

Nov 20 2023 11:02 am

September 26, 2023 10:06 a.m.

A public meeting of the Fitchburg Retirement Board was held in the North Meeting Room located on the 3rd floor of Fitchburg City Hall at 718 Main Street, Fitchburg, MA 01420.

Fitchburg Retirement Board members present: Thomas Dateo Jr. (Chair), John Brown, Jacquelyn Cronin and Anna Farrell. Mary Cringan was absent.

Staff present: Tina Schneider, Administrator and Steffani Santiago, Administrator Assistant

Mr. Dateo Jr., asked Steffani Santiago to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board Vote to Accept Anna Farrell as the First Elected Member:

Board Chair Thomas Dateo Jr., stated that Anna Farrell, ran unopposed in the election for the Fitchburg Contributory Retirement Board's First Elected Member. Mr. Dateo Jr., thanked Ms. Farrell for her continued efforts in advocating for the members of the Retirement System. Ms. Farrell stated she was grateful for the opportunity to continue to serve the members of the Fitchburg Retirement System.

On a motion made by John Brown and seconded by Jacquelyn Cronin, to confirm the reelection of Anna Farrell to the Fitchburg Retirement Board to serve as the First Elected Member for the term of November 1, 2023 through October 31, 2026. Voted unanimous (4-0).

Review and Approval of Warrant and Meeting Minutes:

The Board reviewed the September 2023 Warrant, the August 18, 2023 Meeting Minutes. On a motion made by Jacquelyn Cronin and seconded by John Brown, to approve the September 2023 Warrant and the August 18, 2023 Meeting Minutes. Voted unanimous (4-0).

Review and Approval of Bank Statement and Accounting:

The Board reviewed the July 2023 and August 2023 Bank Statements and Accounting. On a motion made by Anna Farrell and seconded by John Brown, to approve and accept the July 2023 and August 2023 Bank Statements and Accounting. Voted unanimous (4-0).

Review and Approval of Retirement Applications and Calculations:

Paul Walsh, School Dept., School Building Maintenance, Superannuation Retirement Allowance, Option C, effective September 8, 2023. On a motion made by Anna Farrell and seconded by John Brown, to approve Paul Walsh's Option C. Superannuation Retirement effective September 8, 2023. Voted unanimous (4-0).

Notification of Member(s) Passing:

- Mariette Reilly, School Dept., Nutrition Services, Opt. A., Retirement Date: 11/01/04, DOD: 08/28/23.
- John M. O'Connor, DPW Acting Commissioner, Opt. A., Retirement Date: 10/11/01, DOD: 09/08/23.
- Leon Forgues, School Dept., Building Maintenance, Opt. B., Retirement Date: 03/25/04, DOD: 09/12/23.

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Ms. Schneider advised the Board that the payroll warrant that had been previously emailed to them prior to the meeting, was obsolete as the Retirement Office was notified the following day of Mr. Forgues' passing. Thus, the September payroll was updated to prorate Mr. Forgues' benefit and regenerated.

Review and Approval of New Members:

Julia Doyle	Police	Civilian Dispatcher	9/5/2023
Kara Kramer	Police	Civilian Dispatcher	9/5/2023
Kyle Kelly	Police	Civilian Dispatcher	9/5/2023
Michael Abrams	DPW/Water	LMEO w/CDL	9/5/2023
Taylor Rameau	Police	Civilian Dispatcher	9/5/2023
Orion Cox	School	Para	8/29/2023
Lourence Giannotta-Allard	School	Para	8/29/2023
Grace Hoefsmit	School	Para	8/29/2023
Molly Parisi	School	Para	8/29/2023
Joan Pierre-Louis	School	Para	8/29/2023
Dangeli Solis	School	Para	8/29/2023
Alexander Cochran	School	Confidential Clerk	8/21/2023
Marielys Ramirez (REHIRE)	School	Para	8/28/2023

On a motion made by John Brown and seconded by Anna Farrell, to admit to membership the new members listed for September 2023. Voted unanimous (4-0).

