

Worcester Regional Retirement Board Meeting
December 20, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 8:07 a.m. Due to COVID 19 regulations, social distancing considerations and Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Executive Order permitting remote participation for public meetings, the meeting took place by Zoom Conferencing. Present at the meeting were Chairman Kevin Blanchette, Board Members Gene Durgin, Michael Donoghue, Pauline Lajoie, Rebecca Tuttle. Also present were Michael Sacco, Chief Executive Officer, Colleen Canty, and Carol Rocco. All votes were taken by roll call.

APPROVAL - MEETING MINUTES: November 29, 2022.

MOTION: *made by Mr. Donoghue and seconded by Mr. Durgin. All were in favor.*

MONTHLY WARRANTS:

Accounts Payable: Warrant #72 \$51,958.68

MOTION: *made by Ms. Lajoie and seconded by Mr. Donoghue. All in favor.*

Staff Salaries: Warrant #75 \$69,566.60

MOTION: *made by Mr. Durgin and seconded by Ms. Lajoie. All in favor.*

Board Compensation: Warrant #76 \$2,500.00

MOTION: *made by Ms. Tuttle and seconded by Mr. Donoghue. All in favor.*

3(8)c's Warrant #78 \$841,663.50

MOTION: *made by Mr. Donoghue and seconded by Ms. Lajoie. All in favor.*

Pension Vouchers: \$9,036,316.23

MOTION: *made by Ms. Lajoie and seconded by Mr. Donoghue. All in favor.*

Prior to and during the meeting, the following items were available for the Board's review: monthly financial statements, current investment statements, invoices, member and retiree files related to items on the agenda.

The Board reviewed the Cash Balance and Operating Expenses.

Refunds & Transfers Warrant #77 \$494,711.79

MOTION: *made by Mr. Durgin and seconded by Mr. Donoghue. All in favor.*

NEW MEMBER APPLICATIONS: (137)

MOTION: *made by Mr. Donoghue and seconded by Ms. Lajoie All in favor.*

RETIREMENT APPROVALS: (15)

MOTION: *made by Mr. Donoghue and seconded by Mr. Donoghue. All in favor.*

The Board, CEO and town representatives who were in attendance reviewed and discussed the recent COLA Legislation which allows retirement boards to pay an additional 2% COLA, retroactive to July 1, 2022, subject to further municipal member unit approval, which requires two-thirds of the WRRS' municipal member units (34 of the 50) to approve. A motion was made to grant the additional 2% COLA, increasing the FY 23 COLA from 3% to 5%, subject to the required municipal member unit approval.

MOTION: *made by Ms. Lajoie and seconded by Mr. Donoghue. The motion carried by a majority roll call vote with, Mr. Donoghue, yes; Mr. Durgin, yes; Ms. Lajoie, yes; Ms. Tuttle, no; and Chairman, Blanchette, yes.*

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT:

The CEO gave his monthly report to the Board. With respect to legal matters, the CEO noted that other than the litigation strategy matters to be discussed in executive session, the only other legal matter was the filing of the post-hearing memorandum in the Laura Pease matter which is currently pending at DALA.

With respect to the PRIM / PRIT update, due to the meeting being conducted early in the month, the PRIT investment performance numbers were not available for review, and the November and December investment performance numbers will be provided at the January 2023 meeting. The CEO noted that the Dow Jones Industrial Average is down 10.46% year-to-date, and market experts are not predicting a year-end rally due to inflationary pressures, a slow economy and the continued conflict in Ukraine.

With respect to Actuarial and Audit activities, the CEO noted that the Actuarial, Audit and GASB 67/68 reports the Board approved last month have been posted to the website, and PERAC recently approved the FY 24 member unit assessments, which have also been posted to the website and emailed directly to the member unit treasurers/collectors and chief executives. The CEO reported that PERAC has yet to confirm a date upon which it will commence the WRRS audit, and the CEO will be drafting and circulating a RFP to potentially retain an outside audit firm to conduct future audits.

With respect to Staff Activities, the CEO reported he is winding down his 2022 member unit benefit meetings and seminars, noting he was in Barre on December 6th, he met with the Douglas Finance Committee on December 13th and on December 21st he is meeting with the District 7 Fire Chiefs in Sutton. The CEO will resume his meeting schedule in the Spring 2023. The CEO also noted that retirements have slowed a bit as we approach year-end, but staff remain busy with addressing year-end issues and member requests. The CEO noted the ballot counting for one of the elected member's seats occurred on December 1st, and Pauline was re-elected receiving 1,487 votes, with Rosemary Shaughnessy receiving 625 votes, with a new 3-year term to run January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2025. Staff Member Alannah Matthews had announced she would be resigning, but she reconsidered and has decided to continue working with us. The CEO was pleased that Alannah reconsidered, as she has been an asset during her tenure. The CEO also noted that he would be meeting with Collen and Anne in January to further discuss and assess staffing needs, and he anticipates coming to the Board with a plan in the first quarter of 2023 to move forward. With respect to the upcoming January 19, 2023 Treasurers/Collectors meeting to discuss the FY 24 Assessments, the CEO asked whether the meeting would be held in person or remotely, and the Chairman said he would give it some thought and let the CEO know in the next week or so how he wished to proceed. The CEO noted that Linda Bournival will be present as always to address the group not only about the FY 24 Assessments, but also the cost and member unit impact of the Board's vote to grant the additional 2% COLA if the municipal member unit majority vote favorably on the measure. The CEO also noted that in years past we have invited someone from PERAC to speak at the meeting, and it was agreed that the CEO would extend that invitation to PERAC Executive Director John Parsons for this year's meeting. Finally, the CEO informed the Board that he was looking to revamp the WRRB website in 2023, and while it is not necessary to conduct a Section 23B compliant RFP process to procure technology services, he will be soliciting bids through a competitive process and present them to the Board, likely towards the end of the first quarter of 2023.

At 9:07 a.m. in accordance with Section 21(a)(1) of Chapter 30A of the General Laws, a motion was made to recess the open meeting and go into Executive Session to discuss and conduct two (2) Legal Cases, two (2) Evidentiary Hearings and one (1) approval for disability applications and medical issues related thereto. Motion made by Mr. Donahue, seconded by Mr. Durgin. The motion carried by a roll call vote with, Mr. Donoghue, yes; Mr. Durgin, yes; Ms. Lajoie, yes; Ms. Tuttle, yes; and Chairman, Blanchette, yes.

At 10:22 a.m. the Board reconvened in open session for the purpose of adjournment.

ADJOURN MOTION: *Motion was made by Mr. Durgin and seconded by Ms. Lajoie at 10:22 a.m. to close the Executive Session and then close the meeting and adjourn. Non-debatable motion. All in favor. The motion carried by a roll call vote with Mr. Donoghue, yes; Mr. Durgin, yes; Ms. Lajoie; yes, and Chairman Blanchette, yes.*