

Berkshire County Retirement Board Meeting
September 24, 2025

The meeting of the Berkshire County Retirement Board was called to order at 1:00pm, 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 and Ericka Oleson, Advisory Board member and William S. Pignatelli, 5th member appointed.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- 1.) Members of the public have the opportunity to address the Retirement Board. There were no public comments. Michael Ovitt: Members of the public have the opportunity to address the retirement board. Seeing none, I would like to congratulate Smitty and welcome him to his first board meeting.

Consent Agenda Detail:

MINUTES:

- a.) The Board minutes of the regular meeting held August 27, 2025 were signed and approved.

Minutes provided as an attachment to email

INVESTMENTS:

- b.) The Board received from PRIT a statement of performance for August 2025. The PRIT Fund returned 1.98% for the month of August.

BANK STATEMENTS:

- c.) The Board received the bank statements for August 2025 and the budget for Sept 2025. *Cash Books for August were sent to Board by email.*

MONTHLY WARRANTS:

- d.) The Board approved payment vouchers:

09-01-25	\$101,571.47
09-02-25	\$66,026.38
09-03-25	\$21,353.83
09-04-25	\$12,600.43
09-05-25	\$1,873,523.78
09-06-25	\$956.58
09-07-25	\$10,801.50

REQUESTS FOR RETIREMENT:

- e.) The Board approved the application for a 12(A) Member Survivor Allowance for Lindsay Horrigan (TJ Horrigan, Alford, Highway Supt). The retirement will be effective 08/01/2025.

The Board approved the application for superannuation retirement from Charles Durfee, Lanesboro, Director Highway. The retirement will be effective 10/17/2025.

The Board approved the application for superannuation retirement from Karen Bossio, CBRSD, Paraprofessional. The retirement will be effective 09/19/2025.

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MEMBER TRANSFERS OUT OF SYSTEM:

f.) The Board approved the notice of transfer of the account of Scott Bergeron, a member in Otis, to the Hampden County Retirement Board. The Berkshire County Retirement Board will accept 1 year and 4 months of creditable service. The amount of the transfer is \$8,812.34.

The Board approved the notice of transfer of the account of Sophia Bletsos, a member in GB, to the Hampden County Retirement Board. The Berkshire County Retirement Board will accept 3 years of creditable service. The amount of the transfer is \$22,508.20.

The Board approved the notice of transfer of the account of Carol Jammalo, a member in MGRSD, to the Adams Retirement Board. The Berkshire County Retirement Board will accept 17 years and 7 months of creditable service. The amount of the transfer is \$34,705.84.

REQUEST FOR SERVICE BUYBACK:

g.) Mark Brouillette, a member in Becket, is eligible to buy back 1 year and 3 months of reserve military service through Chapter 178 of the Acts of 2024, veteran's buyback. If Mr. Brouillette pays \$6,583.20 into the annuity savings fund, the Board will grant 1 year and 3 months of creditable service.

Paul Hernandez, a member in Stockbridge, is eligible to buy back 4 years of military service through Chapter 178 of the Acts of 2024, veteran's buyback. If Mr. Hernandez pays \$24,918.40 into the annuity savings fund, the Board will grant 4 years of creditable service.

Heather Hunt, a member in Dalton, is eligible to buy back 6 months of prior creditable service. If Mrs. Hunt pays \$4,890.12 into the annuity savings fund by October 30, 2025, the board will grant 6 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)

Joseph Haskell Jr.	Becket	\$956.58(Partial)
Charlotte Rand	BHRSD	\$3455.02
Dorin Middlebrook	Dalton	\$36,084.94
Justin McCarthy	MGRSD	\$24,152.99
Stephen Hassmer	Lee	\$316.21
Mary Beth Fennelly	Lee	\$6,748.34
Gregory Elser	Dalton	\$6,371.14
Nancy Crandell	Otis	\$1,176.75
Thomas Castagna	CBRSD	\$20,102.36
Elizabeth Baisch	MGRSD	\$3,949.02

INJURY REPORTS:

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

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NEW MEMBER APPLICATIONS:

