

Berkshire County Retirement Board Meeting  
October 31, 2024

**The meeting of the Berkshire County Retirement Board was called to order at 8:30A.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, Timothy Sorrell, Elected Member. Sue Funk, Advisory Board member participated remotely and Beth Matson, Appointed member was absent.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

1.) Members of the public have the opportunity to address the Retirement Board. There was no public comment.

**2.) CONSENT AGENDA**

**MINUTES:**

a.) The Board minutes of the regular meeting held September 25, 2024, were approved. *Minutes provided as an attachment to email*

**INVESTMENTS:**

b.) The Board received from PRIT a statement of performance for September 2024. The PRIT Fund returned 1.32% for the month of September.

**BANK STATEMENTS:**

c.) The Board received the bank statements for Sept 2024 and the budget for Oct 2024. *Cash Books for September were sent to Board by email.*

**MONTHLY WARRANTS:**

d.) The Board approved payment vouchers:

09-05-24	\$1,825,386.67
10-01-24	\$92,248.81
10-03-24	\$25,150.53
10-04-24	\$29,723.55
10-05-24	\$1,802,655.14
10-06-24	\$315.87

**REQUESTS FOR RETIREMENT:**

e.) The Board approved the application for superannuation retirement from Beth Hull, SBRSD, Guidance Secretary. The retirement will be effective 11/28/2024.

The Board approved the application for superannuation retirement from Elizabeth Heath, BHRSD, Paraprofessional. The retirement will be effective 11/30/2024.

The Board approved the application for superannuation retirement from Kimberly Shand, MGRSD, Paraprofessional. The retirement will be effective 12/22/2024.

The Board approved the application for superannuation retirement from Cheryl Attarian, Great Barrington, Library Tech. The retirement will be effective 12/31/2024.

The Board approved the application for superannuation retirement from MaryJo Barrett, CBRSD, Supervisor. The retirement will be effective 1/01/2025.

Berkshire County Retirement Board Meeting  
October 31, 2024

**MEMBER TRANSFERS OUT OF SYSTEM:**

f.) There were no transfers for the month of October.

**REQUEST FOR SERVICE BUYBACK:**

g.) Brian Fahey, a member in Monterey, is eligible to buy back 3 years and 4 months of military service through Chapter 178 of the Acts of 2024, veteran's buyback. If Mr. Fahey pays \$14,008.09 into the annuity savings fund by August 8, 2025, the Board will grant 3 years and 4 months of creditable service.

Sheldon Langley, a member in Monterey, is eligible to buy back 9 months and 19 days of prior creditable service. If Mr. Langley pays \$3,223.61 into the annuity savings fund by November 30, 2024, the board will grant 9 months and 19 days of creditable service.

**REQUESTS FOR REFUNDS:**

h.) The Board approved the applications for refunds from the following members: (Pending approval from Dept. of Revenue- child support division)

C. Dobbert Burdick	Florida	\$61.71 (Partial Refund)
D. Miller	Florida	\$219.62 (Partial Refund)
M. Williams	Clarksburg	\$34.54 (Partial Refund)
E. Austin	Hancock	\$1,896.88
M. Babich	Richmond	\$17,629.13
E. Clark	SBRSD	\$10,285.87
J. Cooper	SBRSD	\$1,660.91
J. Kennedy	Lenox	\$48,721.05
J. Wagner	Dalton	\$12,881.71

**INJURY REPORTS:**

i.) There was one injury reported in the town of Cheshire.

