

Berkshire County Retirement Board Meeting  
September 28, 2020

**The meeting of the Berkshire County Retirement Board was called to order at 9:02 A.M. in the Retirement Office, located at 29 Dunham Mall, Pittsfield, MA. Present at the meeting were, Michael Ovitt, Chairman, Karen Williams, Elected Member, and Mark Bashara, Elected Member. Paul A. Lisi, Jr., Advisory Board Member participated by video conference.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

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

**MINUTES:**

1.) The Board minutes of the meeting held August 26, 2020, were signed and approved.  
**Voted to approve the minutes.**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

2.) The Board considered engaging PBI Research Services to provide death audit services for the Berkshire County Retirement System. The Board reviewed the number of retirees who had no flags for death notices like health and life insurance there are 213 retirees who have no deductions (about 22%). The Board discussed the methods we currently use to identify retirees who have passed and Mark Bashara suggested reviewing the death notification process with members when they retire. Many retirees are leaving the area so it is difficult to track the deaths if they are not noted in the newspaper and PBI has access to other searches to find death notifications. The Board members discussed engaging with PBI for 1 year to see if the death audit service was proving to be of value to the retirement system. Mark Bashara made a motion to contract with PBI for 1 year beginning in January 2021, second by Paul Lisi Jr. Unanimous.

**Voted to approve a 1-year contract with PBI for death audit services.**

3.) The Board considered adding the PTG Electronic Document Storage modules with fee deferral until 2021, there would be no fee for 2020. The annual fee for the scan module would be \$6000 beginning in December of 2021. The scanning could be completed on our copier with addition of a Twain application and there is no cost to our service contract since there is no cost for click and scan. The staff visited the North Adams Retirement Board on September 17<sup>th</sup> to preview and demo the completed application of the scan module. The Board noted that with the recent Covid-19 issues it was important to be able to access records remotely. The other important feature is that documents will be stored securely in remote sites. The records would be easily recovered if there was ever a disaster, this may also lessen our insurance costs for document re-creation coverage. Paul Lisi Jr suggested that the staff dedicate a specific amount of time each week to complete the scan process. Motion by Paul Lisi Jr to purchase the document scan module second Mark Bashara. Unanimous.

**Voted to approve the contact for the document scan module with PTG.**

4.) The Board is asked to review and approve the 2019 Annual Financial Statements prepared by Melanson. The final report was not ready for the Board to review, there were outstanding audit items from the Town of New Marlboro that had not yet been completed.

**Voted to table.**

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5.) The Board reviewed applicants for the 5<sup>th</sup> position appointed member for the Berkshire County Retirement Board. The Board acknowledged there were 5 applicants for the vacant 5<sup>th</sup> position appointed on the retirement board. They decided they would individually rank each of the candidates and submit those preferences to the Executive Director by Monday October 5, 2020. The Board would like to interview the top three applicants. The Board would like to schedule interviews for the position and since it is a five-year appointment they would like to meet the candidates in person. Interviews will be scheduled for 30 minutes and will take place on a Tuesday or Wednesday in October, based on which day works better for the candidates. The Board will complete this process in time to appoint the 5<sup>th</sup> member at the October 28, 2020, board meeting.

**Voted to note the record.**

**INVESTMENTS:**

6.) The Board received from PRIT a statement of performance for August 2020. The PRIT Fund returned 2.38% for the month of August.

**Voted to note the record.**

**BANK STATEMENTS:**

7.) The Board is in receipt of the bank statements for August 2020. The Board is also in receipt of the budget for September 2020.

*Note: copies of cashbooks for August 2020 were emailed to each Board member prior to the meeting.*

**Voted to note the record.**

**MONTHLY WARRANTS:**

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

08-05-20	\$1,448,225.42
08-06-20	\$1,500.00
09-01-20	\$2,454.82
09-02-20	\$25,722.80
09-03-20	\$14,071.80
09-04-20	\$118,920.29
09-05-20	\$1,485,931.22

**Voted to approve payments as presented.**

**REQUESTS FOR RETIREMENT:**

9.) The Board approved the application for superannuation retirement from Brenda Olivieri, SBRSD, Paraprofessional. The retirement will be effective 08/31/2020.

The Board approved the application for superannuation retirement from Donna Bercury, Lee, Cafe. The retirement will be effective 08/31/2020.