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

8165	Tammy L Daignault	Dalton	8/18/2025	Assessor Clerk	1
8166	Cora L Hunter	CBRSD	8/25/2025	Paraprofessional	1
8167	Denise J Haywood	CBRSD	8/25/2025	Paraprofessional	1
8168	Markell E Shea	Clarksburg	8/25/2025	TA Assistant	1
8169	Trevor C Hoff	Egremont	8/19/2025	Firefighter/EMT	4
8170	Danielle K Townend	CBRSD	8/25/2025	Title I Tutor	1
8171	Paul M Hernandez	Stockbridge	8/13/2025	Firefighter/EMT	4
8172	Michael J Meagher	Stockbridge	8/18/2025	Deputy Fire Chief of Emergency Op.	4
8173	Kathleen A Gamache	Clarksburg	8/11/2025	Administrative Assistant	1
8174	Sandra Antunes	BHRSD	8/25/2025	Paraprofessional-BSIP Stipend	1
8175	Stacy A Bolte	Clarksburg	9/2/2025	Café Assistant	1
8176	Amity D Winters	BHRSD	8/25/2025	Paraprofessional	1
8177	Shannon M Adams	Lenox	8/28/2025	Paraprofessional	1
8178	Michael D Grillo	Sandisfield	8/4/2025	Fire Chief/EMT Admin	4
8179	Ariyana V Jackson	SBRSD	8/25/2025	ESP-Student Services	1
8180	Anne-Marie Bona	Williamstown	8/25/2025	Admin. Assistant	1
8181	Sopie E DiGrigoli	Lenox	8/25/2025	Paraprofessional	1
8182	Daryl A Gagne	Lanesborough	8/25/2025	EMT	1
8183	Kimberly Hunt	BHRSD	8/25/2025	Paraprofessional	1
8184	Cindy Keiderling	Lee	9/2/2025	Paraprofessional	1
8185	Nicole Robarge	SBRSD	9/8/2025	ESP	1
8186	David Dean	Hinsdale	9/15/2025	DPW Laborer	1
8187	Mark Goerlach	Williamstown	9/2/2025	Heavy Equipment Operator	1
8188	Ana Carpenter	Lenox	8/26/2025	Paraprofessional	1
8189	Patrick Colvin	Lenox	8/26/2025	Permanent Sub/Athletic Director	1
8190	Ellie Bailey	Lenox	8/26/2025	Paraprofessional	1
8191	Colton LaCross	CBRSD	9/8/2025	Custodian	1
8192	Daniel Reed	Egremont	9/9/2025	Transit Station Attendant	1
8193	Jamine Douillard	SBRSD	9/15/2025	Paraprofessional	1
8194	Jessica Cramer	Florida	9/15/2025	Teachers Assistant	1
8195	Julie Storti	BHRSD	9/22/2025	Admin Assistant	1
8196	Tymell Coy	BHRSD	9/12/2025	Food Service Helper	1
8197	Ryan Narey	MGRSD	8/28/2025	Paraprofessional	1
8198	Tammy Smith	MGRSD	9/2/2025	Cafeteria Assistant	1
8199	Lea Sanchez Madrigal	MGRSD	8/25/2025	Paraprofessional	1
8200	Suzanne Schryer	MGRSD	8/25/2025	Paraprofessional	1
8201	Wonjara Campbell	MGRSD	8/25/2025	Paraprofessional	1
8202	Nicole DiSimoni	BCRHA	9/3/2025	Housing Counselor	1
8203	Ryan Santiago	Gt. Barrington	9/9/2025	Driver	1
8204	Jennifer Bailey	CBRSD	9/22/2025	Paraprofessional	1
8205	Michael Naventi	CBRSD	9/15/2025	Custodian	1
8206	Erin Redd	CBRSD	9/29/2025	Paraprofessional	1
8207	Angela Mullen	Florida	8/27/2025	Teachers Assistant	1
8208	Brittany Fields	Florida	9/9/2025	Teachers Assistant	1

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PERAC APPROVALS

k.) The Board received approval from PERAC to grant a retirement allowance to Monica Wissman, Florida, as of 06/30/2025. Annual pension amount is \$18,254.88.

The Board received approval from PERAC to grant a retirement allowance to Robert Taylor, SBRSD, as of 06/30/2025. Annual pension amount is \$13,881.84.