**NEW MEMBER APPLICATIONS:**

j.) The Board approved for membership in the Berkshire County Retirement System the following members:

8006	Corbin Saunders	Williamstown	9/3/2024	Motor Equipment Operator	1
8007	Taylor Bindschusz	Dalton Fire	9/12/2024	Firefighter	4
8008	Sheldon Langley	Monterey	6/23/2024	Highway	1
8009	Amy Denette	Clarksburg	8/28/2024	Paraprofessional	1
8010	Rebecca Geary	Lee	9/16/2024	Paraprofessional	1
8011	Darlene Smith	BHRSD	8/29/2024	Paraprofessional	1
8012	August Danowski	Lenox	9/18/2024	Admin Asst	1
8013	Kellie Duquette	CBRSD	10/1/2024	Paraprofessional	1
8014	Daniel Pound	Sandisfield	9/30/2024	Laborer Highway Dept	1
8015	Olivia Tatro	CBRSD	10/7/2024	Paraprofessional	1
8016	Philip Leahey	Lee	9/30/024	Water Distribution	1
8017	Jacob May	BHRSD	9/23/2024	Admin Asst.	1
8018	Ivy Gifford-Blasi	Williamstown	10/7/2024	Office Assistant	1
8019	Joseph Nichols	Lee	10/15/2024	Paraprofessional	1
8020	Samantha Brown	CBRSD	10/15/2024	Paraprofessional	1

Berkshire County Retirement Board Meeting  
October 31, 2024

8021	Jonathon Crawford	CBRSD	10/8/2024	Paraprofessional	1
8022	Trisha Carlo	Lanesboro	10/15/2024	EMT	1
8023	Jonathan Swigart	CBRSD	10/21/2024	custodian	1
8024	Laurie McArthur	Sandisfield	10/21/2024	Asst Treasurer / Collector	1
8025	Colby Curtin	Tyringham	9/23/2024	Highway laborer	1
8026	Stephen Hakes	Cheshire	10/17/2024	Cemetery/Custodian	1
8027	Seth Murko	MGRSD	10/10/2024	Custodian	1
8028	Damari Taylor	BHRSD	9/30/2024	Paraprofessional	1

**RETIREMENT ALLOWANCE APPROVALS:**

k.) The Board received approval from PERAC to grant a retirement allowance to Richard Roy, Lee, as of 08/12/2024. Annual pension amount is \$59,178.24.

The Board received approval from PERAC to grant a retirement allowance to Robert Orell, Williamstown, as of 08/29/2024. Annual pension amount is \$39,255.12.

The Board received approval from PERAC to grant a 12(2)(d) survivors benefit retirement allowance to Donna Sherman, spouse of Thomas Sherman, MGRSD, as of 09/04/2024. Annual pension amount is \$8,933.76.

The Board received approval from PERAC to grant a retirement allowance to Douglas Miller, Florida, as of 08/30/2024. Annual pension amount is \$34,956.60.

**3(8)c REIMBURSEMENTS:**

l.) The Board received a letter from PERAC ordering the Chicopee Retirement Board through the provisions of MGL Sec 3(8)(c) to reimburse the Berkshire County Retirement Board \$32,774.81 a year toward the retirement allowance of Richard Roy.

**PERAC CORRESPONDENCE:**

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

#25/2024 Mandatory Retirement Board Member Training-4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2024

#26/2024 The Application of the Anti-Spiking Provision

#27/2024 Changes to Return to Service under G.L. c. 32, § 8

#28/2024 Violent Assault Disability: Chapter 149 of the Acts of 2024

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

**TRAVEL & EDUCATION APPROVALS:**

n.) The Board approved the travel expense for staff to provide a retirement seminar in Lenox Schools on November 25, 2024 in Lenox, MA.

**MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE:**

o.) Advisory Board Annual Meeting Notice

2024 Fall MARCS Conference Registration Notice

The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 25, 2024 at 1:00pm.

Berkshire County Retirement Board Meeting  
October 31, 2024

Mark Bashara: On the Consent Agenda, is there anything anybody wishes to pull up and discuss separately? Or approve it as it is presented? Then I will make a motion that we accept the Consent Agenda as presented. Timothy Sorrell: I will second your motion. **A roll call vote was taken to approve the consent agenda as presented. The vote was unanimous.**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- 3.) **Executive Session:** under Purpose 7 of the Open Meeting Law: To comply with Exemption (c) of the Public Records Law (G.L. c. 4, s. 7(26)(c)) exempting information and other materials or data relating to a specifically named individual, the disclosure of which may constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. RE: Review of applications for disability benefits.

