

Berkshire County Retirement Board Meeting
February 23, 2022

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, Paul A. Lisi, Jr., Advisory Board Member, Mark Bashara, Elected Member. Karen Williams, Elected Member and Beth Matson Appointed member participated remotely. A roll call vote was taken to open the meeting. The vote was unanimous.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- 1.) Members of the public had 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 connected remotely.

There was a motion made by Paul Lisi to go into executive session under Purpose # 7 of the open meeting law, to comply with the statute exempting confidential information from public disclosure. The motion was seconded by Mark Bashara. A roll call vote was taken to enter into Executive Session. The vote was unanimous.

The Board entered executive session @ 9:01 am. The Board remained in executive session to consider item #2 and item #3

The Board returned to regular session at 9:33am.

LEGAL UPDATE:

- 4.) Board counsel will update the Board on any outstanding legal issues before the Berkshire County Retirement Board. There were no legal updates for the month of February.

- 5.) The Board will review and approve the 2021 Annual Statement of the Berkshire County Retirement Board as of December 31, 2021.

Sheila LaBarbera noted that the annual statement is completed for the 2021 Berkshire County Retirement System. The system ended December 31, 2021 with total assets of \$358 million. Paul Lisi commented that this is impressive and you have all done a good job and completed this so quickly for the previous year.

Paul Lisi made a motion to accept the annual Statement of the Financial Condition of the Berkshire County Retirement System for 2021. Second Mark Bashara

A roll call vote was taken, and the vote was unanimous.

- 6.) The Board will discuss the process of performance evaluations and staff compensation.

Michael Ovitt: The Board will discuss the process of performance evaluation in staff.

Paul Lisi: You were supposed to reach out to Tom Gibson and see what, if he could come up with some kind of a template.

Michael Ovitt: I would like to see what we would try to gather from everyone.

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Sheila LaBarbera: Well, why don't we do this today? Why don't we just set forth the plan and delegate what you want from me, what you want from the board, how you want to begin to put this process together, then that way there, we have clear, concrete plan going forward of what information they want to bring forward?

Mark Bashara: I would take that if, Mike, you get something from Tom. We can look at that and then add or adjust it and we look at it and say this covers everything.

Michael Ovitt: Last month, we talked about what everyone else does and the copies of other evaluations. I didn't get anything.

Sheila LaBarbera: That's what I'm saying, what's the plan?

Mark Bashara: I think Beth had mentioned how they did it before?

Beth Matson: I thought you weren't interested to have two of us that meet with the administrator then make a recommendation.

Mark Bashara: To me the simplest thing is what we talked about last time. Was for Sheila to get all the comments from Tom, and then I think Karen mentioned what we originally said Mike was going to do it.

Paul Lisi: We need to starting plan, and I know that you want some direction. Mike, I don't know if it's easy for you, but somebody should reach out to Tom and say, can you just present to us what you have for boilerplate kind of reviews. Once you receive those, if you can, send them out to all of the Board members, and prior to the March Board meeting, we all review them and then we can share our thoughts and suggestions then. That way in March we can at least talk about it and draft a version, and then in April, we review it and then we can put it in place and start talking about logistics from there. But the important part is to create it. Unfortunately, 2022 is going to be still one of these very messed up years for this process, but I think that if we do it properly, over the course of 2022, 2023 will be a proper procedure will be in place, which is something I believe you're all looking for and we should have. It's a bit settling to people when you have procedures in place and know what you're being evaluated on. So, if we can start getting that stuff from Tom, deliver it, and review it come March.

Mark Bashara: I'm committed to making sure that we move it forward. So, I think, if we keep moving this forward, 2022 might not be smooth, but I think Sheila will also know where she stands, what's required of her, and we can wrap this up, if we keep moving. So I agree, we should get the materials from Tom and review them before the March meeting, so we can discuss it and get a draft. And then in April we can vote on it unless we needed more discussion. We could have something substantial, even if we need another month or so, we have enough time.

Michael Ovitt: Right and this is a little different of a relationship because we're not working in the office and on the day to day with her.

