

Berkshire County Retirement Board Meeting  
March 31, 2021

**The meeting of the Berkshire County Retirement Board was called to order at 9:04 A.M. in the Berkshire County Retirement Office, located at 29 Dunham Mall, Pittsfield, MA. Present at the meeting were; Michael Ovitt, Chairman, Mark Bashara, Elected Member, Beth Matson Appointed member and Karen Williams, Elected Member. Participating by video conference was Paul A. Lisi, Jr., Advisory Board Member. A roll call vote was taken to open the meeting. The vote was unanimous.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

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

**MINUTES:**

1.) The Board minutes of the regular board meeting held February 24, 2021, were signed and approved. **A roll call vote to approve the minutes and the vote was unanimous.**

The Board minutes of the executive session held February 24, 2021, were discussed and several Board members indicated they would like to propose edits to the minutes. The proposed edits will be sent to the director for inclusion in the minutes then the amended minutes will be presented for approval at the April meeting. A motion was made by Paul Lisi, Jr. to table second by Beth Matson, minutes were tabled pending edits from Board members. **A roll call vote to table the minutes and the vote was unanimous.**

The Board minutes of the March 24, 2021, board meeting were tabled. The Board asked that the March 24, 2021, board meeting minutes be prepared separately as a regular session and an executive session. Interview questions and answers will be part of the executive session minutes. The minutes will be separated and presented at the April meeting for approval. A motion was made by Paul Lisi to table second by Mark Bashara. **A roll call vote to table the minutes and the vote was unanimous.**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

2.) The Board selected two finalists for the job opening in the retirement office and set a date for the final interviews. The two finalist were Jill Hersey and Melanie Medon. The Board set a date of Tuesday, April 13, 2021 at 9am for the final interviews. The final interviews will be in person. The Executive Director will contact the candidates regarding the date and time of the final interview.

3.) The Board reviewed the proposal from Access Plus for fiber optic internet and phone service. Access Plus provider had visited the office and reviewed our current service and hardware. They received permission from our landlord to install the necessary equipment to provide the fiber optic service to our office. The proposal lowers our monthly expenses and does require a 24-month commitment. It is estimated to take about 3 weeks to convert to the fiber optic service and we will not be billed by Access Plus until they are able to provide service for both internet and phone. A motion was made by Mark Bashara and second by Karen Williams to accept the proposal from Access Plus.

**A roll call vote to approve the proposal for the fiber optic services from Access Plus and the vote was Unanimous.**

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*\*During the discussion of items #3 and #4 Paul Lisi was disconnected from remote participation, he reconnected by phone but the Spectrum service went out and he signed out at 9:59am and was not able to reconnect to the meeting. \**

4.) The Board reviewed the requests for a reclassification from a group 1 to group 4 for the Town of Lee, Fire, Rescue and EMS employees. After consideration and discussion of the reclassification the Board determined they would send the request to legal counsel for consideration before reclassifying any of the employees to a group 4. Information relevant to the request such as job descriptions would be gathered and sent to legal counsel for review. A motion was made by Mark Bashara to forward the request to legal counsel for an opinion second by Beth Matson.

**A roll call vote** was taken to request a legal opinion on the reclassification request, and the vote was unanimous.

**INVESTMENTS:**

5.) The Board received from PRIT a statement of performance for February 2021. The PRIT Fund returned 1.17% for the month of February.

**A roll call vote** to note the record and the vote was **Unanimous**

**BANK STATEMENTS:**

6.) The Board is in receipt of the bank statements for February 2021. The Board is also in receipt of the budget for March 2021 and a cash flow estimate for 2021. The Board discussed the cash flow estimate and the need to transfer assessments to PRIT. It was determined that the estimated monthly cash transfer from PRIT would be 1.2 million. We will notify PRIT of the transfer and amend our monthly maintenance balance to 1.2 million. We will monitor our monthly expenses and make any adjustments as needed.

*Note: copies of cashbooks for February 2021 were emailed to each Board member prior to the meeting.*

**A roll call vote** to note the record and the vote was **Unanimous**

**MONTHLY WARRANTS:**

7.) The Board approved payment vouchers:

03-01-21	\$1,430.46
03-02-21	\$19,319.55
03-03-21	\$369,830.79
03-04-21	\$65,746.58
03-05-21	\$1,559,705.73

**A roll call vote** to approve payments and the vote was **Unanimous**

**REQUESTS FOR RETIREMENT:**

8.) The Board approved the application for superannuation retirement from Jill Moncecchi, Florida, cafeteria. The retirement will be effective 02/09/2021.

The Board approved the application for superannuation retirement from Cathleen Bourquard, BHRSD, A/P clerk. The retirement will be effective 04/01/2021.