**On motion, made by Michael Ovitt to enter Executive Session and then return to open meeting. Seconded by Mark Bashara. A roll call vote was taken, and the vote was unanimous.**

**A roll call vote was taken to enter into executive session @ 9:25m.**

*The Board returned to regular session at 9:53am.*

Michael Ovitt: We are back to regular session, and in executive session, the board voted to grant accidental disability benefits to Mr. Bustin Buzzella.

4.) **Legal Update:** Presented by Board Counsel Thomas Gibson

I just want to mention now that we are on the subject of traumatic brain injury, as you know; PERAC sent a memo also about the Violent Injury Act that was recently enacted by the legislature. In Middlesex County, we have a case of a police officer who was struck over the head with a baton and had sustained traumatic brain injury. It appears that the case may be the first one to qualify under Chapter 149 as a disability arising from a violent act where a member has sustained catastrophic life-altering and life-threatening disability and a medical condition caused by a weapon that was designed to inflict bodily harm.

In this particular case, a defendant that was in the process of being arrested took the baton from another police officer's belt and used it to hit this police officer over the head. When you read the medical reports, it does not look like the traumatic brain injury was that significant because he can mow his lawn and he drives his children to school. When we had a hearing before the board and brought him in to answer questions, it was clear to the board that this individual had a significant cognitive defect as a result of that injury of being struck on the head. After listening to the member, the chief and the members spouse, the board has changed its view of that case and is now prepared to vote to grant that enhanced 100% benefit to this individual. You may see some of these cases down the road and we will be well-equipped to advise the board appropriately on these cases.

**Mendel Appeal**

Thomas Gibson: Lisa Mendel versus the Berkshire County Retirement Board. It has to do with an assertion that the board erred and did not give her creditable service for working Labor Day weekend - before she was actually permanently appointed to the job. There is an

Berkshire County Retirement Board Meeting  
October 31, 2024

evidentiary hearing before the DALA sometime in February of 2025. They are lining up witnesses to come in and say she was working on Labor Day weekend and she was paid for it, and therefore, the Berkshire County Retirement Board made a mistake. We know we did not make a mistake. She is grasping at straws in our view trying to get some additional service so that she can qualify for the MTRS enhanced retirement benefit. Unfortunately, we have to defend the claim.

*Thomas Gibson left the meeting @ 9:59am*

5.) Review and approve the final draft of the Marcum Financial audit for 2023

Sheila LaBarbera: We have to complete the management letter today. The previous letter was signed on the 22nd; Marcum did not receive it until the 25th, so the three days to review the audit and issue the final draft had already expired when they received the letter. We have to start over again so please sign this letter and as soon as you sign, we will scan it and send it out to Marcum.

Michael Ovitt: There was no date on the letter to begin with.

Sheila LaBarbera: Marcum said it was dated 22nd.

Michael Ovitt: No, on our letter.

Jill Hersey: No, but when you signed it. When you signed it, it had it.

Michael Ovitt: Right, but there is no date on this. There is no date on here right now.

Sheila LaBarbera: No, and there is not intentionally.

Michael Ovitt: Yeah, I know, but generally, on the heading you would have a date.

Sheila LaBarbera: No, we have never dated a management letter. There is the three-day time limit that we have to get that back to them, so there has never been a date on a management letter only the signature line.

Michael Ovitt: Yeah, but on any correspondence, there should be a date on it.

Sheila LaBarbera: Hopefully, we will have that draft audit within the next three days. We have a number of towns and districts that are looking for the final draft and GASB 67/68 numbers to complete their town audits so I will send it out to all of the town treasurers when completed.