The Board approved the application for superannuation retirement from Paul Duvall, Lenox, Police Officer. The retirement will be effective 10/01/2020.

The Board approved the application for superannuation retirement from John Cowles, BHRSD, Paraprofessional. The retirement will be effective 10/16/2020.

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The Board approved the application for superannuation retirement from David Lemieux, Williamstown, Police Officer. The retirement will be effective 10/27/2020.

The Board approved the application for superannuation retirement from Jacqueline Lemieux, Williamstown, COA Van Driver. The retirement will be effective 10/27/2020.

The Board approved the application for superannuation retirement from William Walsh, Gt Barrington, Police Chief. The retirement will be effective 12/24/2020.

The Board approved the application for superannuation retirement from Karen Emerson, CBRSD, Paraprofessional. The retirement will be effective 12/18/2020.

**Voted to approve retirements as presented.**

**REQUEST FOR SERVICE BUYBACK:**

10.) William Colvin, a member in Lenox, is eligible to buy back 4 years and 6 months of prior creditable service. If Mr. Colvin pays \$17,592.91 into the annuity savings fund by October 31, 2020, the Board will grant 4 years and 6 months of creditable service.

**Voted to approve buyback as presented.**

**MEMBER TRANSFERS OUT OF SYSTEM:**

11.) The Board approved the notice of transfer of the account of Chris Bouchard, a member in Becket to the Hampshire County Retirement Board. The Berkshire County Retirement Board will accept liability for 16 years and 10 months of creditable service. The amount of the transfer is \$92,871.28.

**Voted to approve transfer as presented.**

**REQUESTS FOR REFUNDS:**

12.) The Board is asked to approve the applications for refunds from the following members: (Pending approval from Dept. of Revenue- child support division)

Robert Zerbato	Lee	\$15,126.53
Dann Rinsma	Stockbridge	\$9,690.73
Patricia Swartz	Clarksburg	\$1,231.75

**Voted to approve refunds as presented.**

**INJURY REPORTS:**

13.) There were no injuries reported in the month of September.

**NEW MEMBER APPLICATIONS:**

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

7105	NATALIE M HOWE	CLARKSBURG	8/1/2020	PARA	1
7108	MATTHEW R FENTON	LEE	7/15/2020	EMT/FF	1
7110	STEPHEN SWEENEY	LANESBORO	8/3/2020	HIGHWAY	1
7112	MARTA L KOWITZ	WILLIAMSTOWN	8/17/2020	LIBRARY	1
7113	JANICE M MORAN	CBRSD	9/17/2020	TITLE 1 TUTOR	1
7114	BRIAN S MILES	Gt Barrington	8/3/2020	LABORER	1
7115	SHELLEY A JENKINS	CBRSD	9/17/2020	PARA	1

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7116	REBECCA L RANDALL	FLORIDA	9/8/2020	PARA	1
7117	ROYANNE K HAMMOND	LENOX	8/28/2020	Police officer	4
7118	Bridget HERMAN BALAWENDER	MGRSD	9/3/2020	SECY	1
7119	PIYAWADEE WASHBURN	MGRSD	9/11/2020	PARA	1
7120	JESSICA S LESURE	MGRSD	9/11/2020	PARA	1
7121	MICHAEL A CLARK	MGRSD	9/11/2020	PARA	1
7122	ABBIGAIL L LUCZYNSKI	MGRSD	9/11/2020	PARA	1
7123	MATTHEW J LENNON	SHEFFIELD	8/24/2020	HIGHWAY SUPT	1
7124	MARYANN SCHUR	SBRSD	8/28/2020	ESP	1
7125	MEAGAN A HOLLAND	MGRSD	9/11/2020	PARA	1
7126	ANDREW T SHANNON	WASHINGTON	9/15/2020	LABORER	1
7127	JANET C TONE	LENOX	8/26/2020	PARA	1
7128	JEANNETTE E COOPER	SBRSD	9/10/2020	SPED ESP	1
7129	EMMA L WHITNEY	MGRSD	9/8/2020	PARA	1
7130	KELLY S PALUBECKIS	LENOX	9/14/2020	SPED PARA	1

**Voted to approve new members as presented.**

**RETIREMENT ALLOWANCE APPROVALS:**

15.) The Board received approval from PERAC to grant a retirement allowance to Craig Willis, Washington, as of 03/20/2020. Annual pension amount is \$8,745.12.

