

Berkshire County Retirement Board Meeting
January 27, 2021

The meeting of the Berkshire County Retirement Board was called to order at 9:00 A.M. in the Berkshire County Retirement Office, located at 29 Dunham Mall, Pittsfield, MA. Present at the meeting were; Michael Ovitt, Chairman, Mark Bashara, Elected Member. Participating by video conference were Karen Williams, Elected Member, Beth Matson, Appointed member and Paul A. Lisi, Jr., Advisory Board Member A roll call vote was taken to open the meeting. The vote was unanimous.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Members of the public had an opportunity to address the Retirement Board as the remote link to the meeting was posted with the agenda. No members of the public attending the meeting or were connecting remotely.

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MINUTES:

1.) The Board minutes of the meeting held December 30,2020, were signed and approved. **A roll call vote to approve the minutes and the vote was unanimous.**

NEW BUSINESS:

2.) The Board reviewed the application for accidental disability benefits from Jason Hoellerich, Town of Cheshire. At this time, the Board reviewed the Accidental Disability retirement application filed by Jason Hoellerich, Highway Foreman, Town of Cheshire and the medical panel's certifications and reports. Participating remotely before the Board was the applicant and his attorney Amy L. Perry-Mercier, Esq., as well as Board counsel Thomas F. Gibson, Esq. and Gerald A. McDonough, Esq. Mr. Gibson advised the applicant of the PERAC approval process, required filings, health insurance, workers' compensation offset and refund of sick leave in conjunction with workers' compensation, should the application be approved.

On a Motion made by Paul Lisi and seconded by Karen Williams, it was moved to approve the member's application and submit same for approval by the Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission. (PERAC)

A roll call vote was taken, and the vote was **Unanimous.**

A roll call vote approved the Application for Accidental Disability Benefits.

3.) The Board is asked to accept and process an Application for Ordinary Disability Benefits for Jeffrey Roosa, Town of Lee.

Retirement Board counsel Thomas F. Gibson, Esq. advised the Board that the applicant's application met the standard for acceptance and processing.

On a Motion made by Paul Lisi and seconded by Karen Williams, it was moved to accept and process the member's Application for Ordinary Disability Benefits.

A roll call vote to accept application and request a medical panel was Unanimous.

On Motion made by Mark Bashara and seconded by Karen Williams, it was moved to waive the in person requirement for a medical panel review and instruct PERAC to perform a paper review of the member's application for ordinary disability benefits.

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A roll call vote to waive the in person requirement for a medical panel review was unanimous.

PERAC will be notified of the waiver when the medical panel request is submitted for review.

Board counsel reported to the Board on various matters, including the status of the Samuel Pratt and Deborah Ball cases; the recent Superior Court decision regarding the status of supplemental payments made in conjunction with workers' compensation; the status of the appeal to the Appeals Court regarding buy backs of unused vacation; PERAC Memo #4/2021 regarding COLA; PERAC Memo #38 regarding purchase of a reserve police officers and call fire fighters service; the filing of on-line of Statements of Financial Interests; outline the need for pre-employment physical examinations in presumption applications; a new member of the PERAC Commission; and the status of certain legislative initiatives.

At 10:18am the Board meeting was interrupted by a loss of internet service. Paul Lisi, Karen Williams, Beth Matson and Attorney Tom Gibson waited while we attempted to reconnect. Tom Gibson signed off and Spectrum announced a service outage in our area. The Board was able to reconvene at 10:27am by telephone to complete the remaining regular order of business. The Board members identified themselves on the phone and a roll call vote was taken to reconvene to complete the regular order of business.

A roll call vote to reconvene the interrupted meeting was unanimous.

4.) The Board reviewed the employer match for retiree dental insurance.

The retirement board was informed that there was currently no employer match for dental insurance for retirement staff. The Board currently has no retirees so the board debated the amount to be matched for current and future retirees. The current match for active member's dental insurance is 85/15. Paul Lisi felt that an 85/15 match for retirees was too high based on other cities and towns and districts in the Berkshire County Retirement System. Mr. Lisi felt the match for retiree's dental insurance should be less than 85/15 and other board members agreed. After much debate and discussion regarding the employer's match the Board felt they needed additional information to make a decision. Paul Lisi proposed paying the full amount of the dental insurance until a rate had been set by the board, there was no second on the motion. Mark Bashara made a motion for 75/25 seconded by Michael Ovitt. Mark Bashara stated it was a temporary employer match until the Board could get additional information to help them determine a fair employer match.

A roll call vote to set the employer match at 75/25 was Unanimous

This item will be placed on the agenda in February after additional information is gathered and presented to the Board.

The Board was informed of the availability of a former employee for post-retirement employment with the retirement board. The Board discussed the rate of pay for the former employee if she was to return in some capacity to work at the retirement office. Mark Bashara made a motion to pay \$25 per hr. seconded by Karen Williams.