6.) Review and approve ABL contract for death audit services

Sheila LaBarbera: I have the ABL contract for death audit. It is \$750 for the year. I sent the board members a copy of the contract. Tom Gibson reviewed the amended ABL contract to include his changes. Tom Gibson reviewed and approved the contract. If we could just motion to approve, I will sign it and send it out to ABL today. Our contract expires with PBI today, so we will be picking up ABL for November 1, 2024.

Mark Bashara: That is for three years.

Sheila LaBarbera: That is for three years at \$750.

Timothy Sorrell: All right. I will make a motion to approve the ABL contract as amended by Attorney Gibson. Sue Funk: I will second.

**A roll call vote was taken to approve the ABL contract as presented. The vote was unanimous.**

Berkshire County Retirement Board Meeting  
October 31, 2024

7.) Review and approve two purchases: laptops and third drawer for copier.

Sheila LaBarbera: You will see I sent out two quotes for you. The first is for the laptops. We had budgeted for these laptops. The laptops that we have just come to the end of their useful life. Joel spec'd the new laptops out for us. This purchase is from the state buy. The current laptops I think we purchased those in either '17 or '18. They have already been updated a number of times. The hard drives have crashed at least once or twice and so it is time to get new laptops. They did come in significantly less than we had originally budgeted; the quote is \$2300 for three.

Mark Bashara: These are the ones you can take home and work from if you need to.

Sheila LaBarbera: Yes, and Brian and Jill were out at a seminar in Dalton and they did not work.

Timothy Sorrell: You take them on the road when you go out and do the presentations to the towns?

Sheila LaBarbera: Yes, and I use mine mostly in the office here for board meetings, but if I go out, I take mine with me too.

Michael Ovitt: Can you just explain the third drawer?

Sheila LaBarbera: The third drawer, unfortunately, was a missed item when we purchased the copier last year. McFarlane thought our third drawer was a storage drawer; it was a high-capacity drawer. There are enough high-capacity print jobs that we do use it significantly. The laptops came in at a little bit less so we have some money in equipment, so I asked him to give us a quote.

Michael Ovitt: Okay. Any idea what the difference is? Like 500 versus -?

Jill Hersey: It is 500 for the regular drawer and high capacity I think is 1500.

Mark Bashara: Now, this is an added thing. We are not losing something off the printer? It is an addition.

Timothy Sorrell: I will make a motion to approve the two purchases of the laptops and a third drawer for the copier. Mark Bashara: I will second.

**A roll call vote was taken to approve the purchase of three laptops and a high capacity print drawer for copier as presented. The vote was unanimous.**

8.) Review of proposed 2025 annual budget

Sheila LaBarbera: We put together the 2025 budget. There really is not too much to our budget this year. We have budgeted what we have for expenses. I do not know if anyone has any questions. I would use today for questions, comments, anything else you want to add. I just wanted a review because the advisory board is meeting next week. We normally we have a budget to present to the Advisory Board for review not for them to vote on, that's why I made sure that we have a budget here before you today.

Mark Bashara: The \$40,000, you also added extra hours for staff. That is as if you needed to work overtime and get extra things done, it would come from there? This is for next year's budget.

Sheila LaBarbera: For next year. There are some things right now that we need to work on that we just have not gotten to that we need to. Most of it is legislative items. It is the anti-spiking, we have to go back to 2018 and pull all of those retirees just to see who was affected by the anti-spiking. Then we have to investigate whether or not there was salary surveys done in any of those people affected by anti-spiking and recalculate based on the current legislation. Unfortunately, it is just time-consuming, and it is going to take a time to complete that item. We have some money for that now but this money is there for next year.

Berkshire County Retirement Board Meeting  
October 31, 2024

If you decide to change your mind and provide us with a part-time employee, there is money there. If not, then there is money to pay us if we work more than the additional five hours.

Mark Bashara: Okay.

Sheila LaBarbera: But everything else is the same. We did apply some percentage increases. The health insurance we may see significant increases. MEDEX rates just went up 21%, so I expect that the health insurance rate at about 10-15%.

