ASSOCIATION OF MONTANA RETIRED PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
Board Minutes
100 North Park – MPERA Office, 2nd Floor Conference Room
January 20, 2026 at 9:30 A.M.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Association of Montana Retired Public Employees (AMRPE) Board of Directors was called to order by President Carol Grell Morris at 9:30 A.M. The meeting was conducted in person and via videoconference (Zoom).

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Carol Grell Morris, In person; Lois Menzies, In person; Bruce Brensdal, Zoom; Sheri Scurr, Zoom; Chris Behan, Zoom; Sheryl Olson, Zoom.

Sandi Olsen was excused.

GUESTS

Morisha Daniely (CMS), In person; Bill Holahan (MPERA), In person; Brian Thompson (BKBH); Zoom

Members of the Public: NONE

MINUTES

Minutes from the December 16, 2025 meeting were reviewed.

Motion: Lois moved to approve the minutes subject to correction of typographical errors and inclusion of motion makers and seconders; Bruce seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

MPERA PRESENTATION

Bill Holahan, MPERA Executive Director, reported on recent actuarial valuation presentations to the SAVA Committee, Board of Investments, and Legislative Finance Committee. He noted that improving amortization periods generated few legislative concerns. MPERA will conduct an actuarial experience study covering July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2025, with results to be presented to the MPERA Board in May 2026 and to SAVA in July 2026. Bill also provided operational updates, including benefit payments, tax reporting, and audit activity, and emphasized that MPERA benefits do not constitute "golden parachutes."

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Brian Thompson, AMRPE lobbyist, reported that interim legislative activity related to pensions remains limited. The January SAVA meeting focused primarily on election issues. Brian reviewed the interim committee schedule, potential pension-related legislation, and ongoing efforts—supported by AMRPE and AARP Montana—to eliminate state taxation of Social Security benefits. He recommended re-forming AMRPE's Legislative Committee and holding regular calls during the 2027 session.

REPORTS

Treasurer's Report

Bruce presented the final 2025 financial report and year-to-date 2026 report. Assets increased in 2025, and revenues exceeded expenses.

Motion: Lois moved to approve the 2025 financial report and transmit it to the Audit Committee; Sheryl seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Bruce presented a proposed 2026 budget. Following discussion, the Lobbying & Legal line was increased from $2,000 to $3,000.

Motion: Lois moved to approve the 2026 budget as amended; Sheri seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Bruce also reported that required IRS and state filings for 2025 have been completed or will be filed when available.

Contracts Committee – CMS Contract

Bruce reported on the proposed Independent Contractor Agreement with Communication & Management Services (CMS) for April 1, 2026 through December 31, 2027. The contract clarifies scope of services, data ownership, confidentiality, and compensation, including separate hourly rates for routine support and specialized design work. Bruce moved to approve the CMS contract;

Motion: Sheryl moved and Chris seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Carol will sign the agreement.

SEGBAC

Bruce reported that SEGBAC's next meeting is scheduled for March 2026 and that he will provide an update at the March AMRPE Board meeting. He reminded the Board that he serves as AMRPE's representative on SEGBAC.

Membership

Lois presented the January 2026 membership report, including recruitment and renewal statistics. She reviewed the annual recruitment and renewal mailing process, response rates, and database maintenance procedures.

Nomination Committee

Lois reported that one Board vacancy remains for a term ending December 31, 2026. A new Nominating Committee will be appointed to recruit candidates, with attention to representation from underrepresented retirement systems.

Member Communication

Carol reported that a spring 2026 newsletter will be produced and will require additional non-legislative content. She encouraged Board members to suggest topics and noted the need to strengthen AMRPE's social media presence during the interim.

OLD BUSINESS

MPERA Retiree Webinars

Sheri reported on her efforts to represent AMRPE at MPERA retirement webinars. She attempted to attend a recent defined contribution plan webinar but was unable to join due to a link error, which she has since resolved. She plans to register for and attend the next retirement webinar scheduled for January 21, 2026, at 2:00 p.m., using the script and talking points provided by Lois to briefly introduce AMRPE and invite participants to join.

Lois reminded Sheri to coordinate with MPERA staff (specifically Theresa, the usual webinar host) in advance so that AMRPE's brief presentation can be built into the agenda following MPERA's introductory video. Sheri expressed willingness to continue serving in this role and indicated that she would refine her approach after gaining experience with the webinar flow.

HR Research and Outreach

The Board revisited earlier discussions about increasing membership by working more closely with public-sector human resources offices. Lois summarized prior work: AMRPE has some legacy printed materials—a mission card and business-card-sized handouts—but their use has been sporadic, and effectiveness is unknown. She suggested that a Board committee review existing materials, determine whether they merit reprinting or redesign, and develop a plan for distribution through HR offices.

Sheri and Chris discussed potential strategies, including:

- Approaching HR departments at state agencies and local governments to explore whether AMRPE information could be included in retirement packets or made available in offices.
- Targeting conferences such as the Montana Association of Counties (MACo) and the Montana League of Cities and Towns, where MPERA often hosts tables and where AMRPE might seek its own table or potentially co-locate near MPERA's booth.

Lois recommended that the Membership Committee take the lead on refining HR outreach concepts, including possible postcard or brochure designs and associated costs, and that any proposed new materials be coordinated with CMS for printing and layout.

NEW BUSINESS

Committee Appointments

Carol reported that she is in the process of finalizing committee assignments for 2026. She has received committee preference lists from several Board members and will confirm membership and designate chairs for key committees, including Membership, Member Communication, Legislative, Contractor Coordination, Constitution and Bylaws, and Audit.

Carol indicated that she expects Lois to continue chairing the Membership Committee, that she (Carol) will continue to chair the Member Communication Committee, that Leo will remain on the Audit Committee, and that Bruce will continue to serve as SEGBAC representative. She will follow up with Board members who have not yet submitted their committee preferences and will circulate a complete committee roster prior to the February meeting.

Additional Comments

Board members briefly discussed the importance of recruiting at least one Board member from public safety or law enforcement retirement systems to improve representation of other MPERA-administered plans. Chris offered to have informal conversations with potential candidates and to direct interested individuals to the Nominating Committee so that formal recruitment can proceed through established processes.

Carol noted that the legislative interim period is an ideal time to address internal governance and administrative issues, such as insurance review and HR outreach, before legislative demands intensify in late 2026 and early 2027.

ADJOURNMENT

Chris moved that the meeting be adjourned. Sheri seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:41 a.m.

The next Board meeting will be held on February 17, 2026, at 9:30 a.m., by video conference and/or in person.