

ASSOCIATION OF MONTANA RETIRED PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
Board Minutes
100 North Park – MPERA Office, 2nd Floor Conference Room
April 16, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

The Board meeting of the Association of Montana Retired Public Employees was called to order by Tom Livers at 9:32 a.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Tom Livers, Lois Menzies, Melanie Symons, Carol Grell Morris, Dave Ashley, and Tyler Coenen (staff) were present in person. Leo Hudetz, Bruce Brensdaal, Geoff Badenoch, and Barbara Martens were present by video call.

GUESTS

Bill Holahan (MPERA Acting Executive Director), Brian Thompson (AMRPE Lobbyist with Browning, Kaleczyc, Berry, & Hoven), and Melissa Esposito (CMS Trainee) were present in person.

MINUTES

Lois Menzies moved to approve the minutes as submitted and Melanie Symons seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

MPERA PRESENTATION

Dore Schwinden retired, and Bill Holahan was appointed as acting Executive Director by the MPERA Board. Bill reported that their consulting actuaries reported the results of their audit. The results were clean with minor suggestions for improvements in reporting. The scope of the audit was to determine if MPERA actuarial practices were reasonable and sound.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Brian Thompson reported that HB569 changed some retirement qualifications for the Sheriffs' Retirement System that added a 50-year-old age requirement for retirement and that funding of the system is now based on an Actuarial Determined Employer Contribution with a 0.5% limit to increases per year. The SAVA committee voted 8-1 to introduce a bill to repeal HB569. Brian agreed to provide a legislative update to AMRPE following the primary election.

REPORTS

Treasurer's Report

It was noted that the administrative category for contracted services within the budget had been exceeded already. The Board Operating budget costs so far included website domain registration and hosting, DPHHS reports, and gifts for departing Board members. It was also noted that two CDs will come due soon.

Leo Hudetz moved to authorize Bruce Brensdaal, as Treasurer, to reinvest the expiring CDs for another 12 months. Dave Ashley seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Membership Report

It was noted that dues renewal return percentages are lower than in previous years. The upcoming newsletter may boost this number because it will include a reminder for members to pay their dues. The newsletter is planned to be sent to everyone who received a renewal letter, which included everyone who was current through 2020.

OLD BUSINESS

Desk Manual Revisions

Lois made revisions that focused on the addition of a Board Designee option for processing dues for new and renewing members and a few other small changes to better capture current processes. There was some discussion around the responsibility of maintaining this document and the process of approval. It was decided that a vote is not needed to approve these changes, but that the Board could recognize these changes, then continue making more changes as other processes evolve.

Geoff Badenoch moved to acknowledge, recognize, and accept the changes and Dave seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Spring Newsletter

It was reported that most of the content for the newsletter has been determined and much of it has already been written. The Newsletter Committee will meet after the Board meeting to discuss planning and next steps. The Board decided to circulate drafts via email and get it finalized and sent before the May meeting.

Social Media

There was discussion about the benefits of AMRPE joining social media. It was mentioned that there should be cross-referencing if AMRPE moves forward with social media, and it should be linked to the website and vice versa and mentioned in the newsletter. It was also discussed that there needed to be some individual commitment for this to work. Tom Livers assigned an ad-hoc committee to discuss suggestions and bring recommendations to the May meeting. The committee included Carol Grell Morris and Geoff Badenoch and the assistance of Tyler Coenen.

Website

It was discussed that Board members should keep website content in mind as there may be a need to update content. Geoff mentioned that it may be a good idea to include a picture of Board members either together, or headshots included with bios. It was also noted that Dave Ashley's bio was missing from the site.

MPERA Communication

Tom mentioned that he will start a draft letter of AMRPE's official support of increasing the working retiree hour cap from 960 to 1,040, will take input from other Board members, and then will send the letter to MPERA. It was also discussed and decided that the Board will likely not pursue the issue further if MPERA decides not to make this change.

NEW BUSINESS

Items for May Agenda

Share folder with important documents for Board access, committee chair descriptions for committee duties/activities/timelines, audit committee update and third member assignment, Spring newsletter, social media recommendations, and final discussion of working retirees' hours cap.

Dave moved to adjourn the meeting and Geoff seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Tom Livers adjourned the meeting at 11:55 a.m.

The next meeting will be on May 21, 2024, at 9:30 a.m. by video conference call or in-person.