The Board received approval from PERAC to grant a retirement allowance to Nina Weiler, Becket, as of 07/01/2025. Annual pension amount is \$35,444.52.

The Board received approval from PERAC to grant a retirement allowance to Ross Vivori, Great Barrington, as of 07/15/2025. Annual pension amount is \$36,378.72.

The Board received approval from PERAC to grant a retirement allowance to Tania Hernandez, Williamstown, as of 08/06/2025. Annual pension amount is \$66,296.52.

3(8)c REIMBURSEMENTS:

l.) 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 Hampden Retirement Board \$4,029.60 a year, toward the retirement allowance of Brenda Marra.

PERAC CORRESPONDENCE:

m.) The Board received from PERAC the following:

-PERAC Annual Report 2024

Note: Copies of the annual report are available on the PERAC website

TRAVEL & EDUCATION APPROVALS:

n.) There were no travel requests for the month of September.

MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE:

o.) -Adams Community Bank signatures

-Prosper Account Approval Application

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

Mark Bashara: Second.

A roll call vote was taken to approve the Consent agenda as presented, the vote was unanimous.

NEW BUSINESS:

2.) The Board was notified of the appointment of Wm. Smitty Pignatelli as the 5th member of the Berkshire County Retirement Board. The term will begin September 10, 2025 and end June 30, 2030. Michael Ovitt: So, again, congratulations.

3.) Legal Update: Presented by Board Counsel Thomas Gibson

Michael Ovitt: Item #3, there is no legal update. Was that changed because of the date?

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Sheila LaBarbera: No, he did not have anything to report for this month. The outstanding disability issues have all been resolved, no PERAC memos the only thing that we are waiting on is the approval of the Larkin calculations. We will have him attend next month for the potential hearing.

4.) The Board reviewed and approved a revision to the PTG Pension Pro+ contract. Michael Ovitt: Item # 4, the board is asked to review and approve a revision to the PTG PensionPro+ contract.

Sheila LaBarbera: I sent out a copy of the PensionPro+ hosting a services agreement. The revision is the PensionPro+, which is the new PTG software that they are developing. This available to those of us who are using this PensionPro. We would be eligible to use that until 2026 at no charge. What PTG would be doing is they would take the modules that we use; they would run as a dual system. We would actually be able to use them interchangeably. If I wanted to learn how to do the pension payroll on the PensionPro+, I could go in and do that. Any of the changes that we make in that program is also written into PensionPro, and you can use them simultaneously and kind of get an idea whether or not you like it and if it is something that you would like to use. What is nice about it, it is in segments. If Brian wanted to just use membership, we could just use that for a little while and we can use the pension payroll for a little while. The systems run dual and we have already prepaid they are not going to charge at for this trial period.

Mark Bashara: Which is 2-1/2 years you said?

Sheila LaBarbera: We are paid through 2028 we would be able to use this, I believe, through 2026.

Ericka Oleson: Yes, December 31, 2026.

Sheila LaBarbera: Then we would have to make a decision if we would like to move forward with the PensionPro+ at that time. We would use it for 2026 for free. At the end of 2026, we can decide whether we wanted to stay with the old program or upgrade to the new program. We have already prepaid for that through 2028. There would be an additional charge at some point for the PensionPro+. I think it comes in our last year with that 5-year agreement that we had. There would be some kind of a cost at that point.

Michael Ovitt: Is it a beta program per se? Or is it – are they marketing that separately?

Sheila LaBarbera: No, it is live and running for ten systems right now.

Michael Ovitt: So, they are not looking for us to test it as a county system?

Sheila LaBarbera: Brian and I have been helping for the last year as part of that PTG group. They would send out modules as they were completing things to look at it, use it, and make suggestions. .

Michael Ovitt: So, is there additional work to do a dual system?

Sheila LaBarbera: No. If I enter December's pension payroll in PTG+, it is already written into the regular PTG system that we have. It is basically, on their end, they are running dual, so there is no extra work. If there's any change in beneficiary membership in the PensionPro+, that membership – the beneficiary is changed in the membership in PensionPro.

