

Berkshire County Retirement Board Meeting
May 29, 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 Mark Bashara, Elected Member, Timothy Sorrell, Elected Member and Sue Funk, Advisory Board member. Michael Ovitt, Chairman participated remotely. 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.

NEW BUSINESS:

2.) The Board reviewed and signed the letter of engagement for Marcum LLP to perform our 2023 financial audit.

Michael Ovitt: In looking that over is there anything different in their engagement letter?

Sheila LaBarbera: No, I am going to review with Marcum cybersecurity issues and if they wanted any policies or procedures but management letters are the same.

Mark Bashara: I will make a motion to sign the letter of engagement from Marcum to perform our 2023 financial audit. Sue Funk: I will second.

A roll call vote was taken to approve the engagement letter for the 2023 audit. The vote was unanimous.

3.) Legal Update: Legal update for May.

Sheila LaBarbera: The appeal letter for Bartini is actually June 3rd, not January 3rd that was a typo. The notice letter is dated December 29th, we sent it certified and he signed for it on 01-05-21. His appeal was dated 01-19, but I do not know what the legal issue is we will wait and see.

Michael Ovitt: So, Tom or Jerry are not attending.

Sheila LaBarbera: They are not attending, there are not any issues to report on.

Michael Ovitt: We have Colello, Larkin, and Bartini no other updates on those?

Sheila LaBarbera: Colello is just a filing issue. He needed to add a schedule to his filing because he is operating a business. Larkin, I received some information from Great Barrington and I forwarded it to Tom Gibson. Mr. Buzzella has his final medical appointment scheduled in June.

4.) Directors update: PTG, Annual Affidavits

PTG Insurance portal

Everything actually went well until yesterday afternoon. We had a glitch with somebody in Williamstown, it held up our pension payroll. I think we have it straightened out this morning. The feedback from all of the treasurers have been very appreciative. The insurance portal was a long time coming and it is making everybody's life a lot easier.

Annual Affidavits

PERAC memo #13 has some updates regarding the annual affidavits. We subscribe to PBI, the death reporting service and it has been very accurate. There is really no reason to do annual affidavits every single year. There is no reason to do it this year. If you want to do it

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every other year, we can consider that going forward. We are paying \$2500 a year for the death service, why add another couple thousand dollars in postage and time and effort for a mailing that is not necessary?

Mark Bashara: All the retirees complain about that.

Sheila LaBarbera: They do and when they go out next year, they do not have to be notarized. They just have to have an attestation.

Michael Ovitt: Can you explain what the difference is requirement-wise?

Sheila LaBarbera: Many retirement systems are using death services to collect the death notices for retirees rather than rely on the annual affidavits and family notification. In addition, a notary signature is no longer required.

Mark Bashara: And by not doing it, we are not incurring any kind of liability?

Sheila LaBarbera: No, because we use the death service.

Michael Ovitt: As far as PTG, when you were away, Jill was having a bunch of issues. I did not hear the resolution.

Sheila LaBarbera: It was resolved. They are very prompt. They are ticketing issues and they are resolved very quickly to the best of their ability. They did not share why the reporting did not work for almost four days. I have mentioned to Chris Lodge that they are still very short in instructions. They have met all of the expectations that we have for them; so far, everything that they promised has been delivered.

Mark Bashara: Were we charged for the insurance portal?

Sheila LaBarbera: They rolled it into our annual payment. The five-year plan.

Michael Ovitt: Which is still outrageous for the record. Sheila, can you expand on the computer services company? Where we are at with that?

Computer Services

Sheila LaBarbera: Ascentek was bought out by what is called now Iron Tech. Iron Tech had forty clients that they had absorbed from Ascentek that had ten or less employees. They were going to put together a plan for the small businesses because his business plan for the services that he offers don't really work for businesses with less than ten people. It has to do with cost. He worked on it for about three months and then he sent out an email and said he just cannot make it work. John Charow who owns Nova Computers was somebody that Iron Tech had brought into the business to work specifically with the small business. John Sinopoli at Iron Tech said to John from Nova Computers they are yours, we cannot support them anymore. I am working with both John Charow and Joel on some preliminary items with our system to provide us with that anti-virus service that we had before. It is not \$6 anymore; it is \$20 per unit. It is now \$120 a month for the virus protection.

