

MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF LOUISIANA

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

FEBRUARY 17, 2022

The Board of Trustees of the Municipal Employees' Retirement System of Louisiana met in regular session on Thursday, February 17, 2022, at 9:00 A.M. at the Municipal Employees' Retirement System, 7937 Office Park Boulevard, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

PRESENT:

Ms. Susan Percle, Chair
Ms. Phyllis McGraw, Vice-Chair
Mayor Donald Villere, Trustee
Mr. Donald Clause, Trustee
Mayor Barney Arceneaux, Trustee
Mr. Richard Williams, LMA Designee
Mr. Philip Qualls, State Treasurer's Office
Ms. Desiree Honoré Thomas, Commissioner of Administration Office

UNABLE TO ATTEND:

Mayor Mark Piazza, Trustee
Representative Philip DeVillier, Chairman House Retirement Committee
Senator Robert Mills, Senate Retirement Committee

IN ATTENDANCE:

Maris LeBlanc, Executive Director
Susita Suire, Retirement Benefits Administrator
Christopher Saik, Chief Investment Officer
Nancy LaGarde, Chief Financial Officer
Aaron Lally, Investment Consultant
Henry Jaung, Investment Consultant
Jessica Lau, Investment Consultant – via Zoom
Treasurer John Schroder – via Zoom
Greg Curran, G.S. Curran
Joey David, House Retirement
Kenny Herbold, Actuary, Louisiana Legislative Auditor's Office
Bryan Gautreaux, Member

The Chair called the meeting to order.

The Chair opened the meeting with a prayer and led everyone in the pledge of allegiance.

The Chair asked Ms. Suire to call roll. A quorum was present.

Mr. Bryan Gautreaux made a public comment requesting that the Board reconsider Ms. LeBlanc's decision to deny his public records request for a list of retirees that have retired from the City of New Iberia between January 1, 2017 to date.

Mayor Arceneaux moved to approve Ms. LeBlanc's decision to deny Mr. Gautreaux's public records request; the motion was seconded by Ms. McGraw. The motion carried without objection or opposition.

MINUTES
FEBRUARY 17, 2022
PAGE TWO

Treasurer John Schroder updated the Board that the Gainesville property development has been approved and closing of the sale should take place in late summer of 2022.

The Chair asked for approval of the minutes of the meeting held on January 20, 2022.

Mr. Williams moved that the minutes of the meeting held on January 20, 2022, be approved; the motion was seconded by Mayor Villere. The motion carried without objection or opposition. A copy is attached and made a part of these minutes.

The Chair asked for approval of the Plan A and Plan B retirements (a list was provided to the Board Members).

Ms. McGraw moved that the Plan A and Plan B retirements be approved; the motion was seconded by Mayor Arceneaux. The motion carried without objection or opposition.

Ms. McGraw moved that the Board certify the delinquency of the partial unfunded accrued liability owed by the Lafayette Consolidated Government to the Municipal Employees' Retirement System of Louisiana, pursuant to La. R.S. 11:1733, in the amount of \$1,619,072, as described in the two attached invoices, and request that the Treasurer deduct these amounts from any other monies payable to LCG by any department or agency of the state; the motion was seconded by Mayor Villere. The motion carried with Mr. Williams abstaining.

Ms. McGraw moved that the Board certify the delinquency of contribution fund payments owed by the Lafayette Consolidated Government (LCG) to the Municipal Employees' Retirement System of Louisiana (MERS), pursuant to La. R.S. 11:1733, in the amount of \$9,453.13, as described in the attached invoice for three MERS members incorrectly enrolled in the Parochial Employees' Retirement System (PERS), and request that the Treasurer deduct this amount from any other monies payable to LCG by any department or agency of the state; the motion was seconded by Mayor Villere. The motion carried with Mr. Williams abstaining.

Ms. McGraw moved that the referral of these matters to the Treasurer be deferred until the end of March. If the LCG introduces an ordinance on March 8 to amend the LCG budget to authorize payment, adopts that budget on March 22, and makes payment or arrangements to make payment to MERS by March 31, the referrals to the Treasurer will not be made. If LCG fails to meet any of these requirements the referrals will be made immediately upon that failure; the motion was seconded by Mr. Qualls. The motion carried with Mr. Williams abstaining.

Mr. Saik presented the investment cash flow report as of January 31, 2022.