Death Audit Services:

Ms. Santiago informed the Board that she had contacted the Middlesex Retirement Board as suggested by Mr. Brown at their August meeting, to inquire about death audit services for their retirees. Ms. Santiago advised, that she conversed with Middlesex Retirement's Chief Administrative Officer, Lisa Maloney, Esq., via email, who provided some information regarding the death audit services they receive from PBI. Ms. Santiago circulated a quote for services from PBI and explained the benefits of their software. The Board agreed the service would be beneficial to the System. The Board discussed the cost for services and suggested retirement office staff speak with colleagues during the Fall MACRS Conference, to inquire as to what vendors, if any, other Systems are utilizing for similar services.

School Department New Member Forms:

Ms. Santiago advised the Board, as of the second week of September, the retirement office had not received any New Member Forms for new/rehires. Ms. Santiago advised that she was informed by an employee of the School Department that their Human Resources Office had launched an electronic onboarding program and that Voya and Retirement Forms were not included in the onboarding package. Ms. Santiago informed the Board that she had reached out to the School Department's Human Resources Director Cari Fabale, who indicated that the forms were not included in the onboarding package because the Retirement Board requires wet signatures. Ms. Fabale advised that her office was in the process of reaching out to new hires to

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have the forms completed and once returned, they would be forwarded to the retirement office. Ms. Santiago informed the Board that the System had received contributions for school new hires who do not have Member Forms on record. On a motion made John Brown and seconded by Anna Farrell, for the retirement office to draft a letter to the Superintendent notifying him of the schools obligation to obtain and return fully completed, signed New Member Forms to the retirement office for every eligible new hire and rehire prior to the employee beginning their employment. Voted unanimous (4-0).

2023 Annual Affidavits Update:

Ms. Santiago reminded the Board of their conversation during their August meeting regarding the two retirees who had not returned their 2023 Annual Affidavits. Ms. Santiago reported that one of the retirees had delivered their completed Affidavit prior to August 31, 2023, so their August benefit was released. Ms. Santiago advised that Ms. Schneider was able to determine that the remaining retiree resided in a gated community out-of-state and was able to make contact with complex staff which ultimately led to being able to reach next of kin. Ms. Santiago advised that the retiree had selected an Option A., and that there was no beneficiary or next of kin contact information on record. Ms. Santiago explained the avenues in which the retirement office had to pursue to make contact and explained that services from a vendor like PBI could have expedited the process and perhaps prevented the hold on the retiree's benefits had the office been able to make contact with the retiree sooner.

Retirement Office Space:

Mr. Dateo Jr., reminded the Board of the September 20, 2023 email from the City's Facilities Manager, Russell Karlstad, in which he indicated that construction would commence on October 2, 2023. Mr. Dateo Jr., stated that Mr. Karlstad believed the project would take approximately three (3) to four (4) days to complete, the majority of which would occur while retirement office staff attends the Fall 2023 MACRS Conference. Ms. Schneider advised, staff would ensure the desk and walls in the main office would be cleared before they leave for the conference.

Attorney Gibson Opinion regarding FLSA Status of Retirement Office Staff (Tabled from August 18, 2023) Meeting:

Mr. Dateo Jr., reviewed Attorney Gibson's memorandum and draft compensatory time policy. The Board discussed the materials presented. The Board determined retirement office staff should keep timesheet records that would be submitted to the Board monthly to determine the need for a compensatory leave policy and/or overtime budget. The Board acknowledged the work that had taken place over the last year due to legislative changes. The Board agreed staff could utilize flex time as an option for weeks in which they worked over their scheduled hours provided the office was staffed or they notified the Auditor's office that the office would be closed and posted a notice on office door to notify visitors.

Retirement Software: Ms. Schneider advised the Board of an email chain that she was copied on between retirement administrators from System across the Commonwealth regarding technically issues they had experienced with PTG, poor customer service experience and lack of communication from PTG. Mr. Brown advised that PTG was scheduled for a round-table discussion at the Fall MACRS Conference and that he was hopefully the presentation would yield answers and a plan of action.

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Update on Home Rule Petition for Personal Time Buybacks:

Mr. Brown informed the Board that the legislation was at PERAC's Emerging Issues Forum during the legislative update and that the matter was still in front of the Joint Committee on Public Services. Mr. Dateo Jr., stated he would reach out to Senator Cronin's Office and State Representative Kushmerek's Office to request a status update and invite them to the October meeting.

