

FRANKLIN REGIONAL RETIREMENT SYSTEM
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
March 25, 2020

A meeting of the Franklin Regional Retirement Board, duly posted to be held via remote participation, using the online videoconferencing program Zoom, by members of the Board to stem the spread of COVID-19 on the above date was called to order at 7:55 a.m. by Board Chair Sandra Hanks, with Board Members, Mary Stokarski, Paul Mokrzecki, Angelina Bragdon and Gabriele Voelker and Assistant Director Susan Bobe present. Also present in the Board office located at 278 Main Street, Suite 311, Greenfield MA were Executive Director Dale Kowacki and Auditor Deborah Frentzos.

Prior to and during the meeting, the following items were available for the Board's review: monthly financial statements, current investment statements, invoices, and member and retiree files related to items on the agenda.

A permanent copy of the agenda as presented to the Board is on file in the retirement office, except for those items that are restricted from public viewing.

Review and Acceptance of Meeting Minutes

On a motion made by G. Voelker and second by A. Bragdon, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held on February 26, 2020.

Payroll, Refunds, Transfers and Bills Warrants

On a motion made by P. Mokrzecki and second by M. Stokarski, the Board voted unanimously to approve the warrants as follows:

Retirees Payroll	\$970,778.06
Refunds	36,587.16
Transfers	223,154.83
Invoices	<u>84,499.03</u>
For a total of:	\$1,315,019.08

Cash Transfer between Investments and Bank

On a motion made by M. Stokarski and a second by P. Mokrzecki, the Board voted unanimously to transfer \$1,027,000.00 from Loomis Sayles to cover next month's warrants.

Membership

On a motion made by M. Stokarski and a second by A. Bragdon, the Board voted unanimously to approve the new members, new positions and additional positions as follows:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>HIRE DATE</u>	<u>C.S. %</u>	<u>New %</u>	<u>UNIT</u>	<u>POSITION</u>
Bjorlin, Randi L	2/18/2020	80%		OGE	Administrative Assistant to the Assessor
Chouinard, Hana S	1/23/2020	80%		FRN	Instructional Assistant
Ekstein, Kenneth G	1/13/2020	100%		FRN	Long-term substitute teacher
Larabee-Chandler, Marie A	3/9/2020	60%		MHR	1:1 Paraprofessional
Shippee, Tammy I	1/7/2020	100%		MOH	Long-term paraprofessional substitute
Williams, Kerri L	1/21/2020	90%		OGE	Paraprofessional
<u>New Positions</u>					
Steele, Melinda	2/4/2020	45%		FRN	Instructional Assistant
Warren Kayce D	2/11/2020	100%		DER	Town Administrator
<u>Additional Position</u>					
Grinnell, Sarah	12/4/2019	100%		MOH	Academic Athletic Advisor

New Retirees:

On a motion made by P. Mokrzecki and a second by A. Bragdon, the Board voted unanimously to approve the following retirements:

Andrews, Kirsten – The retirement packet has been submitted to PERAC to retire Kirsten Andrews for a Superannuation, Option C, 5(1)(e) retirement allowance. Her last day of work was March 3, 2020 and her retirement benefit will begin on March 4, 2020. Ms. Andrews was a group 1 member working as a paraprofessional for the Town of Orange schools, accruing 26 years, 10 months of creditable service. The Massachusetts Teachers’ Retirement System holds liability for 25 years of the total service.

Willis, Judy – The retirement packet has been submitted to PERAC to retire Judy Willis for a Superannuation, Option C retirement allowance. Her last day of work was March 6, 2020 and her retirement benefit will begin on March 7, 2020. Ms. Willis was a group 1 member working as the Payroll Coordinator for the Mohawk Trail Regional School District, accruing 33 years, 1 month of creditable service.

Buybacks and Makeups:

On a motion made by M. Stokarski and a second by G. Voelker, the Board voted unanimously to approve the following buyback:

LaRue, Lee Ann – current member serving in the Pioneer Valley Regional School District has requested a make-up of service for work in the Petersham School System beginning in July 2002 through August 2005. Available paystubs provided the gross earnings and creditable service accrued based on actual hours worked as determined by using an hourly rate equal to two times the Massachusetts minimum wage for the time period.

Total creditable service allowed is 1 year, 9 months, 19 days at a cost of \$5,359.91 if paid by April 30, 2020 otherwise interest will accrue as allowed by law.

Deaths:

Brooks, Clayton – Option A retiree since 06/30/2003, Mr. Brooks worked as a laborer/truck driver for the Town of Leyden, accruing 14 years, 7 months of creditable service. DOD was 03/15/2020 at the age of 82.

Miller, Sharon – Option A retiree since 10/30/2002, Ms. Miller worked as the Assistant Librarian for the Town of Northfield, accruing 21 years, 4 months of creditable service. DOD was 03/01/2020 at the age of 75.