A roll call vote to set the rate at \$25 per hr. was Unanimous

INVESTMENTS:

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5.) The Board received from PRIT a statement of performance for December 2020. The PRIT Fund returned 4.38% for the month of December.
A roll call vote to note the record was Unanimous

BANK STATEMENTS:

6.) The Board is in receipt of the bank statements for December 2020. The Board is also in receipt of the budget for January 2021.

Note: copies of cashbooks for December 2020 will be available in February.

MONTHLY WARRANTS:

7.) The Board is asked to approve payment vouchers:

12-05-20	\$3,384.98
01-01-21	\$128,035.17
01-02-21	\$23,358.19
01-03-21	\$4,123.00

A roll call vote to approve payments as presented was Unanimous

REQUESTS FOR RETIREMENT:

8.) The Board is asked to approve the application for superannuation retirement from Judith Andersen, CBRSD, COTA. The retirement will be effective 01/22/2021.

The Board is asked to approve the application for superannuation retirement from Lori Bohin, Lenox, Paraprofessional. The retirement will be effective 01/15/2021.

A roll call vote to approve retirements as presented was Unanimous

MEMBER TRANSFERS OUT OF SYSTEM:

9.) There were no requests for transfers in the month of January.

REQUEST FOR SERVICE BUYBACK:

10.) There were no requests for service buybacks in the month of January.

REQUESTS FOR REFUNDS:

11.) There were no requests for refunds in the month of January.

INJURY REPORTS:

12.) There were no injuries reported in the month of January.

NEW MEMBER APPLICATIONS:

13.) The Board is asked to approve for membership in the Berkshire County Retirement System the following members:

7190	JEDADIAH HENRY	HINSDALE	12/3/2020	POLICE OFFICER	4
6470	JENNY E VANASSE	LENOX	12/22/2020	ASST DIR	1
7192	JOSHUA T BRADLEY	DALTON	12/3/2020	POLICE OFFICER	4
7193	ZACHARY W SORRENTINO	LEE	12/28/2020	HWY SUPVSR	1
7195	Kristen Mabey	Williamstown	11/31/2020	Para	1

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7196	CARMEN N MORALES	GT Barrington	12/14/2020	ASMIN ASST	1
7197	SERINA R STIMPSON	BCRHA	12/14/2020	SVC COORD	1
7198	JENNEY S MALOY	LENOX	1/4/2021	Youth LIBRARIAN	1
7199	MATTHEW C WILSON	LEE	1/4/2021	FF/PARAMEDIC	1
7200	TIAONA C WINOT	DALTON	1/4/2021	DISPATCHER	1
7201	ABRIANNA R CHAFFEE	LEE	1/21/2021	PARA	1
7202	AUSTIN M WHITE	LEE	1/11/2021	EMT/FF	1
7203	Christine Lemoine	Williamstown	1/4/2021	dispatcher	1
7204	Richard Andrews	Williamstown	1/4/2021	COA van driver	1

A roll call vote to approve new members as presented was Unanimous

RETIREMENT ALLOWANCE APPROVALS:

14.) The Board received approval from PERAC to grant a retirement allowance to John Cowles, BHRSD, as of as of 10/16/2020. Annual pension amount is \$9,269.64.

The Board received approval from PERAC to grant a retirement allowance to Jaimy Messana, Lee, as of as of 11/04/2020. Annual pension amount is \$17,617.20.

A roll call vote to note the record was Unanimous

PERAC CORRESPONDENCE:

15.) The Board received from PERAC the following memorandums:

#38/2020	Questions from Gomes Decision
#39/2020	Tobacco Company List
#01/2021	Medical Testing fee
#02/2021	2021 limits under Ch46 of 2002
#03/2021	2021 limits under sec 23 of 131 of 2010
#04/2021	COLA Notice
#05/2021	Prosper SFI online submission
#06/2021	2021 interest rate set @ 0.1%
#07/2021	Buyback and makeup repayment worksheets

Note: copies of memorandums and letters given to each Board member

TRAVEL & EDUCATION APPROVALS:

16.) There are no travel requests for the month of January.

MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE:

- a.) The Board is in receipt of Vernava case Worcester v. PERAC
- b.) Copy of the PBI Death Audit Report for January 2021
- c.) Update signature cards for Pittsfield Cooperative Bank
- d.) Tom Gibson letter regarding pensionable earnings over 40hr per week.
- e.) A letter from PERAC informing the Board that Berkshire County Retirement is scheduled for an actuarial valuation in 2021.

The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 24, 2021 at 9:00am.

A roll call vote to adjourn at 11:01 am was Unanimous

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RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Sheila LaBarbera, Executive Director

APPROVED BY:

Michael Ovitt, Chairman

Mark Bashara, Elected Member

Karen Williams, Elected Member

Paul A. Lisi, Jr., Advisory Council Member

Beth Matson, 5th Member Appointed