As far as monitoring right now we are pay as you go and have had discussions with both Nova Computers and Joel that there is not a business plan that anyone offers anymore. You are going to pay for so many hours of service per month. There are a couple of pieces of equipment that we have to upgrade for security purposes. We need a commercial-grade router that supports the upgrades and cybersecurity and Joel agreed. John, Joel and myself are going to get together sometime in June to review the computer system and discuss our insurance policies and how we manage our cybersecurity.

I am putting together a request for a grant from MIIA to establish policies and procedures. Joel has been very honest about the fact that the responsibility for the computer operations and policies are more time than he is able to provide. He is happy to help you with the equipment upgrades, but he said we are going to have to find an MSP provider to accept that

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responsibility. I do not have anything to present to you right now. Honestly, if it does not work out with Nova Computers, I am not sure what we do.

Michael Ovitt: Well, Sheila every city and town and other system has this IT service.

Sheila LaBarbera: No, Mike they have an IT Department. Just like the Sheriff's Department does. They have probably three or four employees. That is their full-time job.

Michael Ovitt: Right, but there is other companies out there, I mean can we collectively gather up other companies to get other proposals?

Sheila LaBarbera: Sure. If you have some suggestions of where you think I can find them, I will take them and I will seek them all out. I do not think I can find anybody that is here locally that will do it. The problem is that most of these operations are providing you cost for ten or more employees because that is the breakpoint of profitability for them.

Mark Bashara: Does Joel know of anybody?

Sheila LaBarbera: No.

Sue Funk: So, I can tell you in Egremont we use a company called Whalley. They have two locations, one maybe north towards the Southwick area. Everything, the network, backups, clouds.

Sheila LaBarbera: Give me a name and number.

Michael Ovitt: So that is an example. There are other companies out there, so let us beat the bushes a little bit.

Sue Funk: And what do we pay now, like, roughly?

Sheila LaBarbera: we are paying \$6 a month.

Mark Bashara: So, can you check into this Brainspiral? They are in Williamstown

Michael Ovitt: Okay. Can you for the next meeting get me a copy of what the RFP would be for this? The scope of services?

Sheila LaBarbera: I have no idea what the scope of services would be, I have to talk to Joel.

Michael Ovitt: Well, we are asking one company for services, so there has to be an expectation and scope of services, correct?

Sheila LaBarbera: Yes, but he is providing the offering it is not my area of expertise. I need Joel to do that.

Mark Bashara: But he would be the best to write up a scope of services.

Sheila LaBarbera: I think I can get him to give me at least an outline.

Mark Bashara: And then we send it to this Brainspiral, the Whalley, or any other ones. Then maybe what comes out of that is one of these companies you may want to also consider this, which you could then run through Joel. At least it gets us started.

Consent Agenda Detail:

MINUTES:

a.) The Board minutes of the regular session meeting held April 24, 2024, were signed and approved.

Minutes provided as an attachment to email

INVESTMENTS:

b.) The Board received from PRIT a statement of performance for April 2024. The PRIT Fund returned -1.82% for the month of March.

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BANK STATEMENTS:

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

MONTHLY WARRANTS:

d.) The Board approved payment vouchers:

04-05-24	\$1,714,607.98	
05-01-24	\$34,427.96	
05-02-24	\$94,119.91	
05-03-24	\$26,907.54	
05-04-24	\$24,012.77	
05-05-24	\$1,719,876.38	
05-06-24	\$5,845.20	(Partial Refunds)

REQUESTS FOR RETIREMENT:

e.) The Board approved the application for superannuation retirement from Kathryn Hocter, FRRSD, Paraprofessional. The retirement will be effective 06/11/2024. (revised from April 2024)

The Board approved the application for superannuation retirement from Darcy Meyers, SBRSD, paraprofessional. The retirement will be effective 07/02/2024.

The Board approved the application for superannuation retirement from Robert Orell, Williamstown, Heavy Equipment Operator. The retirement will be effective 08/29/2024.

The Board approved the application for superannuation retirement from Claude Beckwith Jr, Williamstown, Water Operator. The retirement will be effective 05/01/2024.

The Board approved the application for superannuation retirement from Susan Rathbun, Hinsdale, Chief of Police. The retirement will be effective 05/31/2024.

The Board approved the application for superannuation retirement from Bonnie Van Valkenburg, CBRSD, Paraprofessional. The retirement will be effective 06/12/2024.