Timothy Sorrell: We are seeing it in Lanesborough.

Mark Bashara: They talked about that at Mass Retirees that MEDEX and health insurance is just going to go right up.

Mark Bashara: Scarafoni I see next year we will be talking about that. Have you heard anything at all? Is he going to keep the rent the same?

Sheila LaBarbera: I do not know. We will have to talk to him. He usually has a minimal increase. You know, we do it for five years. We have certainly been an anchor tenant for him. He is appreciative of the low maintenance.

Michael Ovitt: So, we are in year three right now. This is for next year? Year four?

Sheila LaBarbera: Yes, we are in year three of five because '26 will be the final year of the contract.

Mark Bashara: So, next year, at this time, budget time, we will be talking, and by then I am sure he will contact you or you will contact him. Now, education and training, we get a travel registration 9% increase.

Sheila LaBarbera: MACRS conference is probably going to be moving to a different facility where the rates will be a little bit higher than what they have been at the old resort. We do not usually ever use all of that money, but we budget for everyone to attend.

Mark Bashara: In the health insurance that takes into account for the increases, you are talking about?

Sheila LaBarbera: We added 10% in the health insurance. We will also include the family plan because right now Jill is on an individual plan, but you never know.

Sue Funk: Do you think 10% is enough? We had our rep here the other day, and it sounded like ours could even be higher than that.

Sheila LaBarbera: Well, I am not worried because we budget one extra plan, so if it happens to be more than the 10%, there is money in there because of the extra plan.

Michael Ovitt: Had we budgeted for the extra plan? I thought we did and then we did not.

Sheila LaBarbera: No, we always have carried one extra plan.

Michael Ovitt: Are we doing two family and two individual?

Sheila LaBarbera: Well, Brian has a family plan.

Michael Ovitt: So, we are throwing one extra individual plan?

Sheila LaBarbera: We have two individuals. We have one family with Brian, and the extra one is a family plan.

Mark Bashara: There is two family plans, but there is only one, which is Brian currently.

Mark Bashara: Yeah. I am guessing Denise is MEDEX.

Michael Ovitt: So, we are budgeting less than what we did last year? Or is there something else under benefits? Our current year benefits is \$69,360, and our budgeted for next year is \$67,655.

Jill Hersey: There was a difference with Wellpoint. They changed the rates because it used to be that if you wanted the CIC for extra coverage, there was a higher increase. Now it is included.

Berkshire County Retirement Board Meeting  
October 31, 2024

Sheila LaBarbera: The CIC is included and the other item we budgeted for was HMO family. In the past, we budgeted the PPO.

Michael Ovitt: We are talking about a 10% increase, and it went down 3%.

Jill Hersey: Plus because they do fiscal year, we take two quarters at the current cost and then two quarters at the increase so technically that 10% increase is only for two quarters.

Michael Ovitt: This is kind of a work in progress.

Sheila LaBarbera: I will put it back on the agenda for a vote for next month.

9.) **Directors update:** PTG review

Sheila LaBarbera: **PTG review.** I sent out the synopsis of our meeting that we had the other day. Things with PTG have gone very well. We noted a couple items. The first is – and it has been since fixed – transfers to other systems because we were on a different server. It is up and running and will be fully functional on Monday, and so that is all set. We are on a new server. It is quicker for some of our reports, so the efficiency is much improved for that. We asked for a couple new reports. This affected a number of towns this year. The OPEB requirements now are starting to ramp up, so they look for us to give them a report of the retirees – of all the retirees and their health insurances. The problem is that report does not submit or include survivors. We have a number of survivors. That report should be available probably in the spring, May or June.

Their service has been greatly improved with Jean and Barbara Jo, and I let them know that. They have been responsive. They have been good at tracking issues and following up, so that is going very well.