Michael Ovitt: Assuming there is enhancements with the PensionPro+, is there additional information you enter?

Sheila LaBarbera: There are some enhancements, but many of the enhancements are things that we talked about before, multiple screens, you can run multiple reports, you can multitask in there where you cannot in PensionPro. The basics of what a membership card looks like

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and the information that has to be entered is the same. The basics of pension payroll and how its run is the same. It just that it offers you a newer look, so they have already updated the screens they are very modern those are kind of more of computer updates than they are system changes.

Timothy Sorrell: The plus side to this is you are giving it a test run now for free. If you like it, we can extend and purchase the new contract. If we do not like it we will just say it is not worth it, right? Rather than next year, you jump into it without knowing what it is like and we waste money to find out you do not like it.

Sheila LaBarbera: Yes, doing it this way and then making a decision in 2026. You could decide to pick up PensionPro+ in 2028 when we run out. You might not get it for the same price. As a current subscriber, there is incentives for us to stay with them and to upgrade.

Mark Bashara: And it was 5 years when you signed up?

Sheila LaBarbera: Yes.

Michael Ovitt: Are they putting that number in writing yet or – what it will be after the trial?

Sheila LaBarbera: You mean what our costs are going to be?

Michael Ovitt: Yeah.

Sheila LaBarbera: We talked about that already, but I said it would be in 2027. We owe a final payment on January 2027. It would be \$50,000. It would have covered '27 and '28, so the additional cost if we went to PensionPro+ in the fifth year.

Michael Ovitt: So, it is free for the next 15 months? There is no consequences –?

Sheila LaBarbera: No, when our time is up on December 31 of next year, if we do not want to use the PensionPro+, we will say we will stay with PensionPro, they just turn the switch off. At any time in the future, they can turn it back on if we decide to upgrade.

Michael Ovitt: So, as far as the redundancy, there is no redundancy for your workload?

Sheila LaBarbera: No.

Timothy Sorrell: I will make a motion to approve revision to the PTG PensionPro+ contract.

Ericka Oleson: Second.

A roll call vote was taken to approve the PensionPro+ contract revision as presented, the vote was unanimous.

Sheila LaBarbera: Thank you.

5.) Directors update: Review Job Description and posting for open retirement position

Review Job Description

Sheila LaBarbera: The proposed job description for the open position in the retirement office. I have amended this since we posted for the position that Martha took. I took out retirement coordinator/accountant. I think the lesson learned is that we want somebody who understands the whole picture of what we do here not just accounting. It now states specifically what we are looking for people who have business administration or have some experience with accounting, but math is more important. If somebody comes in and does not have the accounting experience, we can teach it as long as they are amenable to learning it. This is what we do every day in the office and what they may or may not be asked to do. It covers everything, so I would prefer that we stay with this current job description and post it accordingly.

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Smitty Pignatelli: I thought they required us that salaries be posted?

Sheila LaBarbera: I do not know where we are at with the salaries, so I just put based on experience. I left that to the board.

Smitty Pignatelli: But I thought the legislature passed a law that you have to put salary ranges in your postings.

Sheila LaBarbera: That is what we did the last time is we put the salary range in.

Ericka Oleson: I do like to see the salary range. I feel like that lets people know.

Michael Ovitt: You can end up with fifty people that are not even going to entertain it once they know the salary.

Sheila LaBarbera: That is true.

Michael Ovitt: So, we might eliminate unnecessary applicants.

Sheila LaBarbera: So, what would you like to post for salary range?

Timothy Sorrell: What did we have the last time?

Sheila LaBarbera: \$60,000 to \$65,000.

Timothy Sorrell: I say it is a good start.

Mark Bashara: Based on experience?

Timothy Sorrell: Right.

Michael Ovitt: So, the range?

Ericka Oleson: What about upping it to like \$60,000 to \$70,000 and see if that extra \$5,000 may open up more applicants?

Sheila LaBarbera: If you go to \$70,000, you are going to be paying them more than you are paying Brian who has been here four years.

Ericka Oleson: We have talked about looking at his salary. I mean, we do not have to offer \$70,000, but it might, seeing the applicants that we got last round, maybe we will get a few more.