Ms. LeBlanc gave the Board an update on FIA Leveraged Fund, and Fletcher Income Arbitrage Fund Ltd. indicating that final disbursements had been received.

Mr. Lally, and Mr. Jaung presented the Board with the preliminary performance report for the month of January 31, 2022. A copy of this report is attached and made part of these minutes.

Mr. Lally, Mr. Jaung, and Mr. Saik gave the Board a presentation of the MERS' asset study that also served as investment education.

MINUTES
FEBRUARY 17, 2022
PAGE THREE

The Chair recommended Ms. Honoré Thomas be appointed as the Chair of the Personnel Committee.

Mayor Arceneaux moved to accept the Chair's recommendation to appoint Ms. Honoré Thomas as the chair to the Personnel Committee; the motion was seconded by Mr. Williams. The motion carried without objection or opposition.

Ms. LeBlanc gave the Board an overview of the review conducted by the Legislative Auditor's Office of the MERS' 2021 Actuarial Valuation. Ms. LeBlanc asked the Board to approve sending a response to the Legislative Auditors addressing the actuarial assumed rate of return and the method of how and when COLAs are granted. Mr. Curran and Mr. Herbold gave the Board their views in explaining the report.

Ms. McGraw moved to have the Executive Director send a response on the report produced by the Legislative Auditors of the MERS' 2021 Actuarial Valuation; the motion was seconded by Mr. Williams. The motion carried without objection or opposition.

Mr. Curran presented information about member demographics for a possible cost-of-living adjustment for retirees.

Ms. Percle stated that she and all retirees received a memo from MERS explaining the COLA, WEP, GPO, 1099Rs, and self service portal.

Ms. LaGarde presented the budget ending January 31, 2022.

Ms. LaGarde updated the Board that the GASB 68, Employer Pension Report is complete and available on the MERS' website.

Ms. Suire gave the Board an update on current membership statuses for actives, terminated, and retirees.

Ms. Suire updated the Board that a letter was mailed to all MERS retirees and survivors introducing the Self Service Portal and how to register. The portal registration has been communicated to the entire MERS membership as of February 10th.

Ms. Suire informed the Board that a booth has been reserved for MERS at the Louisiana Municipal Clerks' Association's spring conference in Lafayette for April 7 & 8. Ms. Suire has been asked to give a presentation on April 7th at the conference.

Mr. Williams moved to approve the membership agreement for the Village of Reeves to join Plan B effective February 27, 2022; the motion was seconded by Ms. McGraw. The motion carried without objection or opposition.

Ms. McGraw moved to approve the retroactive benefit payments requested by the disability retiree; the motion was seconded by Mayor Villere. The motion carried without objection or opposition.

Ms. LeBlanc informed the Board there were no employers with late contributions that needed to be reported to the Treasurer's Office.

Ms. LeBlanc reported that there is no new litigation.

MINUTES
FEBRUARY 17, 2022
PAGE FOUR

Ms. LeBlanc informed the Board that Senator Mills sponsored Senate Bill 9 by the request of MERS. Mr. Williams moved to support Senate Bill 9; the motion was seconded by Mayor Villere. The motion carried without objection or opposition.

Representative McCormick sponsored House Bill 25 that prohibits retirement systems from investing in companies that boycott energy companies. Ms. McGraw moved to oppose House Bill 25; the motion was seconded by Mayor Villere. The motion carried with Mr. Williams, Ms. Honoré Thomas, and Mr. Qualls abstaining.

Ms. LeBlanc presented a fact sheet to the Board that she had given to Representative DeVillier.

Ms. LeBlanc informed the Board that there has been no action taken by the Attorney General's Office on the Marshals' request as of today.

Ms. LeBlanc has contacted several election vendors that allow members to vote by mail, phone, and electronically.

Ms. LeBlanc updated the Board that MERS' student worker, J'Lynn Shelby, has decided not to take the Membership Analyst position that is currently vacant.

Ms. LeBlanc has renewed her certified ethics trainer status.

Ms. LeBlanc informed the Board that she will be traveling to Washington D.C. to attend a meeting with Representative Mike Johnson to support passing legislation to repeal and/or reform the WEP and GPO offsets to Social Security. The travel expenses will be paid for by LAPERS.

Ms. McGraw moved to adjourn; the motion was seconded by Mr. Williams. The motion carried without objection or opposition.



APPROVED



ATTEST