The last item which I think is great, PensionPro+, that will be coming up available in the first quarter of '25. They are going to put some of the smaller retirement systems on the PensionPro+ first to do all their beta testing live. As soon as they are ready, we will be able to upgrade to the PensionPro+ at no additional cost. We are looking forward to that, but everything with them is actually going very well. I have nothing adverse to report. They have improved their processes as far as releases. They will do monthly releases whether they are global or individual, they will be noted that way.

I thought the meeting went very well. We do not have any plans to meet with them in November. We have set up a meeting for December for year-end. You can see in the report the significant decline in service calls.

Michael Ovitt: If you have an issue on any given day, are they responsive?

Sheila LaBarbera: Yes. That is what I just mentioned. Their service has been very responsive and I let them know that their service has been greatly improved not only the timeliness of their return phone calls but also in the resolution of issues.

10.) Discussion regarding COLA base.

Michael Ovitt: Mark had expressed interest in getting some numbers on changing the COLA base.

Mark Bashara: I would guess it is similar to what we did last time. Like you would have to suggest go from 16 to 17, and I believe there is a process where you would, I think, send it to PERAC or whatever to see the actuarial results.

Michael Ovitt: Impact.



Berkshire County Retirement Board Meeting  
October 31, 2024

Mark Bashara: Impact and the cost and so on, and where it leads us because I figured by doing this early, it gives us plenty of time to look at options and see what's going on, so I figured we start the process now while we have plenty of time to discuss it.

Michael Ovitt: I believe it has something to do with the advisory council as well, right?

Mark Bashara: That is for approval.

Sheila LaBarbera: Yes, the advisory board has to approve the vote.

Mark Bashara: Right, but at this point, I am just looking to find out the cost, where it sets us, the impact. You know, when I – for Mass retirees, you know, I have to agree with them. I mean, we have been doing very, very well with the returns and everything, and I just believe that now is the time to share the benefits with all the retirees. Therefore, that is why I am looking at this. I mentioned that a couple of years ago when originally, I went for 18, we settled for 16, and at this point, I think 17 would be a reasonable amount. We have no idea what is going to happen years from now.

Michael Ovitt: Sheila, is there an optimal time to gather that estimate between actuarial evaluations and what not?

Sheila LaBarbera: I am going to ask John Boorack if he can give us an estimate and what the impact would be on your assessments.

Michael Ovitt: But things are not – you know, things need to be updated with our annual statements.

Sheila LaBarbera: Well, it depends on what John Boorack's schedule is too, he is doing all the assessments, so we probably will not see anything from him right away.

Michael Ovitt: So, if you could present to us maybe next month just what his timetable is.

Mark Bashara: That is why I am doing it early. Even if he says, look, we cannot get to it 'til February or March, that's fine. I figured at least it is on his radar and the back of his mind and then we know we did not miss the boat by, oh, if we only had brought this up two months earlier or something. That's all I have for that.

A motion was made by Tim Sorrell to adjourn the meeting at 10:11 am. Mark Bashara, second.

**A roll call vote was taken to adjourn, the vote was unanimous.**

The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Monday November 25, 2024 @1pm.

Berkshire County Retirement Board Meeting  
October 31, 2024

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

---

Sheila LaBarbera, Executive Director

APPROVED BY:

---

Michael Ovitt, Chairman

---

Mark Bashara, Elected Member

---

Timothy Sorrell, Elected Member

---

Sue Funk, Advisory Council Member

---

Beth Matson, 5<sup>th</sup> Member Appointed

Berkshire County Retirement Board Meeting  
October 31, 2024

**The meeting of the Berkshire County Retirement Board was called to order at 8:30A.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, Timothy Sorrell, Elected Member. Sue Funk, Advisory Board member participated remotely and Beth Matson, Appointed member was absent.**

**Addendum to the October 31, 2024 Board meeting minutes, the following discussion was erroneously omitted from the original October 31, 2024 minutes.**

Sheila LaBarbera: Before we adjourn though, we just talked a little bit, Mike, before you got here, about extra hours, so we have some things coming up – not coming up. They are already sitting out there that we have not been able to get to, so I would like a little bit of guidance for myself. Brian and myself are working in extra hours. How many hours –?