The Board received approval from PERAC to grant a retirement allowance to Jesse Wirtes, MGRSD, as of 03/27/2020. Annual pension amount is \$8,762.40.

The Board received approval from PERAC to grant a retirement allowance to Jeffrey Henault, Peru, as of 04/24/2020. Annual pension amount is \$5,262.48.

The Board received approval from PERAC to grant a retirement allowance to Carol Smiel, MGRSD, as of 06/16/2020. Annual pension amount is \$12,951.36.

The Board received approval from PERAC to grant a retirement allowance to Karen Joyner, Lenox, as of 06/17/2020. Annual pension amount is \$25,012.92.

The Board received approval from PERAC to grant a retirement allowance to Barbara Teggi, BHRSD, as of 06/18/2020. Annual pension amount is \$9,652.68.

The Board received approval from PERAC to grant a retirement allowance to Debra Caffrey, Lenox, as of 06/30/2020. Annual pension amount is \$17,409.48.

The Board received approval from PERAC to grant a retirement allowance to Gordon Roosa, Lenox, as of 06/30/2020. Annual pension amount is \$13,023.48.

The Board received approval from PERAC to grant a retirement allowance to Marjorie Middleton, FRRSD, as of 06/30/2020. Annual pension amount is \$4,036.68.

The Board received approval from PERAC to grant a retirement allowance to Ann Leonesio-Scerbo, MGRSD, as of 06/30/2020. Annual pension amount is \$15,325.92.

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The Board received approval from PERAC to grant a retirement allowance to Sharon Huban, CBRSD, as of 07/06/2020. Annual pension amount is \$10,894.44.

The Board received approval from PERAC to grant a retirement allowance to Albert Saldarini, Lenox, as of 07/21/2020. Annual pension amount is \$30,816.36.

The Board received approval from PERAC to grant a retirement allowance to Melissa McGovern, Clarksburg, as of 09/28/2020. Annual pension amount is \$10,970.28.

**Voted to note the record.**

**3(8)c REIMBURSEMENTS:**

16.) The Board received a letter from PERAC ordering the Berkshire County Retirement Board through the provisions of MGL Sec 3(8)(c) to reimburse the Teacher's Retirement Board \$8,985.27 a year toward the retirement allowance of Linda Johnson. **Recalculated** *We have now passed the \$400,000.00 in annual savings in recalculated 3(8)c payments for a total savings of over \$1.9 million dollars since 2015*

**Voted to note the record.**

**PERAC CORRESPONDENCE:**

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

#27/2020 Regular Compensation and Creditable service status for certain leaves

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

**TRAVEL & EDUCATION APPROVALS:**

18.) The Board is asked to approve the travel expense for Denise Gregoire, Bill Flynn and Sheila LaBarbera to visit with the North Adams Executive Director to demo the PTG scan module September 17, 2020.

**Voted to approve the travel expense as presented.**

**MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE:**

- a.) Copy of Demand letter to Patricia Brown for recoup of excess retirement benefits paid to Garland Cummings.
- b.) Copy of question and answer to Mark Bashara regarding the number of retirees that receive health and life benefits.
- c.) Dana Farber donation acknowledgement for Gerald Doyle, Jr.
- d.) Copy of remaining unused 2020 vacation days for retirement staff. The Board reviewed the remaining vacation time of the staff as of September 2020. The Covid-19 pandemic made it difficult for the staff to use the earned vacation time in 2020. Paul Lisi, Jr made a motion to allow the staff to carry over any unused vacation time until June 30, 2021. Second by Mark Bashara. **Unanimous.** Mike Ovitt made a motion to allow the staff to purchase back up to two weeks of unused vacation time by December 31, 2020, second by Karen Williams, **Unanimous.**

The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 28, 2020 at 9:00am.

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**Voted to adjourn at 10:22 am.**

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:



\_\_\_\_\_  
Sheila LaBarbera, Executive Director

APPROVED BY:



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Michael Ovitt, Chairman



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Mark Bashara, Elected Member



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Karen Williams, Elected Member

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Paul A. Lisi, Jr., Advisory Council Member