

**Worcester Regional Retirement Board Meeting
December 22, 2020**

The meeting was called to order at 8:03 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, Joanne Savignac, Michael Donoghue and Pauline Lajoie. Also present were Michael Sacco, Chief Executive Officer, Colleen Canty, Rosemary Shaughnessy and Durriyyah Leonard.

APPROVAL - MEETING MINUTES: November 24, 2020.

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

MONTHLY WARRANTS:

Accounts Payable: Warrant #86 \$16,954.72

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

Staff Salaries: Warrant #89 \$65,522.95

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

Board Compensation: Warrant #90 \$2,500.00

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

3(8)c's Warrant #93 \$1,000,000.00

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

Pension Vouchers: \$7,785,798.04

MOTION: *made by Ms. Savignac and seconded by Mr. Durgin. 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 #91 \$330,814.13

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

NEW MEMBER APPLICATIONS: (10)

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

RETIREMENT APPROVALS: (20)

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

Chairman Blanchette announced that the discussion for investment strategies will be postponed until January's meeting.

Chairman Blanchette reminded the Board that his current term is set to expire on December 31, 2020 and put before the board of directors to vote on who will be appointed. The motion was made to reappoint Kevin Blanchette as Chairman for another six-year term, January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2026.

CHAIRMAN APPOINTMENT:

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

The Board Performed annual review for CEO Michael Sacco, Esquire. 3% cost of living increase was granted. Merit increase deferred to later date.

CEO ANNUAL REVIEW:

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

December 22, 2020

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT:

Legal Update

- Russell Kleber – Athol – Police Chief – Severance/Regular Compensation issue – Remote DALA hearing occurred on December 10, 2020.
- Several cases in the DALA/CRAB pipeline – CEO will prepare litigation list of all matters in litigation with a brief summary of each case and update status on a monthly basis.
- Call Fire Fighters – filed first motion for summary decision in Jeffrey Briggs case – his service was reduced due to the Gomes SJC decision – others to follow.
- Section 91A Issues – 3 delinquent – Joyce Juda, resolved, produced receipt that PERAC received filing before 11/30; Ross Ackerman, did not file until 12/1, forfeited his November 2020 check, CEO had a remote hearing, CEO recommends termination of November check, reinstated for December; Jamie Grenier, now in compliance 12/7, forfeited November 2020 check, did not request a hearing.
- Section 91 Limitations – FY 21 Budget signed, included provision to amend Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020 to continue the post-retirement public sector employment limitation waiver until December 31, 2021 or the end of the State of Emergency, whichever comes first – not pertain to disabilities.

The CEO requested that the Board vote to affirm termination of Ross Ackerman's November 2020 check due to missing the 91A deadline with PERAC. Board approved.

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

PRIM / PRIT Update

- Tab 8 – as of 11/30/2020 \$870 million – rebounded big on the vaccine news – 29,910 on November 30th and opens this morning at 30,216.45.

Actuarial Update

- Just received yesterday the FY 22 Member Unit Statements
- Friday – Posted to website the FY 22 Appropriation Schedule for all member units.
- Sent out an email to Treasurers on the \$500 assessment for the break outs that do not have enterprise funds – received 15 requests for breakouts, only 3 non-enterprise requests - received 1 complaint (Douglas)

- Alerted Treasurers about January 13, 2021 Meeting – will be conducting via Zoom.
- PERAC approved our revised funding schedule – we reduced our assumption from 7.75% to 7.65% - PERAC pointed out that they have recommended 6.9% to 7.15% - 90 systems are using 7.5% or less.

Staff Activities

- Purchased TV and equipment for remote meetings to be conducted from the conference room – helpful for staff to attend remote meetings together, also helpful for when Board meets again in conference room and a Board member needs to remotely attend the meeting.
- Remotely attended the PRIM meeting on 12/1 – predicting continued volatility – PRIT feels it is well diversified, noting it did well during the March correction and benefitted significantly during the rebound – not recommending any changes in the asset allocation model.
- Finalized our PTG contract – locked in for 7 years pricing - \$31,350 first year to \$40,860 in year 7, negotiated some language for indemnification, requiring negligence on our part to be liable – close year end, run parallel for 1st quarter, hopefully go live start of 2nd quarter – April 1, 2021.
- Continuing with the verifications – 13 still outstanding, printing paper checks and we will release them and reinstate direct deposit when we receive the verification, making phone calls.
- Still no plan on opening office to the public – possible COVID 19 exposure turned out to be negative – purchased an air purifier for the office - continue with current operating plan until the State of Emergency is lifted.
- Colleen, Valerie, and I met, and we streamlined our Regular Compensation checklist and communicated that to the Treasurers – not much pushback – a few questions on the call FFs and per diem pay.
- On call FF – one of the issues was service granted under Section 4(2)(c) even if the Town did not adopt the local option – Rutland had 2 individuals impacted – I had some communications with Becky Tuttle on adopting the local option in Section 4(2)(b) to allow service beyond 5 years – they adopted Section 4(2)(b ½) instead – trying to find out what they adopted.
- Drafted a revision to the Board's sick leave bank policy – before you for a vote to adopt – essentially, 177 days currently, should be more than enough to cover our two (2) anticipated medical leaves, but allows employees to apply for sick leave bank as needed, and if the need arises and the bank becomes depleted, each employee can voluntarily donate sick days into the bank – must have more than 14 days to donate, cannot donate days that would have the employee go below 14 days – minimum time to be eligible for the bank

CEO requested the board to vote on revision made to the employee handbook regarding sick bank leave policy.

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

- Finalized the first Webinar – Retirement Basics Overview – posted to website yesterday – coming months, plan on creating others for members – How to Retire/Post Retirement Considerations, and the Disability Retirement Process – and a Regular Compensation presentation for the Treasurers.
- Memo to Treasurers – “Once a Member, Always a Member” – issue with per diem
- Membership Regulation – Board previously approved back in February to become effective July 1st – we never were able to have a public hearing due to COVID – now with our technology, we can accommodate up to 100 attendees on Zoom –will put this on an agenda for January with an anticipated effective date of July 1, 2021.
- Will be implementing policy on executive session minutes release – going forward, each January I will present the Board with a recommendation to release executive session minutes from the prior calendar year – open meeting law requires periodic review of executive session minutes – most of ours contain medical information so we likely will not release, however there will be some that likely can be released

At 9:12 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) 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. Savignac, yes; and Chairman, Blanchette, yes.

At 10:09 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. Savignac at 10:09 a.m. to close the Executive Session and then close 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, Ms. Savignac; yes, and Chairman Blanchette, yes*