

ASSOCIATION OF MONTANA RETIRED PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
Board Minutes
Zoom Conference and Video Call
October 20, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

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

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Lyle Manley, Connie Welsh, Cathy Kendall, Jan Brown, Dale Boespflug, Jim Lewis, Leo Hudetz, Patty Mott, James Driggers, 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, Executive Director, MPERA

Mike O'Connor

Tim and Julie Reardon

MINUTES

Jan Brown made a motion to approve the September minutes, Cathy Kendall seconded the motion, and the September minutes were approved unanimously.

MPERA UPDATE

Dore Schwinden stated that Montana Public Employee Retirement Administration (MPERA) received the annual actuary evaluation from Cavanaugh MacDonald. Dore will be presenting the findings to the State Administration and Veterans' Affairs (SAVA), Legislative Finance Committee, and the Board of Investments. The actuary evaluation does state Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS), the Highway Patrol Officers' (HPORS), and Game Wardens and Peace Officers' retirement system all amortize more than 30 years. MPERA is working on several pieces of legislation for the next session: 1) a general revisions legislation in order to maintain qualifications status by the IRS, 2) increase employer funding for Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) and the Highway Patrol Officers' (HPORS). Judges' (JRS), Firefighters' United (FURS), and Sheriffs' (SRS) are doing well and under the 30-year amortization rate.

Legislative Finance Committee

Brian Thompson stated that he did attend the Public Employees; Retirement Board (PERB) meeting and listened to the actuary presentation. He noted that there are a number of legislators who do not like pensions and would like to see the Legislature have their own actuary.

REPORTS

Treasurer's Report

James Driggers presented the financial report and commented that the budgets look good but not as robust as budgeted for 2020. He noted that the Board will need to discuss what to do with the CD that expires in February. The current CD rates are very low and so the Board will need to consider the best steps for this money.

Connie Welsh made a motion to approve the October financial statement, Cathy Kendall seconded the motion, and the October financial statement was approved unanimously.

Membership

Patty Mott stated that she has not received any member renewals but has received payment for 43 new members. There were 2,071 new member letters sent out at the beginning of October, which is about 200 less than last year.

OLD BUSINESS

Creating graphs and charts in response to Pew and Reason Foundation

Mike O'Connor stated that he is working on graphs with data from the Combined Annual Financial Report (CAFR) showing how the retirement system has been doing over the last 50 years. This information will be helpful to present in response to the graphs developed from the Pew and Reason Foundation data that only shows how the retirement system has been doing in the last sixteen years.

Letter agreement with BKBH

Connie Welsh commented that she has not received the letter of understanding for lobbying services from Brian Thompson of Browning, Kaleczyc, Berry and Hoven, P.C. (BKBH) and will follow-up with him.

Join forces with Teachers' Retirement System (TRS)

Cathy Kendall stated that she and Connie Welsh met with the Shawn Graham, Executive Director, Teachers' Retirement System (TRS), earlier in the month to discuss ways TRS and AMRPE can work together to increase awareness about the economic impact State and Teacher retirees make in the State. It was decided that AMRPE will present the information to TRS and TRS will decide if they would like to participate. TRS will then share the communication on the website for its members. Kathy and Connie felt this was a very positive first step in building a relationship with TRS.

What can we do to encourage members who live outside Helena to apply for Board positions or other volunteer activities?

Cathy Kendall will schedule a committee meeting after the election to discuss ideas.

Consider Further Newspaper Articles

The Board discussed the next steps and decided to wait until after the election to decide where the efforts will be needed for the upcoming legislative session. Mike O'Connor stated that he will write an Op-Ed piece concerning the costs associated with converting the Defined Benefit system to a Defined Contribution System.

New Business

MPERA Presentations to New Retirees

Dale Boespflug reported that he has not heard from Joel Thompson, Education Specialist, MPERA, and will follow-up with him on the next steps regarding the retirement seminars.

Newsletter Timeline

The timeline was discussed and the Board decided to find out when the Legislative Session will begin to determine when the newsletter should go out.

James Driggers moved to adjourn. Dale Boespflug seconded. Motion to adjourn the October 20, 2020, board meeting carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m.

The next meeting will be held on November 17, 2020, 9:30 a.m. at 100 North Park – PERA Office, 2nd Floor Conference Room and/or video conference call.