Paul Lisi: Depending on what Tom has, let him respond back to us, because it is a more complex relationship, because, in this review, I feel there should be input from Tom Gibson involved because he does have more of a handle working with the executive director. We work on a monthly basis, so to say, with a direct executive director, but he will guide and say, this is what I feel, should be in the review. We may not know what some of that stuff even means, but it gives us the time over March to ask questions or prepare questions for our March meeting, and then, yeah, I have to agree with Mark. I think we can get something in place. I don't think it's fair to an employee or employees to actively do it for 2022 for the fact that employees are by law, entitled to know what they're being reviewed on. And, we get it April, May, so we don't have a fair year of stuff, but we got an idea, of what we're going to

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use in 2022. We can then vote to make it not be part of the personnel file and say this is what the board is created and adopted. And this is just dry run for 2022, but understand, this is what we've adopted in 2022. In 2023, this review will then become part of a personnel file.
Mark Bashara: I think we all need to remember, too, that even once we get everything together, we might get into it and a year from now, two years from now we might say we never even thought about this, and we can adjust it, or you might even have a suggestion. So while it's important that we get something good down, there's nothing saying that it won't evolve over the years and fine tune it, so we're not just locked into that. We may even want to remove something. We could say, this has really been irrelevant. I think we have a lot of flexibility. I think the most important thing is that we act on it, get it going, and so it gives peace of mind.

Paul Lisi: And I am committed to, personally, having something in place by the end of 2022. If at least we have a finalized version of something by the end of 2022, with some expectations going forward. We create a dry run for 2022 and in 2023, we see how that works. And it will be a fluid process. An employee review for yourself will be different than ones that are done for your employees. Personally, I don't want to even be involved in that and I don't think creating a procedure for what you do with your employees is anything that I want to be involved in. because it doesn't make any sense. There is standard boilerplate stuff out there and you know your area well enough. I don't think you need anyone to micromanage anything. But I think we could collectively do this and get an end result where everybody's just settled and saying, OK, now we're all on the same page.

Michael Ovitt: What did you mean when you referenced an HR law?

Paul Lisi: In HR, a person should know what they're being reviewed on. You can't just say they are going to get a review. They should know what they are being reviewed on so everyone has the same expectations.

Mark Bashara: I think the first step here though, is for Mike to get a hold of Tom and tell him what we are looking for. The important thing is that we get it with enough time to review before the next meeting. We should have at least two weeks to review it before the March meeting. I just think we need it soon. Because now we're getting into July or August, and we have to worry about people being away on vacation and then we're right back to where we didn't want to be. So is that okay?

Michael Ovitt: Yeah, okay. I will get in touch with Tom. But are there any other systems that you've seen?

Mark Bashara: Beth, what about where you are?

Beth Matson: I am not aware of an evaluation here, but I haven't looked. I do know that I can certainly get one from Framingham.

Mark Bashara: Yeah, I mean, I guess it wouldn't hurt us to see that.

Beth Matson: It's relatable.

Mark Bashara: Would you just send that to Mike?

Michael Ovitt: Yeah, I can gather them up and then distribute them.

Beth Matson: Ok.

Mark Bashara: That's a starting point.

Paul Lisi: So, there is two parts to this and I definitely 100% agree with that. I don't think we can talk about Part B before we get Part A in place. Now, Part B is going to be very difficult. I'm not comfortable even talking about that yet, because I just haven't had enough time to even look at an evaluation like that.

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Mark Bashara: Let's take one step at a time. Once we get the first part figured out then obviously, we're going to cover that because the whole process.

Paul Lisi: But I will say this to you, as myself, one fifth of the board. I will personally make a commitment to do everything I can. I know Mark and Mike and everybody else, Karen, Beth will, but there will be something in place with direction. I hope. That is my goal, personally, by the end of 2022 we have something.

Mark Bashara: We've made that clear. I think we all definitely are on board. That's why Mike is going to do that.

Michael Ovitt: So in your travels submit what is in place now for a personnel policy.

Michael Ovitt requested that Item o.) PTG update be removed from the consent agenda for discussion.

A roll call vote was taken, and the vote was unanimous to remove from consent agenda.

Paul Lisi: I'll make a motion to approve the consent agenda items A through N, with the removal of item O to be talked about later. Mark Bashara: I will second the motion as read.

A roll call vote was taken, and the vote was unanimous to approve consent agenda.

Consent Agenda Detail:

MINUTES:

a.) The Board minutes of the regular and executive session meetings held January 26, 2022, to be signed and approved.