Sheila LaBarbera: So, you want to go \$60,000-\$70,000?

Michael Ovitt: Well, it makes sense.

Ericka Oleson: I mean, you must have salary surveys for retirement boards?

Sheila LaBarbera: Some.

Ericka Oleson: Could you send me some of that data?

Sheila LaBarbera: I certainly can.

Smitty Pignatelli: Does it make any sense that the salary is \$60,000-\$70,000 negotiable based on experience? I think Mike's right. I mean, this sounds terrific. It only pays \$60,000. I am making \$85,000 where I am now. I am not going to waste your time. I think this legislature put something in there last year about the transparency.

Michael Ovitt: I thought it had to be that you had to have a number of advertisements.

Sheila LaBarbera: What I will do is I will post this on PERAC. Their agency has a website, so I can post there, and then I will post to Indeed.

Michael Ovitt: Okay. Are there any other professional organizations that you would --?

Sheila LaBarbera: I have used a couple in the past like the MMA. They are very expensive to advertise with, and we got nothing.

Ericka Oleson: BerkshireJobs has gotten expensive too?

Sheila LaBarbera: I think they have, I did not use them the last time.

Mark Bashara: I think everybody does Indeed now anyway. Everybody I have spoken to is hired or looked in there. I think you would get a broader range too. You have someone halfway across the country that is moved in here and is totally unaware I am looking at a local.

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Smitty Pignatelli: What is interesting about Indeed though, because you might as well look for a town manager, Indeed is – you put your resume in there and then it triggers word triggers. There was a manager from Wal-Mart who applied to be the town manager because of the word manager.

Sheila LaBarbera: We did have some of those the last time around too. We had some that were not even in the ballpark. There is two or three of those, and you are right with the trigger. And they have a few companies too that help people do their resumes and set them up, and you can tell who they are because their resumes are all the same, where they've gotten their training. I think there are people out there that actually recognize that and so there are trigger words in all no matter what they do. There are trigger words in their resumes that get them noticed.

Michael Ovitt: So, this in its entirety will go out in the notice? Then we are going to just add the salary range?

Sheila LaBarbera: Yes.

Mark Bashara: I'd like to see too when we get down to the point of interviewing, a little more emphasis on the fact that pensions are so rare today in jobs that that's a huge benefit.

Sheila LaBarbera: It is a huge benefit, Mark, but I will tell you, like in Martha's case, she would have to work 10 years to get a pension. It is, but it isn't. For many younger people, it is not – upfront, it does not – they want to be paid. We certainly emphasize it, but it is not the hook that it used to be.

Ericka Oleson: The only other thing would be at the end, applications would be accepted until October 17th, maybe until – or until filled?

Sheila LaBarbera: 17th. The only thing about until filled is that the last time around we were already into the second part of interviews, and I had people that got irritated with me because they said well you didn't fill it yet but our final interviews tomorrow afternoon.

Ericka Oleson: Or until closed?

Timothy Sorrell: Maybe extend it if no qualified applicants applied?

Sheila LaBarbera: It is very easy to extend it in Indeed, and it is very easy to extend it at the PERAC website. If by October 17th we see that we have nothing, then we will reopen it. We will put October 31st.

Ericka Oleson: Perfect.

Michael Ovitt: So, until the end of the day on October 17th? Okay. All right. Are you looking for a vote on that?

Mark Bashara: I will make a motion to have the salary posted from \$60,000 to \$70,000 commensurate on experience.

Timothy Sorrell: I will second that.

A roll call vote to approve job description as presented with a salary range of \$60,000 to \$70,000, the vote was unanimous.

Ericka Oleson: Can I ask quickly? I had sent out an email after Martha had resigned. Why could we have not, like right after she resigned, had this posted weeks ago? We could be looking at applicants now. I just received no response, and I was just curious.

Michael Ovitt: And I did not receive any response either.

Ericka Oleson: I kind of expected a response from you as Chair.

Michael Ovitt: Yeah.

Ericka Oleson: To say, yes. It is just I would like a little more communication in the future. That would be helpful.