Saben, Gloria – Option A retiree since 06/30/1993, Ms. Saben worked in the cafeteria for the New Salem/Wendell Union School District, accruing 24 years, 10 months of creditable service. DOD was 03/13/2020 at the age of 90.

General Business:

Signing of the warrants during Covid-19

The Board discussed procedure for the signing of the warrants as this meeting was held via remote participation. They decided that Sandy would sign with the other Board members signing the next time that the Board meets physically. The Board directed Dale Kowacki, Executive Director to check to see if this procedure is allowed.

On a motion made by G. Voelker and a second by M. Stokarski, the Board voted unanimously to allow Sandra Hanks, Board Chair to sign warrants after voted at today's meeting with the other Board members to sign at the next physical meeting.

Discuss meeting accommodations for Covid-19

The Governor has relaxed the rules around remote participation meetings by removing the requirement that a quorum be present in the same room, thus allowing for all participants to remain at a distance. However, the board still needs to provide access to the public.

Dale chose the videoconferencing program Zoom to host this meeting (and likely future meetings). The meeting posting was modified to inform the public and give them the link to instructions on the board's website on how to join the meeting.

Checks will be brought to Sandy to be signed.

Discuss office staffing and schedule adjustments for Covid-19

Staff is quickly getting ready for full scale quarantine and lockdown should it be mandated.

Staff are each taking a day of quarantine each week until it is over, or it gets worse. Computers arrive early next week and will be set up for secure work from home. Staff are also working on having access to the phone system via the remote computers so taking calls will be as close to normal as possible.

If the office goes into full quarantine, Dale will still come to the office to monitor equipment here and to provide ground support when the others need something loaded into the network server.

The governor's order to close all nonessential workplaces brings up questions needing the Board's input.

- Will you require staff to use sick leave?
 - What if it's mandated quarantine by one of the following?
 - State, Board, Dale?
 - What if it's self-imposed?
 - What proof would you want that they were exposed and need to quarantine themselves.
- At what point will you lay off staff?
- At what point will you let someone go if they self-quarantine longer than expected?
- What are your thoughts about "essential"?
 - Are we an essential service?
 - Are there some of our duties that are considered essential?

Retiree benefits, pay bills, issue refunds and transfers, process deposits, maintain computer security, maintain computer backups

After much discussion, the Board voted the following regarding the Covid-19 crisis:

On a motion made by G. Voelker and second by M. Stokarski, the Board unanimously voted to allow Dale Kowacki, Executive Director to pay people to stay home at his discretion for Covid-19 crisis related incidences and to be paid as usual and not use their sick time. Whether any other illness is applicable or not to the Covid-19 crisis is at his discretion whether to use sick time or not.

The Board also discussed staff working from home and it was understood that Dale will move quickly to supply computers and phone access to staff to use at home to keep the office functioning.

Review and approve 2019 annual report to PERAC

Dale Kowacki, Executive Director presented and reviewed the 2019 Annual report with the Board. The Board members approved the annual report.

On a motion made by P. Mokrzecki and a second by M. Stokarski, the Board voted unanimously to approve the 2019 Annual report.

Annual Retirees COLA for July 1

On a motion made by P. Mokrzecki and a second by M. Stokarski, the Board voted unanimously to approve a 3% Cost-of-living-allowance for retirees starting July 1, 2020.

Email addresses to MassRetirees

The Mass Retirees Association reached out to retirement boards requesting their latest listing of retirees and survivors to include the retiree's or survivor's home address, but also asked for their personal email address and telephone number. Dale asked the Board if they wanted to include the retiree's email addresses to Mass Retirees. The Board's standing policy was only to provide mailing addresses.

On a motion made by G. Voelker and a second by M. Stokarski, the Board voted unanimously to not provide email addresses of retirees and survivors to Mass Retirees.

Board member photos and contact info on website

Prompted by a question posed by a curious member of the system, the question of how much information about board members and staff could be or should be provided on the website. Dale explained that direct email addresses of staff were removed when he learned that hackers use similar looking email addresses to spoof staff into believing their boss wants them to click on a link or attachment. Dale described staff reticence to be recognized out in public from having their picture on the website. Dale allowed that board members might want to be recognized in public so they can have conversations about the retirement system.

After some discussion, the Board voted the following:

On a motion made by M. Stokarski and a second by G. Voelker, the Board voted unanimously to not have their photos or contact information listed on the Board website.

Further discussion was regarding staff photos with staff names, positions and phone extension number listed on the Board's website.

On a motion made by M. Stokarski and a second by A. Bragdon, the Board voted unanimously to list staff on the Board website with their position and extension number.

Adjournment

On a motion made by P. Mokrzecki and a second by G. Voelker, the Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:38 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

THESE MINUTES WERE APPROVED ON APRIL 29, 2020

Deborah A. Frentzos, Auditor

Sandra A. Hanks, Chair and Treasurer

Angelina J. Bragdon, Council Member

Gabriele H. Voelker, Board Member

Mary A. Stokarski, Board Member

Paul J. Mokrzecki, Vice Chair