Minutes provided as an attachment to email

INVESTMENTS:

b.) The Board received from PRIT a statement of performance for January 2022. The PRIT Fund returned -2.72% for the month of January. *The redemption for the month of March will include an additional \$500,000 to cover costs of 3(8)c payables.*

PRIT Investment report provided by email

BANK STATEMENTS:

c.) The Board received the bank statements for January 2022 and the budget for February 2022. Cash books for December 2021 and January 2022 were provided by email

MONTHLY WARRANTS:

d.) The Board approved payment vouchers:

02-01-2022	\$2,572.25
02-02-2022	\$68,651.23
02-03-2022	\$81,590.79
02-04-2022	\$575.44
02-05-2022	\$381,260.54
02-06-2022	\$18,522.84
02-07-2022	\$145,110.29

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REQUESTS FOR RETIREMENT:

e.) The Board approved the application for superannuation retirement from Cynthia Biasin-Burton, Lee, Paraprofessional. The retirement will be effective 3/16/22.

MEMBER TRANSFERS OUT OF SYSTEM:

f.) The Board approved the notice of transfer of the account of Christopher Marsden, a member in Stockbridge to State Retirement Board. The Berkshire County Retirement Board will accept liability for 11 years of creditable service. The amount of the transfer is \$60,652.78.

The Board approved the notice of transfer of the account of Hunter Woodbury, a member in MGRSD to State Retirement Board. The Berkshire County Retirement Board will accept liability for 1 year and 6 months of creditable service. The amount of the transfer is \$2,838.45.

The Board approved the notice of transfer of the account of Kenneth Warren, a member in Berkshire County to Pittsfield Retirement Board. The Berkshire County Retirement Board will accept liability for 4 years of creditable service. The amount of the transfer is \$5,160.00.

The Board approved the notice of transfer of the account of Andrew Shannon, a member in Washington to Hampden County Retirement Board. The Berkshire County Retirement Board will accept liability for 10 months of creditable service. The amount of the transfer is \$3,460.34.

REQUEST FOR SERVICE BUYBACK:

g.) There are no service buyback requests for the month of February.

REQUESTS FOR REFUNDS:

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

Michael Buono	MGRSD	\$3,116.76
Katie Donovan	Lee	\$4,102.91
Matthew Drury	Lee	\$9,807.00
James Fox	Hinsdale	\$9,111.77
Donald Frigon-Lawrence	BHRSD	\$5,791.54
Joshua Herlihy	Lee	\$24,425.51
Jacquelyn Schultz	SBRSD	\$1,410.02
Haylie Stockley	Becket	\$8,130.47
Michael Jackson	Lenox	\$141,649.95

INJURY REPORTS:

i.) There were no injuries reported in February

NEW MEMBER APPLICATIONS:

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

7402 Katelyn Hyde BCRHA 1/3/2022 Housing Search Manager

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7403	Traci Mara	CBRSD	2/3/2022	Custodian	1
7404	Clarissa Mitchell	Hinsdale	1/3/2022	Admin Asst.	1
7405	Makayla Zonfrilli	Lanesborough	1/3/2022	Town Secretary	1
7406	Lisa Richards	Great Barrington	12/28/2022	Admin Asst.	1
7407	Katherine Fletcher	Lee	1/24/2022	Tobacco Program Coordinator	1
7408	Lukas Horn	West Stockbridge	1/3/2022	Police Officer	4
7409	Bruce Huber	Lenox	1/24/2022	Maintenance	1
7410	Rachel Cannon	Lee (School)	1/24/2022	Para	1
7411	Craig Colantoni	New Marlborough	1/19/2022	Equipment Operator	1
7412	Carrie Mulcahy	Lee (School)	1/31/2022	School Secretary	1
7413	Jake Newton Sr.	Sheffield	12/2/2021	Police Officer	4
7414	Noah Yurfest	MGRSD	1/10/2022	Para	1
7415	Alexandra Koza	CBRSD	1/20/2022	Para	1
7416	Michele DeRosier	Clarksburg	1/3/2022	Admin Asst.	1
7417	Timothy Goodchild	Lee (Town)	12/23/2021	Police Officer	4
7418	Janey Beardsley	Sandisfield	2/7/2022	Admin Asst.	1

RETIREMENT ALLOWANCE APPROVALS:

k.) The Board received approval from PERAC to grant a retirement allowance to Bruce Turner, Egremont, as of 12/31/2021. Annual pension amount is \$39,125.40.

