2021-2022. Elections are staggered with six Board positions coming up for election each year.

In accordance with the COPRA By-Laws, if there are no more than 6 candidates seeking office, a formalized ballot process is not required. Voting will be conducted by a “virtual vote" at the December 4, 2020, COPRA Annual Meeting.

A special thanks to all who participated in the process: **Louis Matamoros, Dawnell Navarro, Mary Jo Slunder, Tammy Ryan, Linda Henderson and Susan Perkins.**

**Candidates Seeking Re-election:**

**LAURA ROSS (incumbent)**

Retired from the Street Transportation Department in 2005 as a Management Services Administrator after 30 years with the City. Laura has been an active COPRA Board Member since then and is currently serving as COPRA Vice President. Laura has served as either Vice President or President on the Board for the past fourteen years of her 15 year tenure. She has served as the Retiree Health Care Task Force Representative for that same time as a Board Member.

“I want to use my knowledge to ensure that retirees continue to receive the best benefits available at a reasonable price.”

**SUE STITES (incumbent)**

Retired from the Law Department in 2005 as a Management Services Administrator after 33 years with the City of Phoenix that included work in Police, Municipal Court and Public Works. Sue has been a COPRA member since 2006.

"I want to utilize my experience to assist in the ongoing exchange of information with the retiree population through the identification of helpful resources, programs and an enhanced interactive web site."

**ROB SWEENEY (incumbent)**

Rob is a native Phoenician who lives in the Ahwatukee-Foothills neighborhood of Phoenix.  Rob worked for the City of Phoenix for almost 29 years, retiring in December 2017 as Assistant Chief Information Officer/Assistant Finance Director and is currently serving as COPRA President.  Rob held numerous positions while at the City, working in Finance, City Auditor and Information Technology Services.  Rob worked on many City task forces, including the Innovation and Efficiency Task Force, Task Force on Technology Advancement and the Association/Management Committee using an interest-based negotiation approach for ASPTEA and management to resolve issues.  Rob earned a Bachelor’s of Science in Finance from Northern Arizona University and a Master’s in Business Administration from Arizona State University.  Rob is married to his wife Kecia (KEY-sha).  Together they have three grown children.   Rob is interested in continuing his support of City initiatives and its retirement community by serving on the COPRA Board.

**KATHY WENGER (incumbent)**

Kathy started her career with the City in 1994 as a Budget Analyst II in Water Services and was promoted to Department Budget Supervisor. In 2000, she joined Engineering and Architectural Services as the Administrative Assistant III, responsible for budget and fiscal, personnel and payroll, IT and Central records. She subsequently joined the Phoenix Convention Center as Deputy Director, retiring in 2016.

Kathy is interested in serving on the COPRA Board to help ensure Phoenix Retirees continue to receive excellent pensions and benefits. It is her belief that COPRA is critical to ensure that pension payments, MERP payments and healthcare benefits are protected, and continue to meet the needs of retirees.

**NEW CANDIDATES**

**BRIAN SUGGS**

Brian retired from the City in 2011 after 28 years of service. During that time he worked in a number of areas, including the Development Services Department, Public Information Office, Budget and Research Department, City Manager’s Office and the Housing Department. He was involved in administrative duties in each of these assignments. As a result, he worked with people throughout the City organization and came to understand that the City’s greatest resource was its employees. “It would be an honor to help represent the City retiree community as part of the COPRA board”.

Brian has appreciated the work of the board for a number of years, but was unable to participate because of full-time employment after retiring from the City. Having finished with that employment, he now has time available to spend working on the board. Brian works well with others and looks forward to being part of a team. If elected to the board, he would be glad to hear the concerns of the City retiree community and help represent them to City management.

**BARBARA WIESS**

During her tenure with the City of Phoenix (2013-2018), she worked in Human Resources, Benefits & Wellness Division.  Her primary role was ‘super user / business analyst’ for eChris (PeopleSoft) – everything needed to enroll in (and pay for) benefits during employment & retirement.

She will use what she added to her tool chest during the 20 + years with Maricopa & Pima Counties:

* Over 20 years in benefits management, partnering with all stakeholders (employees, retirees, organizational leadership, legal & financial partners, vendors, etc.) to develop & implement exceptional & financially sustainable benefit programs.
* Over 10 years in public retirement system legal compliance:  Arizona State Retirement System, Public Safety, Elected Official Retirement System, Correctional Officers Retirement Plan.
* Over 5 years legislative coordinator (including registered public lobbyist) for all Human Resources (employment, benefits, retirement) issues

While her history with the AZ counties helped her join the City of Phoenix family, she learned very quickly how much more complicated the system was, with all the different units and benefits granted to those units.  She has lived in Phoenix since 1991 and relies on the services of her fellow employees - and has a deep appreciation for all that they do for her family.

Lastly, and most important, she is very cognizant of the challenges our retirees face, especially this year. She would like to help the membership evolve into our new ‘normal’ (whatever that might be); to help all of us to emerge stronger.