The Board approved the application for superannuation retirement from Mary Alarie, Lee, paraprofessional. The retirement will be effective 05/10/2021.

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The Board approved the application for superannuation retirement from Kathleen Griffin, Lee, paraprofessional. The retirement will be effective 06/16/2021.

The Board approved the application for superannuation retirement from Deborah Wetherell, CBRSD, Admin Asst. The retirement will be effective 06/18/2021.

The Board approved the application for superannuation retirement from Nancy Banach, BHRSD, paraprofessional. The retirement will be effective 06/30/2021.

The Board approved the application for superannuation retirement from Ellin Omelenchuck, Lenox, Registrar. The retirement will be effective 06/30/2021.

The Board approved the application for superannuation retirement from Zoe Marinelli, SBRSD, cafeteria. The retirement will be effective 06/30/2021.

**A roll call vote to approve retirements and the vote was Unanimous**

**MEMBER TRANSFERS OUT OF SYSTEM:**

9.) There are no requests for transfers in the month of March.

**REQUEST FOR SERVICE BUYBACK:**

10.) Christopher Brittain, a member in Lee, is eligible to buy back 3 months of prior creditable service. If Mr. Brittain pays \$1,425.99 into the annuity savings fund by April 30, 2021, the Board will grant 3 months of creditable service.

Carmelo Guarda, a member in Egremont, is eligible to buy back 3 years and 11 months of prior creditable service. If Mr. Guarda pays \$11,402.69 into the annuity savings fund by April 30, 2021, the Board will grant 3 years and 11 months of creditable service.

Sarah Mead, a member in BHRSD, is eligible to buy back 10 months of prior creditable service. If Ms. Mead pays \$3,287.58 into the annuity savings fund by April 30, 2021, the Board will grant 10 months of creditable service.

**A roll call vote to approve the buybacks as presented and the vote was Unanimous**

Laurel Carsell, a member in North Adams, requested a buyback of prior service as a music teacher with CBRSD. The service buyback requested is for employment as a part time music teacher (20%). The Retirement Board will not accept liability for service performed as a teacher, the request should be made to the Teacher's retirement System.

**A roll call vote to Deny liability for the requested buyback as presented and the vote was Unanimous**

**REQUESTS FOR REFUNDS:**

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

Erik Jangrow	CBRSD	\$4,665.76
Jarrett Mello	Lee	\$11,141.83
Richard Neals	Lee	\$41,859.71
Janet Zappula	Florida	\$8,079.28

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**A roll call vote to approve refunds and the vote was Unanimous**

**INJURY REPORTS:**

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

**NEW MEMBER APPLICATIONS:**

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

7215	Jennifer Weber	Lanesboro	2/15/2021	ambulance Dir	1
7216	Adina Friedman	Lenox	2/18/2021	paraprofessional	1
7217	Jennifer James	Williamstown	2/10/2021	research director	1
7218	Michael Hayes	Williamstown	2/22/2021	highway dept.	1
7219	Peter Newton	Lee	3/8/2021	Truck driver/ laborer	1
7220	Joseph Carlotto	Lee	3/8/2021	mechanic	1
7221	Colin Benner	Lenox	3/13/2021	Police officer	4
7222	Nicole Woodard	Dalton Fire Dist.	3/8/2021	fire fighter	4
7223	Dylan Buffoni	BHRSD	3/8/2021	custodian	1
7187	Casey Blair	Lenox	10/20/2020	Laborer Water dept.	1
7224	Trezinha Hyvernaud	BHRSD	3/25/2021	Paraprofessional	1
7194	Steven Schultze	FRRSD	12/21/2020	custodian	1

**A roll call vote to approve new members and the vote was Unanimous**

**RETIREMENT ALLOWANCE APPROVALS:**

14.) There are no retirement allowance approvals for the month of March.

**3(8)c REIMBURSEMENTS:**

15.) 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 \$5,202.49 a year toward the retirement allowance of Diane Carroll. **recalculation**

**A roll call vote to note the record and the vote was Unanimous**

**PERAC CORRESPONDENCE:**

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

- #11/2021 Benefit calculations to Prosper
- #12/2021 Tobacco Company List
- #13/2021 2020 Annual Statement of earned income (91A)

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

**TRAVEL & EDUCATION APPROVALS:**

17.) There are no travel requests for the month of March.

**MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE:**

- a.) Update on signature cards for Pittsfield Cooperative Bank
- b.) PRIM announcement of Paul Todisco's March 2021 retirement

The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 28, 2021 at 9:00am.

**A roll call vote to adjourn at 11:00pm was Unanimous**

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RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

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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

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