The Board received approval from PERAC to grant a retirement allowance to Deborah Merry, Dalton, as of 01/01/2022. Annual pension amount is \$34,515.36.

3(8)c REIMBURSEMENTS:

l.) The Board received a letter from PERAC ordering the Easthampton Retirement Board through the provisions of MGL Sec 3(8)(c) to reimburse the Berkshire County Retirement Board \$3,428.86 a year toward the retirement allowance of Bruce Turner.

The Board received a letter from PERAC ordering the Worcester Regional Retirement Board through the provisions of MGL Sec 3(8)(c) to reimburse the Berkshire County Retirement Board \$3,560.69 a year toward the retirement allowance of Bruce Turner.

PERAC CORRESPONDENCE:

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

#8/2022 Actuarial Data

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

TRAVEL & EDUCATION APPROVALS:

n.) There are no travel or educational reimbursement requests for February.

MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE:

- o.) -Signatures for Bank account access and authority
- Melanson exit letter for 12/31/2020 audit completed 10/21/2021, no findings

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MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE:

o.) PTG deduction module implementation update:

Submitted update of all payroll contacts for each unit to PTG

Completed first demo training on 2/16/2022

PTG programmers are setting up our demo test site

Next step will be scheduled when test site is completed

Sheila LaBarbera: For the next meeting, I will just list this as a discussion item.

Michael Ovitt: So we paying for this? Do we have software installed? Where are we at with it?

Sheila LaBarbera: All of our member's contract information was submitted into PTG. We completed our first training on February 16. PTG showed us how the actual process is going to work. The demo included a file that didn't work and included a file that did work. The process right now is setting up our demo test site. The next step will be scheduled when that test site is completed. I have a presentation that we wanted to do with our treasures. The process with the treasurer will include reaching out to the payroll contact person to get some information about payroll then we set up the payroll sites. We've decided that we're going to be grouping them by payroll systems. The first two groups to go will be Great Barrington and Williamstown because they use Munis and Munis is already programmed for PTG. So we're hoping that the process with those first two would be very easy and they are the two largest units that we have. So it would be nice to get them up and running and working, they're very excited about it and I have to say that many of the treasures that we've spoken to are really excited about this change.

Michael Ovitt: Are all of the treasures aware of it?

Sheila LaBarbera: All of the treasures have been notified.

Karen T. Williams: We got a letter.

Sheila LaBarbera: Some people have called and followed up. Some people that we've spoken to are kind of apprehensive. We told everybody that we're going to provide you with all of the training that you need, this is not an option before the fourth quarter everybody's going to be using the new system.

Michael Ovitt: Our target implementation is the end of October?

Sheila LaBarbera: By the time we close at the end of the year, everybody will be on it.

Michael Ovitt: So, is there still a manual option? If all else fails?

Sheila LaBarbera: I wouldn't call it a manual option. What it would be, is a template.

Michael Ovitt: So they would have to input their information and upload it.

Sheila LaBarbera: And the template is one that is once it's set up, your template is always there. And then you just be responsible for it.

Michael Ovitt: So backing up, do we have it installed yet?

Sheila LaBarbera: We don't we don't pay for it until the end of the year. We pay for it in September when we are billed.

Karen T. Williams: Did all three of you participate in a demo training?

Sheila LaBarbera: Yes

Karen T. Williams: Ok, I just was curious. And do you have any idea how many units use harpers payroll?

Sheila LaBarbera: I think there are seven, Karen. I don't know the exact number because some people are changing. I think we added Lee. And I think we're going to be adding

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Lanesborough, but I'm not positive. So, there's a few more that were not on the original list that we have to add.

Michael Ovitt: So PTG is has the format for Munis, Softright, for Harper's? For all the big ones?

Sheila LaBarbera: Yes. They have a process, I've spoken to, both of the payroll companies, both Universal and Adirondack that share a number of our units and they're more than willing I talked to Adirondack the other day. She said just send it and they were happy to do it.

Michael Ovitt: Is there a liability for the town for monetary obligations for these upgrades, are we responsible?

Sheila LaBarbera: No, not that I'm aware of.

Michael Ovitt: So my software company has to do a change to this. Is PTG providing that with the software company?

Sheila LaBarbera: I believe that they have dealt with most of the payroll companies that you can come up with. They did Essex, and Middlesex. Middlesex has like 70 something.