The Board approved the application for superannuation retirement from Roberta DelGrande, BHRSD, Paraprofessional. The retirement will be effective 06/14/2024.

The Board approved the application for superannuation retirement from Edward Flynn, Richmond. The retirement will be effective 08/01/2024.

MEMBER TRANSFERS OUT OF SYSTEM:

f.) The Board approved the notice of transfer of the account of Jenna Dickinson, a member in MGRSD, to the MTRS. The Berkshire County Retirement Board will accept 3 years and 11 months of creditable service. The amount of the transfer is \$16,546.01.

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The Board approved the notice of transfer of the account of Laurie Harrison, a member in Great Barrington, to the MTRS. The Berkshire County Retirement Board will accept 12 years and 3 months of creditable service. The amount of the transfer is \$50,992.03.

The Board approved the notice of transfer of the account of Anthony Nuvalle Jr, a member in Williamstown, to the Adams Retirement Board. The Berkshire County Retirement Board will accept 1 year and 4 months of creditable service. The amount of the transfer is \$8,281.98.

The Board approved the notice of transfer of the account of Stacie Vigiard, a member in MGRSD, to the MTRS. The Berkshire County Retirement Board will accept 3 years and 5 months of creditable service. The amount of the transfer is \$18,037.08.

The Board approved the notice of transfer of the account of Mary Moriarty-Dunn, a member in BHRSD, to the Pittsfield Retirement Board. The Berkshire County Retirement Board will accept 3 months of creditable service. The amount of the transfer is \$262.81.

REQUEST FOR SERVICE BUYBACK:

g.) Abrianna Chaffee, a member in Lee, is eligible to buy back 6 months and 25 days of prior creditable service to her original start date due to a unit enrollment error. If Ms. Chaffee pays \$856.70 into the annuity savings fund by May 30, 2025, the board will grant 6 months and 25 days of creditable service.

Jose Gonzalez, a member in Hinsdale, is eligible to buy back 4 years of military service through Chapter 71 of the Acts of 1996, as amended by Chapter 468 of the Acts of 2002, veteran's buyback. If Mr. Gonzalez pays \$18,555.26 into the annuity savings fund the Board will grant 4 years of creditable service.

Caren Adams, a member in Lanesborough, is eligible to buy back 5 years and 2 months of prior creditable service. If Ms. Adams pays \$15,301.41 into the annuity savings fund by June 30, 2024, the board will grant 5 years and 2 months of creditable service.

Lorna Gayle, a member in Lanesborough, is eligible to buy back 2 years and 2 months of prior creditable service. If Ms. Gayle pays \$9,149.43 into the annuity savings fund by June 30, 2024, the board will grant 2 years and 2 months of creditable service.

Cynthia Tucker, a member in CBRSD, is eligible to buy back 1 year and 7 months of prior creditable service. If Mrs. Tucker pays \$5,127.02 into the annuity savings fund by June 30, 2024, the board will grant 1 year and 7 months 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)

J. Coffey	Great Barrington Fire	\$5203.74 (Partial-Post Tax Deds)
J. Douglas	CBRS	\$409.81 (Partial-Deds on Supp. Pay)
M. Emerson	CBRS	\$231.65 (Partial-Deds on Supp. Pay)
O. Bates	BHRSD	\$318.67

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S. Bottum	BHRSD	\$6,273.37
J. Coffey	Great Barrington Fire	\$12,944.93
J. Cornwell	Stockbridge	\$1,616.25
S. DeZess	Lanesborough	\$3,074.78
M. Ferry	Lee	\$2,039.70
E. Gunn	CBRSD	\$2,421.25
R. Krueger	SBRSD	\$1,526.74
L. Love	CBRSD	\$201.14
J. Murray Sr	Hinsdale	\$3,242.08
A. Scaglione	SBRSD	\$630.84
J. Suleski	Dalton	\$8,245.62

INJURY REPORTS:

i.) There were two injuries reported from CBRSD for the month of May.

