



# January 2021 MHADRTA *Newsletter*

Volume 4, Number 1

Happy New Year, Everyone! I hope that you all had a good Christmas—however you got to celebrate it! My wishes for you are to have and enjoy a happy, healthy and safe 2021.

I know that this pandemic and the restrictions associated with it are taking a toll on everyone. Most recently restrictions on both indoor and outdoor gatherings have caused a great deal of anxiety among everyone—especially seniors who became very isolated.

It is important that we reach out to those who are alone. We are unable to gather and socialize as a group. I have talked with many members who truly miss this. In the meantime, do not hesitate to call a retired teacher colleague especially one who lives alone, send a card, or make contact in some other way—ZOOM, Facetime, Google Duo or Meet. It can certainly brighten the day for these members.

Now that outdoor restrictions have eased a little and outdoor gatherings of up to ten people are allowed, arrange a walk. Keep social distance but what a great way to visit. However, with the thawing occurring, sidewalks and walking paths may be icy, so we need to be very careful. Snowshoeing, cross country skiing and skating are other options

that we can consider. It also enables us to stay physically active.

Remember that advocacy is also a part of the mission of ARTA. We must advocate for what we believe in. If you have concerns about seniors' services, education, health care—especially in light of recent events (breaking promises, handling of the pandemic, disobeying of travel restrictions by current government MLAs, cabinet ministers and staffers—do not hesitate to contact your local MLA, or the minister in charge of the portfolio. The most recent event being AIMCo taking control of your pension management away from ATRF.

Here starts the fourth year of my newsletters. I am trusting you find them timely and informative. I always welcome submissions, so please do not hesitate to contact me at the email address below.

Thanks,  
Mel Deydey  
President, MHADRTA  
49ermh@gmail.com

**HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY**



## **MHADRTA Executive 2020-2021**

**President: Mel Deydey**

**Past President: Jim Black**

**1st Vice-President: Therese Bullin**

**2nd Vice-President: Donna Mae Goldade**

**Secretary: Ray Morrison**

**Treasurer: Henk Hof**

**Membership Chairman: Jim Kaupp**

**ATA Rep—Local #1: Darlene Dee**

**ATA Rep—Local #2: Jim Black**

**ATA Rep—Local #39: Ray West**

**SEATCA: Delle Lovig**

**ARTA Reps: Judy Wonnenberg  
Dianne Durda**

**Pioneer Village Schoolhouse:  
Vicki McCaig**

**Cards & Scrapbook: Annita Pinder**

**Pension & Financial Wellness: Ray Hoger**

**Health Benefits: Jim Black**

**Contact: Barb Taylor**

**Website: Ed Dick**

**Phoning: Jim Black**

**Programs: Donna Mae Goldade**

**ARTA Board Of Directors: Mel Deydey**

**Contact information for the executive  
(email addresses and phone numbers) is  
available to MHADRTA members on the  
website. It is password protected.**

## **MHADRTA Membership Info**

If have not already done so, it is time to renew your 2020/21 membership as we hope you will continue to be a part of our organization. Of course, we welcome newly retired teachers with a free one year membership. We also invite previously retired teachers who have not yet joined us since they've retired or those who allowed their membership to lapse. Your 2020-2021 membership will be valid from September 1, 2020 to August 31, 2021.

Currently, we have 51 members made up of 36 renewals from last year, 5 new members, 8 Lifetime members and two honorary members.

Membership in MHADRTA is \$15.00 per year, payable by cheque or cash.

Membership in ARTA is separate. For more information, visit [www.arta.net](http://www.arta.net)



**By e-mail:**

**[mhadrta3@gmail.com](mailto:mhadrta3@gmail.com)**

**Visit our website:**

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## Finance Minister Imposes Investment Management Agreement ....from the Alberta Teachers' Association

Teachers and pensioners received a late, unwelcome Christmas gift from Finance Minister Travis Toews in the form of an imposed agreement on pension investment management.

On December 23, 2020, Toews signed a [ministerial order imposing an investment management agreement \(IMA\)](#) between the Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund (ATRF) and the Alberta Investment Management Corporation (AIMCo). ATRF was informed of the imposed *agreement* on January 4, 2021.

According to a [release posted yesterday on the ATRF website](#), the IMA includes a recognition that the ATRF board will establish the investment policy to direct how plan assets are managed, but the full discretion of the board in establishing and executing the investment policy is restricted. Effectively, the government has given AIMCO a veto.

"Specifically, AIMCo is not required to implement ATRF's Investment Policy if, in the sole opinion of AIMCo, it would threaten to compromise AIMCo's economies of scale or operational efficiencies," says the ATRF release. "Such decisions by AIMCo are not subject to appeal or arbitration."

The imposed terms contradict statements made by Toews in the legislature at the time Bill 22 was being passed.

"The ATRF board will remain in control of determining how the pension funds are invested at a strategic level as well as retaining ownership of the plan's assets," said [Toews on November 7, 2019](#). "That is, AIMCo will invest according to the policies set by the ATRF board."

Bill 22, the *Reform of Agencies, Boards and Commissions and Government Enterprises Act*, required ATRF to use AIMCo as its sole investment manager, despite a long-standing strong-returns history of investment management by ATRF. The bill required the negotiation of an IMA between ATRF and AIMCo to be concluded by June 30, 2020. Yesterday's ATRF release says negotiations occurred throughout much of 2020 but that AIMCo was not willing to agree to key terms that ATRF felt protected the board's role and the interests of the plans.

Alberta Teachers' Association president Jason Schilling is incensed by the ministerial order.