Paul Lisi: I would say that most of the software companies, now, that cities and towns use this. Most of these areas have Mass teachers, retirement systems and it's the same export.

Sheila LaBarbera: And the other thing is PTG has 90 retirement boards.

Michael Ovitt: I mean most of our regional towns don't have schools.

Paul Lisi: Yes, they do.

Michael Ovitt: The schools do?

Paul Lisi: I know they use Softright. The report is built right in.

Sheila LaBarbera: I don't think there's any obstacle at this point that they can't overcome. The only costs there might be is Adirondack, if they have to do a manual template or something like that, its \$10. So they might have a cost for their payroll company to do the processing. But other than that, it's there's no computer upgrade or anything like that because if you don't have it, you're just going to do a template.

Michael Ovitt: What else needs to be done on a test site?

Sheila LaBarbera: They're creating it. The programmers have to create it uniquely.

Michael Ovitt: So the demo is different?

Sheila LaBarbera: Yes, it is basically a just a demo.

Michael Ovitt: So this will be just our test site?

Sheila LaBarbera: Correct.

Michael Ovitt: And the towns would just upload it?

Sheila LaBarbera: I was actually surprised that really how simple it is to do this. And for those that have group payrolls and have good up to date information literally, it's a minute.

Michael Ovitt: Is it an accounting setup or is it the file?

Sheila LaBarbera: Just like an ACH.

Michael Ovitt: Are you changing the accounting numbers for payroll?

Sheila LaBarbera: They're doing the payroll, they change everything.

Michael Ovitt: So what account was previously paid from may not be used again?

Sheila LaBarbera: If you're using a template, then you're going to be changing that by hand. If you're creating a file, the items come from the payroll, so whatever you have in your file is what's going to go out.

Michael Ovitt: Do you have an example? I'm just curious, what information is coming forward? So it would be the only time pay details, regular compensation, you know, multiple positions, that kind of stuff

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Paul Lisi: Yes. And correct me if I'm wrong, but it's all of the information on the report we send to you each month right now in an excel. Just a little bit more detail on it.

Sheila LaBarbera: It's everything that you would have in your payroll only this time you get errors and warnings. Some of them will be critical, but some of them are just warnings.

You're going to have to fix. Once you generate your file that you're going to send to us, it performs like a proof of that file, and you're going to get critical errors, and you're going to just get warnings. Now they have to realize that when you get your files, before you send it to us, you're fixing the file, they're not fixing your payroll. That's what the treasurers will have to learn. It's two steps now. To fix our file, also fix your payroll, because if you don't fix payroll, every month you will have the same issues.

Michael Ovitt: So, Paul, my question to you. I mean, previously, we had that no accounts, just retirement wages and gross wages.

Paul Lisi: Why would you want account numbers? You wouldn't want account numbers.

Michael Ovitt: Pensionable, non-pensionable, balancing?

Paul Lisi: Those are set up set up in your payroll system.

Michael Ovitt: That's what's questionable then.

Sheila LaBarbera: So we are going to be closing that gap.

Michael Ovitt: We run into deductions and refund errors often.

Sheila LaBarbera: Yes, quite often.

Michael Ovitt: So does this affect the errors from an accounting standpoint?

Sheila LaBarbera: Yes, it is. Because if your deductions don't match the wages you are going to get an error, so you can't send it that way unless you fix it first. You can override it because remember, there's issues where somebody may need a refund or a deduction of additional payment for deduction. So you can override it and you have a memo so that we know exactly what it is before you send it.

Mark Bashara: So it will force their hand to take care of it? Instead of relying on you to take care of it.

Paul Lisi: It's going to force payroll processor to be more conscious of what they are inputting and setting up codes. that's what they are supposed to do anyway.

Sheila LaBarbera: Like now we have a problem with some towns that forget what codes they use, so they just make up a new one. They can't do that anymore. So there's only a certain number of codes that are going to be approved so if you have an unapproved, you're trying to pay, somebody bonus of some sort or whatever, it's not even going to come through. I can't say 100%, but it's going to fix about 95%. As soon as we have the demo available, I'll show you. I can put it right up on the screen and you guys can see it in a meeting if you want.

The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 30, 2022 at
9:00am.

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A motion was made by Paul Lisi to adjourn the meeting at 9:53am, Mark Bashara, second.
A roll call vote was taken, and the vote was unanimous.

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