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MIIA Grant approval for cybersecurity upgrades

Sheila LaBarbera: The second item that I have is the approval for our cybersecurity grant. This is the final piece of our upgrades for cybersecurity. This one includes penetration testing. We were approved for \$2700. We had budgeted the other half in our budget for this year; I did talk to Jon Charow the other day to let him know that the application had been approved. We will get the assessments and the penetration testing up and running, it is the final piece to our cybersecurity upgrade. It is a fiscal year grant, so when I do the budget this year, it is a couple hundred dollars a month additional, but I will budget that for our monthly IT expense in December for next year. This grant will run through the next 10 months. I do not know if anybody has any questions. I think everybody is all set up. I know Smitty and Tim have their multifactor authentication. We have secure firewalls when I met with MIIA last Friday, I met with both risk and our agent, and they are very impressed and very happy that we are ahead of the curve. All of this will help, and the penetration test will help to see if there is anybody out there testing our vulnerabilities. Other retirement boards and a couple other communities have been involved in ransomware attacks. MACRS did a policy for cybersecurity coverage, I compared them to the policy that we have. The policy that we have cost us less and the coverage is more, so there is no need for any additional coverage with MACRS.

The question that you asked last month, there is some testing that MIIA does do. Once we get set up with Bug Busters and Jon, I am going to have him reach out to MIIA so that they can coordinate their efforts. MIIA coordinate with them to make sure that we get that level of protection included. They said they are very impressed and very happy with what we have done here; things are looking good with our cybersecurity.

Ericka Oleson: The scammers are realizing municipalities are hiding.

Sheila LaBarbera: They do, and MIIA said that is one of the things that they are concerned about the potential for losses.

Bartini Hearing

The last thing I have is the Bartini hearing. He did send in a job summary. The thing in question is, he is an LLC. It is not a proprietorship anymore. He has complied with what PERAC regarding his past filings. Tom and I are working with PERAC to determine how they have appropriated all of the earnings, with his job summary he may receive a bit of relief.

The hearing is scheduled for October 29th. We talked to Sandy King and Ken Hill to take a second look and I think that there may be some adjustments. He is so close, he probably will not be an over earner. We will make sure that going forward he can control what he earns based on the number of jobs he chooses. As long as he knows what his limits are, he is honestly trying not to be on the list. As long as he knows what his earning guidelines are, he is going to stay within those limits, and I believe that he will. We will see if we can get calculation amended and if that happens, we may not even need to have a hearing in October.

Michael Ovitt: What is his status with his pension?

Sheila LaBarbera: He collects his pension. There is just a demand letter for repayment of overearnings.

Ericka Oleson: But there are some questions how it was calculated, so that should be cleared up.

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Sheila LaBarbera: Right. He is an LLC and his wife is an employee.

Ericka Oleson: They are 50% partners?

Sheila LaBarbera: Right. He is going to make some changes because he usually takes a distribution at the end from the net profits rather than a check. I think it's probably better that he look at how he does that, so that it's appropriated better throughout the year.

Ericka Oleson: She is really contributing.

Sheila LaBarbera: Yes. I think he is going to be fine.

6.) Old Business: - tabled

-The Board is asked to consider a COLA base of \$17,000, effective 07/01/26

Michael Ovitt: Old Business. The board is asked to consider a COLA base of 17,000 effective 07/01/26.

Mark Bashara: So, just to bring you up to speed because everybody else is here. Originally, we were at 14,000 a few years ago and up to 16 a year-and-a-half ago. Two years ago, I think? And we – I asked if we could go up to 17. They did – John Boorack – they did their evaluation –

Ericka Oleson: Study.

Mark Bashara: Study. And two meetings ago, I think it was, he – I asked him directly. I said if we go up to 17, is there any negative impact on anything, and he says no. He says, it is no issue. I'm going to make a motion that we approve the 17,000, and then it goes to the advisory committee and then they approve it or whatever discussions they want to have on it. I feel we are one of the best in the state. I got on here originally to benefit the retirees, all right? I think that where we are as a pension system, where we are as far as being fully funded – a matter of fact it's in here we're 99.9 and we're in evaluation of 100.2% or something I read quickly, and seeing that John Boorack said there's really no negative effect to doing that, to me it's a no-brainer that we don't go up to that. I will make a motion to move our COLA base to 17,000 from the current 16.