Mark Bashara: Is this over and above the five that you would typically work?

Sheila LaBarbera: Not that we will go over the five.

Mark Bashara: Right.

Sheila LaBarbera: We will just stay within five.

Timothy Sorrell: Work has got to get done, right?

Sheila LaBarbera: Yeah, unfortunately.

Timothy Sorrell: Like you said, you have 400 files to go through for anti-spiking.

Sheila LaBarbera: Yeah. We have ABL.

Jill Hersey: ABL.

Sheila LaBarbera: ABL. We got to do some special files for them, so we will work on that next week.

Timothy Sorrell: Work has got to get done.

Michael Ovitt: I was wondering what Brian's timetable was, but he has been out since –

Sheila LaBarbera: He will be back around Thanksgiving. Will he be back on the 25th?

Jill Hersey: Yeah.

Sheila LaBarbera: I think that is the date of his return.

Mark Bashara: Would it be possible to email the chairman or us in regards to, like, you're going to know what you're working on for extra, say, this week we're going to be –

Michael Ovitt: Can you –?

Jill Hersey: tomorrow.

Michael Ovitt: Can you target, you know, give us an idea of what you are doing?

Sheila LaBarbera: Oh, sure. I can, yeah, exactly what we are doing, sure.

Michael Ovitt: Okay.

Sheila LaBarbera: Mm-hm.

Mark Bashara: And what you think would be required to do it roughly, you know, I mean, I am not saying to the minute, but –

Sheila LaBarbera: Yeah. We got to let you know that we are working on it.

Mark Bashara: Yeah.

Sheila LaBarbera: And it is working. I mean, you know, the problem is that some of the stuff has to be done – what we are finding a difficulty now is we set up time to do something and then people show up, and I am not turning anybody away.

Mark Bashara: I just –

Berkshire County Retirement Board Meeting  
October 31, 2024

Timothy Sorrell: Does it make more sense for us just to say, go ahead and do it and just let us know what you have performed for the week.

Sheila LaBarbera: Yes. I will keep track – believe me, I will keep track of –

Mark Bashara: But that is what we are saying. Just keep as apprised so that –

Timothy Sorrell: That would be okay to put the hours.

Mark Bashara: Right. Just keep us apprised and not – the next meeting –

Sheila LaBarbera: Sure. That is not a problem.

Michael Ovitt: I guess I would like to know what the priorities are, you know, from day to day, you know, as opposed to the extra hours, day to day, with your deadline, what is our critical?

Sheila LaBarbera: Well, we prioritize right now, so all I can tell you is that we are –

Michael Ovitt: If you can communicate that with us.

Sheila LaBarbera: Right. I mean, we are done prioritizing because right now we are doing what we need to do to keep the day-to-day operations. There is a lot of the legislative changes that happened over the summer that is driving – I mean, we had to put everything off to the side to do the HERO Act.

Michael Ovitt: So, you can just – we'll have this as a documented –

Sheila LaBarbera: Yeah.

Mark Bashara: Yeah. I am guessing you are saying –

Sheila LaBarbera: Just like the payroll, if there is five hours, here is what the five hours were spent on, this is what was done.

Michael Ovitt: So, go ahead and outline that.

Sheila LaBarbera: Yeah.

Michael Ovitt: You know, something happened in the summer. This is why we need to get this done by November or December whatever the deadline is.

Sue Funk: Mike, I have a question.

Michael Ovitt: Go ahead, Sue.

Sue Funk: Okay. So, just because I don't know, and I've never seen a personnel policy or anything, they work 35 hours, so it is immediately overtime after 35? Or they do work 40 first? How does that work?

Sheila LaBarbera: Once you hit 40, then it is time and a half.

Sue Funk: Okay. I just did not know if the policy was different because you guys do not work free.

Mark Bashara: I think, like I said, we are just looking for like you said.

Sheila LaBarbera: Yes.