NEW MEMBER APPLICATIONS:

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

7902	Alexandra Sproul	BHRSD	4/22/2024	Para	1
7903	Tanaijsa Brutus	BCRHA	4/9/2024	Service Coordinator	1
7904	David Fierro Jr.	Williamstown	4/16/2024	Finance Director	1
7905	Jacob Tiffany	Dalton	4/22/2024	Police Officer	4
7906	Daniel Roy	Cheshire	4/23/2024	Facilities & Grounds	1
7907	Ellen Hull	Sheffield	5/6/2024	Admin Assistant	1
7908	Dawn Fye	Dalton	5/6/2024	Admin Assistant	1
7909	Tami Flatley	Dalton	5/6/2024	Assistant Tax Collector	1
7910	Kylie Nestle	CBRSD	5/8/2024	Para	1
7911	James Nicholson	GB	4/29/2024	Assistant Library Director	1
7912	Adam Vanderneck	GB	4/29/2024	Inspector	1
7913	Keith Gangell	GB	4/16/2024	Local Building Inspector	1
7914	Valerie Chisom	GB	4/23/2024	Youth Supervisor Services	1
7915	Niles LaValley	Dalton Fire	5/6/2024	Firefighter	4
7916	Pamela Stealth	Lee	5/6/2024	Equity Access Coordinator	1
7917	Kara Hovland	Lee	4/22/2024	Admin Assistant	1
7918	Garrett Hayward	CBRSD	5/20/2024	Custodian	1

RETIREMENT ALLOWANCE APPROVALS:

k.) The Board received approval from PERAC to grant a retirement allowance to Matthew Withers, Lee Housing Authority, as of 03/01/2024. Annual pension amount is \$9,022.32.

The Board received approval from PERAC to grant a retirement allowance to Luis Grijalva, SBRSD, as of 04/16/2024. Annual pension amount is \$18,378.36.

The Board received approval from PERAC to grant a retirement allowance to Terry Vogel Jr., Great Barrington, as of 04/05/2024. Annual pension amount is \$15,272.04.

3(8)c REIMBURSEMENTS:

l.) There are no 3(8)c reimbursement letters in May.

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PERAC CORRESPONDENCE:

m.) There were no PERAC memos in May.

TRAVEL & EDUCATION APPROVALS:

n.) The Board is asked to approve the travel expense for staff to provide a retirement seminar to Town of Lanesborough on May 9, 2024.

MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE:

o.) -PERAC 91A Notice for Christopher Colello
- PERAC Medical Panel scheduled for B. Buzzella

Timothy Sorrell: I will make a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Sue Funk: I second.

Michael Ovitt: Just a general question, as far as approving travel or expenses for educational seminars and what not, do you generally do them in advance or after the fact?

Sheila LaBarbera: I try to do them in advance. Sometimes they come up and depending on when the meetings are and when we get notifications, sometimes they are after.

Michael Ovitt: All right.

Sue Funk: So, just because I do not know, is there a policy or a procedure for that? For them? Like normal practice for this? Is there a procedure that they are supposed to follow?

Michael Ovitt: The Board needs to approve the expenses.

Sue Funk: My question, I guess, was is there a procedure that says you're supposed to do it whether it be ahead of time or – even if it has to be by an email because there's no meeting in between? Or do they have a guide? Or is it just ask?

Mark Bashara: I mean, typically I know I will see it on the minutes. It will be like some training coming up. Like you are saying if something comes up in the middle of the month.

Michael Ovitt: I mean these have been routine, but it says, you know, the Board is asked to approve the travel expense for staff to provide a retirement seminar for Lanesborough on May 9th and its May 29th, so it has already happened.

Sheila LaBarbera: Those are some we are at the mercy of a town manager or a human resource that has set up their program and I think that is what they did up in Lanesborough. Didn't they have a Benefits Day in Lanesborough?

Michael Ovitt: Well, I was not notified.

Mark Bashara: Me neither. I mean, when it comes up in the middle or something like that, do you typically send us an email at least notifying?

Sheila LaBarbera: I do not, but I can.

Michael Ovitt: And similarly with other trainings and stuff. Any questions or concerns? Hearing none, all in favor of the Consent Agenda.

A motion by Tim Sorrell to approve the consent agenda as presented, second Sue Funk.

A roll call vote was taken to approve the consent agenda as presented. The vote was unanimous.

The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 26, 2024 at 8:30am.

Michael Ovitt: Okay. I look for a motion to adjourn.

A motion was made by Mark Bashara to adjourn the meeting at 9:03am. Sue Funk, second.

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

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, 5th Member Appointed