"Throughout debate on Bills 22 and 203, the government was adamant that ATRF would retain control over investment decisions. Officials and MLAs told teachers they were overreacting and that they were being lied to. Now we have an investment agreement with loopholes big enough to fit a bad \$2.1 billion volatility bet."

Continued on the next page

## Finance Minister Imposes Investment Management Agreement (continued)

Schilling is puzzled that AIMCo and the government would not accept reasonable terms suggested by the ATRF board.

"You would think that AIMCo, which independent reviewers described as demonstrating unsatisfactory investment decisions, risk controls, collaboration and risk culture and as being desperately in need of a culture change would have approached its negotiations with ATRF with a little less arrogance and more flexibility. You would think the government would think twice before backing AIMCo's position."

Schilling is calling on teachers and retirees to contact their MLAs to order a stop to the IMA until AIMCo can come to terms with ATRF and the promises made by government officials.

The agreement would allow the transfer of management to now begin, with a deadline established by Bill 22 and the IMA for the management of all assets to be completely transferred by December 31, 2021.

While these recent developments are deeply concerning for teachers, ATRF says that teacher pensions remain secure and that benefit entitlements are not impacted by the change in investment management.

I am sharing this picture of a discussion that took place in the Legislature on November 7, 2019 when Michaela Glasgo, MLA for Brooks-Medicine Hat asked the Minister of Finance, Hon. Travis Toews for clarification regarding the takeover of the ATRF pension management by AIMCo due to the high volume of letters she received from her constituents. This is recorded in Hansard—the official transcript of the Legislative Assembly. Minister Toews made the same assurances to MLA Allard in the legislature two weeks later. A situation of a Promise Made, Promise **NOT** Kept.

**Ms Glasgo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister. Given that many teachers have reached out to my office voicing concerns over a perceived loss of control over their pensions and given that this perceived loss of control has many teachers worried about AIMCo's management, to the Minister of Finance: can you assure this House and teachers in Brooks-Medicine Hat that the ATRF will have strategic control of the fund?

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Toews:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to assure you that teachers' **pension** compensation benefits will be unchanged. There are no changes to the plan itself. The only thing that is changing is the investment manager of the funds. The ATRF will continue to be the trustee for the plan, and it will continue to manage the administration of the pension. The ATRF board will remain in control of determining how the pension funds are invested at a strategic level as well as retaining ownership of the plan's assets. That is, AIMCo will invest according to the policies set by the ATRF board.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Brooks-Medicine Hat.

**Ms Glasgo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the language that has been communicated to my office has verged on inflammatory

## Open Letter from ATA President, Jason Schilling

Teachers and retirees are livid.

Earlier this week, we sent out news that Finance Minister Travis Toews has imposed terms of an investment management agreement (IMA) between the Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund (ATRF) and the Alberta Investment Management Corporation (AIMCo). The response has been incredible.

I want to be clear about one thing first. While this decision is not good for sound pension management and governance, **it does not have a direct impact on the benefits you currently receive or can expect to receive. Your pension remains secure.**

However, forcing ATRF to use AIMCo as the sole investment manager for teacher pensions and allowing AIMCo to have a veto over decisions about how investments are made are still bad decisions. We are working on a number of strategies and responses to push back.

The first thing we have done is updated our [HandsOffMyPension.ca](https://HandsOffMyPension.ca) website to include updated content and a new template for sending an e-mail to your MLA.

I know that many of you have received unsatisfactory responses from your MLA, but there are two reasons we are doing this:

We need to make things uncomfortable for MLAs, who were told to use

talking points making a promise that has now been broken. These MLAs may also respond differently today, given other recent controversies.

This tool helps us identify additional supporters for other campaigns and activities.

To that end, please share this e-mail and [HandsOffMyPension.ca](https://HandsOffMyPension.ca) with as many teachers and retired teachers as possible.

We will be back in touch with additional strategies in the coming days.

Thank you for your support, solidarity and advocacy.

Sincerely,

Jason Schilling  
ATA President



### VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

I am seeking nominations for Volunteer of the Year. The volunteering of the member does not have to be restricted to MHADRTA or ARTA but can encompass volunteer work within the community, church or other organizations. Please submit your detailed nomination for Volunteer of the Year 2021 by email to me at [49ermh@gmail.com](mailto:49ermh@gmail.com). Deadline is March 15, 2021.

## **NEW MEMBERS ALWAYS WELCOME**

If you know retired teachers who are not members of MHADRTA, please encourage them to join our organization! It is a great way to get connect with former colleagues and friends!

We look forward to the time we are able to gather again and socialize once again. Hopefully very soon!

I will keep you informed.



## **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL INFORMATION**

For those who have no changes in their contact information and wish to pay their membership renewal by eTransfer, please contact our Treasurer, Henk Hof for details and security question. You can contact Henk at [hrhof@shaw.ca](mailto:hrhof@shaw.ca)

There are other options to renew your membership. You can also fill in the renewal form and mail it or drop it off at the address indicated on the renewal form. Include your payment with your renewal.

## **Membership Form for 2020/2021 School Year**

Yes, I would like to **RENEW** or **PURCHASE A NEW** (Circle ONE) membership in MHADRTA for the 2020/2021 term.

Cost of the Membership: **\$15.00 per year**. Cash or cheque only.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Postal Code** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone :** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Providing an e-mail address will enable you to receive the newsletter electronically. Your e-mail address is never shared or revealed to anyone as all mailings are sent as a Bcc (blind carbon copy).**

Please enclose payment (cheque or money order) and send to: MHADRTA, 36 Prairie Dr. NE, Medicine Hat, AB T1C 1R2

**Membership will be valid until **August 31, 2021**.**