ASSOCIATION OF MONTANA RETIRED PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

Board Minutes

Zoom Conference and Video Call

December 15, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

The board meeting of the Association of Montana Retired Public Employees was called to order by Cathy Kendall at 9:30 a.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Lyle Manley, Connie Welsh, Cathy Kendall, Jan Brown , Leo Hudetz, Patty Mott, James Driggers, Jim Lewis, Dale Boespflug and Kim Hoxie (staff) were present by conference or video call.

GUESTS

All guests were present by conference or video call.

Brian Thompson, AMRPE Lobbyist

Dore Schwinden , MPERA

Mike O’Connor

Tim and Julie Reardon

MINUTES

Jan Brown made a motion to approve the November minutes, Leo Hudetz seconded the motion, and the November minutes were approved unanimously.

Lyle Manley took over as Chair of meeting at 9:35 a.m.

MPERA UPDATE

Dore Schwinden stated that Montana Public Employee Retirement Administration (MPERA) is working on four legislative bills. The bills and the sponsors are as follows: HB 44 sponsored by Representative Geraldine Custer to fund the Game Wardens and Peace Officers’ retirement system; HB 59 sponsored by Representative Hamilton to increase employer contributions to the PERS System; LC 721 sponsored by Representative Frank Garner to fund Highway Patrol Officers’ retirement system(HPORS); LC 722 sponsored by Representative Hamilton which is a general revision bill to make some changes to the administration of the systems.

Dori Schwinden stated that he met with the incoming Budget Director, and the new Governor Gianforte is not interested in pension reform at this time.

Legislative Finance Committee

Brian Thompson stated he is getting ready for the session. As of right now, it looks like the session will be a mix of people in the capital and on video conference calls. Brian did receive a call from Representative Frank Garner, and they discussed that Representative Garner is looking into the pension activity and is hoping to streamline the extreme approaches on both sides of the issue to guide the process. Brian does not see the legislature focused on pensions this session.

Brian Thompson also mentioned that his boss had not yet signed the lobbying contract

REPORTS

**Treasurer’s Report**

James Driggers presented the financial report and commented that it has been a quiet month. He will be asking the board in January to decide on whether to roll the expiring CD to another CD or invest some funds in a mutual fund that has a higher return.

Connie Welsh made a motion to approve the December financial statement, Jim Lewis seconded the motion, and the December financial statement was approved unanimously.

**Membership**

Patty Mott stated there are 14 new members for a total of 89 members this year. Patty asked the board if research could be done to changed the payment method for memberships on the website. The board discussed how membership payments are made on the website and agreed that it would benefit AMRPE to make the online payment process as simple as possible. The board will review the options at the next board meeting to have it ready to go by the end of January when the membership renewal letter goes out to the members.

Cathy Kendall made a motion to research new payment options for the website and present findings at the next board meeting. Connie seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

**Creating graphs and charts in response to Pew and Reason Foundation**

Mike O’Connor stated he has completed the graph and will email it to the board members for review.

**Letter Agreement with BKBH**

The letter of agreement has not been finalized yet as mentioned in the Legislative update section.

**Consider Further Newspaper Articles**

The Board discussed updating the March Op-Ed letter and sending it out to the newspapers before the Legislative session begins. The board will be emphasizing the economic impact of the retirees in the Montana communities and encouraging members and non-members to support AMRPE.

**Newsletter Timeline**

The board discussed and agreed that the newsletter will go out in February or March, pending how the session is going. The following ideas were discussed for articles: President’s letter, COVID vaccine information, membership benefits, a legislative update, and medical savings account benefits.

New Business

**Reappoint Board members and Officers**

Lyle Manley made a motion to reappoint Connie Welsh, Patty Mott, and James Driggers to the board for another three years. Cathy Kendall seconded the motion and the motion was approved unanimously.

The board discussed extending the current officers for another year. The officers are Lyle Manley, President; Cathy Kendal, Vice President; James Driggers, Treasurer; and Jan Brown, Secretary.

Lyle Manley made a motion to extend the current officers for another year. Connie Welsh seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Lyle Manley stated he would be reviewing the committee assignments for next year and asked board members to submit their committee preferences. Patty Mott asked to be taken off the legislative committee for the next year.

**State Employee Group Benefits Advisory Council (SEGBAC)**

Jim Lewis stated that he attended the SEGBAC meeting last week and wanted to share a couple of interesting trends. Insurance claims are down five million dollars from last year due to the delay of elective surgeries due to COVID, and the number of retirees on the state health insurance continues to decline.

Jim Lewis moved to adjourn. Connie Welsh seconded. Motion to adjourn the December 15, 2020, board meeting carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

The next meeting will be held on January 19, 2021, 9:30 a.m. at 100 North Park – PERA Office, 2nd Floor Conference Room and/or video conference call.