Ericka Oleson: I will second that.

Smitty Pignatelli: I agree with you. Why was it tabled until – or effective 07/01/26?

Mark Bashara: Because Mike was not here.

Smitty Pignatelli: Oh, okay.

Mark Bashara: If there is something that is important as this, I figured everybody should be here.

Smitty Pignatelli: Sure.

Michael Ovitt: We have a motion and a second. Any other discussion?

Sheila LaBarbera: A technicality, but it was a tabled item. You really should have a motion to take it off the table. You tabled it at last month's meeting, so it is a tabled item. It is procedural. Take it off the table before you vote.

Mark Bashara: So, I retract my original motion. I'll make a motion to take the COLA base of 17,000 off the table from our previous meeting.

Timothy Sorrell: And I will second that motion.

Michael Ovitt: Motion and second to take the COLA base increase off the table from the prior month's meeting. We have motion and second. All in favor.

A roll call vote to remove COLA base increase to \$17,000 from the tabled items, the vote was unanimous.

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Mark Bashara: Now, I will make my motion again to increase our COLA base from 16,000 to 17,000 effective July 1, 2026.

Ericka Oleson: I will second.

Michael Ovitt: Okay. Any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor.

A roll call vote to approve the COLA base increase to \$17,000, the vote was unanimous.

- The Board is asked to approve a funding schedule for FY27

Ericka Oleson: I will make a motion to remove the funding schedule FY27 that was tabled.

Mark Bashara: I will second.

Michael Ovitt: All in favor of removing it from the table.

A roll call vote to remove approval of FY27 funding schedule from the tabled items, the vote was unanimous.

Sheila LaBarbera: We need a funding schedule for the \$17,000 COLA base; I believe it was Alternative 2, which was the \$17,000 COLA base.

Ericka Oleson: Yes.

Sheila LaBarbera: Alternative Number 2.

Ericka Oleson: I will make a motion to accept the funding schedule for FY27, the Alternative Number 2 as presented by John Boorack, Actuary PERAC.

Timothy Sorrell: I will second that.

Michael Ovitt: So, that was presented from John Boorack?

Ericka Oleson: Yes.

Michael Ovitt: Okay. Any discussion? All in favor.

A roll call vote to approve the FY27 funding schedule Alternative #2 \$17,000 COLA base, the vote was unanimous.

Michael Ovitt: I did have one question. We mentioned that it would go back to the advisory council now?

Sheila LaBarbera: It will go back to the advisor council. Ericka, they have a regular scheduled meeting coming up, I think, in November?

Ericka Oleson: Yes.

Sheila LaBarbera: It will go to the advisory board. The advisory board has to approve it before it can be implemented.

Michael Ovitt: So, what is the timeline? Any time before July? Or does it need to be –?

Sheila LaBarbera: They are going to meet in November.

Mark Bashara: We will its good too because here you can explain to them if they have questions.

Ericka Oleson: Yes.

Sheila LaBarbera: They will look at the budget for the fall meeting.

Board Bylaws

Michael Ovitt: I thought the board bylaws were removed indefinitely, so I am not sure why it is still here.

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Timothy Sorrell: I will make a motion to remove that from the table.

Mark Bashara: Second. Meaning not to table it?

Ericka Oleson: Yes.

Michael Ovitt: We removed that previously?

Sheila LaBarbera: No.

Ericka Oleson: Thank you.

Michael Ovitt: All in favor of removing the bylaws from the table.

A roll call vote to remove Board Bylaws from the tabled items, the vote was unanimous.

Timothy Sorrell: We are looking for discussion?

Michael Ovitt: But we just removed it from the table.

Timothy Sorrell: I will make a motion to accept the bylaws as presented with the modification or change to Article 12, changing the stipend amount from \$4,500 to the correct \$3,600?

Ericka Oleson: Yes, and then change it to monthly too from quarterly.

Timothy Sorrell: Yes, you disburse monthly rather than quarterly.

Michael Ovitt: Which item was that?

Timothy Sorrell: The very last one.

Sheila LaBarbera: Paid monthly.

Michael Ovitt: Okay. \$4,500 to \$3,600?