City of Fitchburg I.T. Department ~ Comprehensive Cybersecurity Awareness Program:

Ms. Santiago advised the Board of the email that was circulated to staff from the City's I.T. Department regarding the comprehensive Cybersecurity Awareness and Assessment Program being hosted by the Commonwealth. The Board acknowledged that they received the email and would participate in the program as assigned.

New Business:

- 91A Steven Bourgault – Ms. Schneider informed the Board that she had received a Board Action Termination request from PERAC via PROSPER for ADR Retiree, Steven Bourgault. Ms. Schneider advised the Board of Ms. Bourgault's situation and explained she had been in contact with Mr. Bourgault's daughter regarding the material that needed to be submitted to PERAC and was assured the documentation had been filed with PERAC. Ms. Schneider stated she would continue to check PROSPER for updates and would follow-up with Mr. Bourgault's daughter if PERAC does not update the status for this matter in the next week.
- Longevity Awards – Mr. Dateo Jr., advised the Board that he was aware one of the City's unions had negotiated double longevity awards for middle managers and asked the Board to consider following suit with retirement staff. Mr. Dateo Jr., asked the Board to consider the increase and suggested tabling the matter until the October meeting to discuss further.
- John W. Parsons, Esq., PERAC Executive Director - Mr. Brown informed the Board, during PERAC's Emerging Issues Forum, John Parsons announced he would be retiring from his role as Executive Director at PERAC, in March 2024.

On a motion made by Anna Farrell and seconded by John Brown, to adjourn the September 26, 2023 meeting of the Fitchburg Contributory Retirement Board. Voted unanimous (4-0).

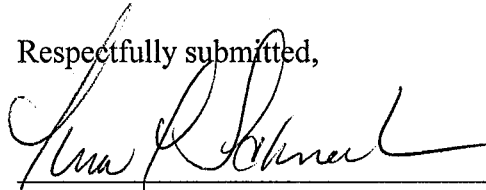
The next public meeting of the Fitchburg Contributory Retirement Board is scheduled for October 24, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

Meeting Adjourned 11:50 a.m.

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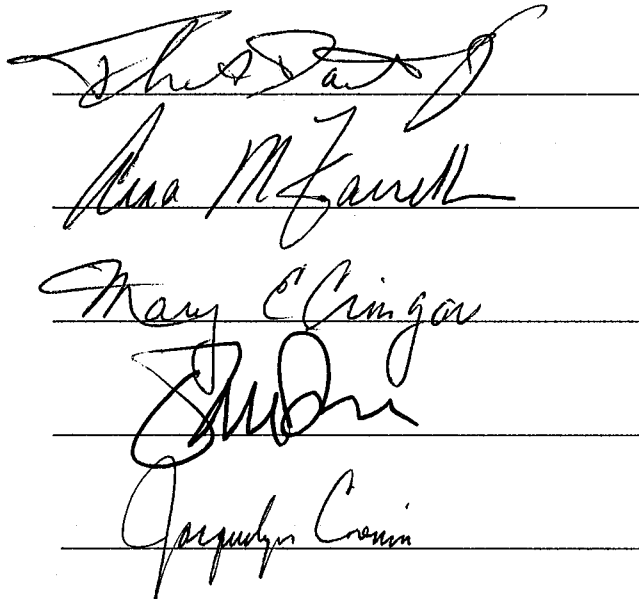
The following payment was approved for the September 2023 warrant:	\$1,843,632.61
Applications for withdrawal of accumulated deductions were:	\$54,849.08
Transfers to other systems were:	\$42,664.95
Management fees for September 2023 were: PRIT Core Fund	\$94,577.10

Respectfully submitted,



Tina M. Schneider
Board Administrator

The Retirement Board attest to the accuracy of the minutes.



Five handwritten signatures are listed vertically, each on a horizontal line. From top to bottom, the signatures appear to be: 1. A stylized signature, possibly 'Shirley'. 2. 'Lisa M. Farrell'. 3. 'Mary C. Cingora'. 4. A signature that appears to be 'John'. 5. 'Josephine Conner'.