ASSOCIATION OF MONTANA RETIRED PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

Board Minutes

Zoom Conference and Video Call

March 16, 2021

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, Patty Mott, James Driggers, Dale Boespflug, Jan Brown, Leo Hudetz, and Kim Hoxie (staff) were present by conference or video call. Jim Lewis was excused.

GUESTS PRESENT BY ZOOM CALL

Dore Schwinden, MPERA

Mike O’Connor

MINUTES

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

MPERA UPDATE

Dore Schwinden gave an update on the bills that he has been monitoring.

HB 81, sponsored by Representative Hamilton, a general revision bill to make some administrative changes, has passed the Senate and should be signed by the Governor. HB72, the Highway Patrol Officers Retirement System’s funding, was amended to use Department of Justice funds instead of funding from sports gambling, and the other two MPERA bills have been tabled.

HB 181, sponsored by Representative Hamilton, which would allow the Legislative Finance Committee to have an actuary, failed in the appropriations committee.

HJR 8, which create an interim study on all pension plans, passed the House and is headed to the Senate.

SB 175, which will suspend employer contributions for two years, is passing. Suspending employer contributions will create 4.5 million dollars savings. The suspension of employer’s contribution under SB175 relates solely to the Judges Retirement.

Finally, LC 2742, was Senate Bill 54, sponsored by Senator Hoven, creating a new tier cash balance pension system for new state employees, which has not been presented at this time.

The new MPERA board members Sonja Woods, Jason Strouf, and Terry Haplin have not been confirmed yet.

Dore also mentioned that the two lawsuits, PureView/Lewis & Clark County and MACo, have been combined and will be heard by Judge Menahan.

LEGISLATURE

Brian Thompson was not available to attend the meeting but did provide an update for the board.

Garner’s bill HJ8 passed with excellent support – 91-9. It’s headed to the Senate.

Brian commented that he still has not seen the Hertz tax bill, but has been in contact with representatives of the CPA association (who are pushing the bill) and they assured him it’s the 2015 version of the tax simplification bill (which is the one that left the retirees alone). MPERA’s funding bill had a hearing on Tuesday and is moving through the process nicely.

The Highway Patrol Officers’ Retirement System funding bill was amended to take the money from a DOJ account instead of the sports gambling account (DOJ suggestion) and is moving through the process nicely.

Leo Hudetz will prepare a short statement for our website reminding our members that under Montana tax law, the first $3,600 received from public retirement is exempt from state taxation.

REPORTS

**Treasurer’s Report**

James Driggers presented the March 2021 financial reports. Membership dues have exceeded budgets this past month and are in line with revenues from 2019. The budget did forecast a loss this year, but now a surplus is projected. The expired CD will be rolled to the next CD with interest at 3%. No additional work on PayPal has been completed at this time.

Connie Welsh made a motion to approve the March financial statement, Leo Hudetz seconded the motion, and the March financial statement was approved unanimously.

Lyle Manley thanked James Driggers for all his hard work on CD management, monthly financials, and the PayPal account changes.

**Membership**

Patty Mott stated that putting a due date on the renewal membership form helped quickly get renewals back this year, with seventy-seven percent of the dues collected by the deadline. Most of the members are annual memberships. The breakdown of renewals is as follows: Lifetime, 28 (3%); 1 year, 683 (73.5%); 2 year, 139 (15%); 3 year, 79 (8.5%).

OLD BUSINESS

**Newspaper Articles**

This topic will be discussed after the legislative session is adjourned.

**Newsletter Timeline**

The newsletter schedule remains after the legislative session closes to give members an update.

**Reviewing of Membership List**

The board will get together and discuss members to target for board positions. An advertisement will also be in the newsletter to generate interest.

New Business

**MPERA presentation**

Dales Boespflug stated he sent the new members presentation to the board members for review. The major push for retiree webinars will be in October.

**Video Production for AMRPE Recruitment**

Lyle Manley, Cathy Kendall, and James Driggers will be meeting with a video company on Thursday to discuss the member recruitment video. The plan for the video is to have a 3–5-year life and hopefully add it to MPERA’s website to increase membership.

**Format of April Meeting**

Lyle asked the board members if they would be interested in meeting in person next month. The board agreed to meet in person next month at MPERA, as long as current COVID conditions remain the same or improve.

Connie Welsh moved to adjourn. Dale Boespflug seconded. Motion to adjourn the March 16, 2021 board meeting carried unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 10:49 a.m.

The next meeting will be on April 20, 2021, at 9:30 a.m. at 100 North Park – PERA Office, 2nd Floor Conference Room, and/or video conference call.