Timothy Sorrell: Yes and board stipend shall be paid monthly.

Ericka Oleson: I will second that motion.

Michael Ovitt: And I think we have had previous discussions on this. Sheila, can you tell us why we need this?

Sheila LaBarbera: I think Tom Gibson explained it to you.

Michael Ovitt: I think it was the remote participation, I believe, right?

Sheila LaBarbera: And the nomination of a Vice Chairman in the absence of the Chairman.

Ericka Oleson: And it was recommended that we have just a set of bylaws anyway?

Sheila LaBarbera: Correct, yes.

Michael Ovitt: My understanding was that it was before the extension of the remote participation.

Timothy Sorrell: I think Tom just recommended that we have them since we did not have any. I think one of the examples was in your absence as Chair; we formally do not have anybody who runs the meeting.

Michael Ovitt: All right. Any other discussion?

Mark Bashara: At the end there, the \$4,500. We are currently at \$3,600, right?

Timothy Sorrell: Right.

Mark Bashara: Right. No, what I am saying – so, does it have to be – I am trying to remember. We raised it from the 250 to 300 a month. Does that have to be approved by the advisory or something?

Ericka Oleson: Yes.

Mark Bashara: Okay. That is what I thought. I just wanted to make sure I understood correctly. So, they can do them both. I am guessing if they have their meeting, they can discuss that.

Sheila LaBarbera: Well, there was no motion to raise the stipend.

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Timothy Sorrell: No, I just modified it so it is correct for what we are getting.

Mark Bashara: Oh, you are saying it is staying at \$3,600.

Ericka Oleson: Yes.

Timothy Sorrell: Yes.

Mark Bashara: Okay. You are putting it where it should be?

Timothy Sorrell: Yes. And also, it says quarterly. We changed it to monthly.

Mark Bashara: All right. Thank you for answering and clarifying.

Michael Ovitt: Any further discussion? All in favor.

Sheila LaBarbera: Anybody opposed?

Michael Ovitt: You calling it?

Sheila LaBarbera: I am asking. I did not hear – I heard three ayes. I did not hear the others.

Michael Ovitt: So, there is four ayes. I will go then and aye. It is unanimous.

Sheila LaBarbera: Unanimous.

A roll call vote to approve the Board Bylaws with a stipend of \$3,600 annually and paid monthly, the vote was unanimous.

Timothy Sorrell: Should I make a request for the next meeting that the agenda at this time we have to pick a Vice Chair?

Sheila LaBarbera: yes.

Timothy Sorrell: It would have to be on the next agenda, right.

Sheila LaBarbera: Yes.

Timothy Sorrell: So, we are in accordance with the bylaws. I know you are busy, but have you been requested to do any more seminars or anything?

Sheila LaBarbera: The phone has been ringing off the hook. We have Great Barrington, Sheffield, Williamstown, Mount Greylock, Berkshire Hills. They are all waiting.

Timothy Sorrell: Oh, wow.

Ericka Oleson: They see a lot of turnover too, those big places.

Brian Shepard: The schools.

Timothy Sorrell: At the schools, what are we just seeing? The paras and the custodial staff? Because we do not deal with the teachers.

Sheila LaBarbera: Right.

Timothy Sorrell: So, you have been able to make the seminars? I mean, I know you are short-handed.

Sheila LaBarbera: Well, we are going to. We are going to try to see what we can do. We are trying to prioritize who needs what and what for. Great Barrington has anxiously awaited us. They have a number of new employees and a number of retirements that are coming up, so we will probably end up there first. Then the two schools. Then down to Sheffield too.

The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 29, 2025 at 9:00am.

Mark Bashara: I will make a motion to adjourn this meeting.

Ericka Oleson: Second.

Michael Ovitt: Motion and second. All in favor.

A roll call vote was taken to adjourn the meeting at 1:42pm, the vote was unanimous.

Berkshire County Retirement Board Meeting
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RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Sheila LaBarbera, Executive Director

APPROVED BY:

Michael Ovitt, Chairman

Mark Bashara, Elected Member

Timothy Sorrell, Elected Member

Ericka Oleson, Advisory Council Member

Wm "Smitty" Pignatelli, 5th Member Appointed