**ASSOCIATION OF MONTANA RETIRED PUBLIC EMPLOYEES**

**Board Minutes**

**100 North Park – MPERA Office, 2nd Floor Conference Room**

**January 21, 2025**

CALL TO ORDER

The Board meeting of the Association of Montana Retired Public Employees was called to order by Tom Livers at 9:36 a.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

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

GUESTS

Bill Holahan (MPERA Executive Director) was present in person.

MINUTES

Carol Grell Morris mentioned that there was a typo in the December minutes, in which the January meeting date should be 2025 instead of 2024. Lois Menzies moved to correct and approve the minutes and Dave Ashley seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

MPERA PRESENTATION

Bill Holahan reported updates and statuses of several pension bills and LCs. Bill mentioned several bills on which MPERA has taken an informational position, including: Senate Bill (SB) 20, which will prohibit retired judges from hearing constitutional cases; SB122, which is a competing bill to House Bill (HB) 85; SB141, which will require the Defined Contribution (DC) plan to be the default retirement plan for new legislators; and other bills on which MPERA has taken a proponent position, including HB85, which will increase funding to several public retirement systems.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Brian Thompson was not present to provide a legislative update.

REPORTS

**Legislative Report**

Tom Livers reported that Brian Thompson (BKBH Lobbyist) testified in favor of two bills, on behalf of AMRPE. These bills were HB148, which would repeal state tax on social security income and SB56, which would supplement employer contributions for PERS, HPORS, SRS, and GWPORS. The HB62 hearing was missed due to technical issues, but Brian will attend the second hearing, in the Senate, and will testify in favor of it. HB62 is the MPERA general revisions bill. The Legislative Committee is tracking many bills, categorizing them based on different levels of interest/impact to AMRPE membership, and listing them on the website with links to the bill information. The website is a work in progress and will see some changes in the categorization of bills.

The Board discussed the best method of establishing AMRPE positions on bills that will match the speed of the legislation. Sheri Scurr moved that the Legislative Committee, on behalf of the Board, take a position to generally support SAVA and MPERA bills, and to inform the full Board of any concerns, and decisions made by the committee. Lois seconded. The Board voted 6 to 1 in favor of the motion, with Dave as the dissenting vote. Two members left the meeting early due to conflicting schedules and were unable to vote.

**Treasurer Report**

Bruce Brensdal reported on the final numbers for 2024 and noted that revenue was a little lower than expected and expenses were a little higher than expected. This impacted the 2025 budget numbers, which will be discussed during the February Board meeting. Bruce also reported on a CD that will be maturing at the end of January and the Board discussed what to do with it. Leo Hudetz moved to approve the financial statement and allow Bruce to shop for better CD rates. Geoff Badenoch asked to amend the motion to direct Bruce (as the Treasurer) to shop rates, make the investment, and report on it during February’s meeting. With the amendment accepted, Geoff seconded the motion as amended and the motion passed unanimously.

**Contract Coordination**

Bruce reported that he still has not heard from Browning, Kaleczyc, Berry, & Hoven (BKBH) regarding an updated lobbying contract. The previous contract expired December 31, 2024, so there is technically no contract in place right now. The Board discussed extending the old contract through the 2025 session, then revisit creating a new contract. Lois moved to allow Tom to approach Brian Thompson with an amendment to the previous contract that would extend the contract through May at current rates. Carol seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**Membership Report**

Lois reported that two new members signed up and seven more members renewed since the December report.

OLD BUSINESS

**Committee Selections**

Tom reported that he is still waiting for a couple of responses from Board members about their preferences and will wait for those before moving forward with recommendations. This will be discussed again in February.

NEW BUSINESS

**Membership Renewal Letter**

Lois reported that 1,061 renewal letters were sent on January 17, 2025. The renewal list went back two years (2023-2024) and anyone who was last current through 2022 was made inactive.

**2025 Budget**

Bruce provided a draft 2025 budget for the Board’s review. The budget will be discussed and voted on in February.

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

Tom Livers adjourned the meeting at 11:49 a.m.

The next meeting will be on February 18, 2025, at 9:30 a.m. by video conference call or in-person.