Mark Bashara: Just keep the chairman, the board apprised, and then if something – say, something unusual comes up and it's something totally unexpected, all right, we sent you this is what we're going to do but because this happened, this is what we need to prioritize. I am just giving examples, and then at least we are aware of it and we can say, okay, we understand now or whatever.

Michael Ovitt: We had talked a month or two ago about possibly doing extra hours, and I think our response was it was totally off the table.

Sheila LaBarbera: Well, I can tell you that there is not really anybody that is excited about working extra hours.

Michael Ovitt: Okay.

Berkshire County Retirement Board Meeting  
October 31, 2024

Sheila LaBarbera: But the reality is that you have us in a catch-22. So, if we do not work the extra hours and work does not get done, then what happens? So, we got work that has got to be done.

Michael Ovitt: That is a change from what we had discussed previously.

Sheila LaBarbera: Not really, because I have told you, we would like a part-time employee for the extra work and you said no.

Mark Bashara: Well, the important thing is –

Michael Ovitt: And now, you are willing to do it.

Timothy Sorrell: I think they have to.

Michael Ovitt: Okay.

Timothy Sorrell: They have to do it because of the anti-spiking. Jill just said that if they do not do it, we are going to get hit with the interest on that?

Jill Hersey: Well, we already have to pay –

Timothy Sorrell: Oh, we already have to.

Jill Hersey: So, if we let it go 'til next year, then we have to –

Mark Bashara: The simplest thing I can simplify it is no surprises. That is it. That is really simple. And you've already –

Sheila LaBarbera: There should not be any surprises.

Mark Bashara: You keep us apprised and –

Timothy Sorrell: So, we are doing it, you just tell us what the five hours went to, I guess.

Sheila LaBarbera: Yes. Thank you.

Mark Bashara: Yeah. Exactly. That is it. Do we need to make a vote on that? Or we would just say you are good – I mean, there is a record of it obviously.

Sheila LaBarbera: There is a record of it. Yes.

Mark Bashara: So, I am good with that.

Michael Ovitt: And when does that begin? This week, you said?

Sheila LaBarbera: Probably Jill will start next week. Well, both of us are probably going to start –

Mark Bashara: Starting Monday.

Sheila LaBarbera: Yeah. ABL probably over the weekend.

Jill Hersey: Yeah.

Sheila LaBarbera: She may come in on Saturday and do it.

Mark Bashara: All right. So, then we'll be seeing emails and –

Michael Ovitt: That is broken down on payroll, and you are going to submit it weekly, then?

Sheila LaBarbera: Yes. With the regular payroll, sure.

Mark Bashara: Yeah. You are right because the regular hours, the 35, is your daily whatever you do.

Sheila LaBarbera: Yeah.

Mark Bashara: The five hours is what we want, you know –

Sheila LaBarbera: Exactly.

Timothy Sorrell: And it's budgeted, so.

Sheila LaBarbera: Yes.

Mark Bashara: Yeah. All right. So, if there is no vote, there is a record, we discussed, we are good.

Sheila LaBarbera: Yes.

Mark Bashara: Sue, anything on your part? Are you good?

Sue Funk: No. I am good though. Thanks.

Berkshire County Retirement Board Meeting  
October 31, 2024

Mark Bashara: I will make a motion to adjourn at 10:11 a.m.  
Timothy Sorrell: I second that motion.

Michael Ovitt: Motion and second. All in favor.

A motion was made by Tim Sorrell to adjourn the meeting at 10:11am. Mark Bashara, second.

**A roll call vote was taken to adjourn, the vote was unanimous.**

The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Monday November 25, 2024 @1pm.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

---

Sheila LaBarbera, Executive Director

APPROVED BY:

---

Michael Ovitt, Chairman

---

Mark Bashara, Elected Member

---

Timothy Sorrell, Elected Member

---

Sue Funk, Advisory Council Member

---

Beth Matson, 5<sup>th</sup> Member Appointed