



EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, February 6, 2024; 10:00 a.m.
Kenilworth Office Building, Riverdale, MD
(Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams)

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (“Commission”) Employees’ Retirement System (“ERS”) Board of Trustees (“Board”) met virtually via Microsoft Teams with CHAIR SHAPIRO leading the call on Tuesday, February 6, 2024. The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by CHAIR SHAPIRO.

Board Members Present

Peter A. Shapiro, Board of Trustees Chair, Prince George’s County Commissioner
James Hedrick, Board of Trustees Vice Chair, Montgomery County Commissioner
Gavin Cohen, CPA, M-NCPPC Secretary-Treasurer, Ex-Officio
Sheila Morgan-Johnson, Prince George’s County Public Member
Elaine A. Stookey, Bi-County Open Trustee
Theodore J. Russell III, Prince George’s County Open Trustee
Caroline McCarthy, Montgomery County Open Trustee
Pamela F. Gogol, Montgomery County Public Member
Lisa Blackwell-Brown, MCGEO Represented Trustee

Joined at 10:01 a.m.

Board Members Absent

Asuntha Chiang-Smith, M-NCPPC Executive Director, Ex-Officio

ERS Staff Present

Andrea L. Rose, Executive Director
Jaclyn F. Harris, Deputy Executive Director
Alicia C. Stanford, Administrative Specialist
Sheila Joynes, Accounting Manager

Presentations

Michael “Wes” Aniton, M-NCPPC Office of the General Counsel, Deputy General Counsel

ITEM 1. APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 6, 2024, CONSENT AGENDA

ACTION: MS. GOGOL made a motion, seconded by VICE CHAIR HEDRICK to approve the Consent Agenda of February 6, 2024. The motion PASSED (9-0). (Motion # 24-1).

ITEM 2. CHAIR’S ITEMS

Ms. Rose informed the Board that Howard Brown, Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) Represented Trustee, is on leave and retiring effective April 1, 2024; therefore, he is unable to complete his term on the Board. The FOP will conduct an election for a FOP Represented Trustee to serve the remainder of Sgt. Brown’s term. Sgt. Brown served on the Administration & Personnel Oversight Committee (“Personnel Committee”) and due to this vacancy, another trustee will replace him on the Personnel Committee. As outlined in the Governance Manual, the Chair shall make committee

assignments, subject to Board approval. Chair Shapiro recommended Theodore Russell to serve on the Personnel Committee.

ACTION: MR. COHEN made a motion, seconded by VICE CHAIR HEDRICK, to approve the assignment of Theodore Russell to the Administration & Personnel Oversight Committee. The motion PASSED (9-0). (Motion # 24-2).

ITEM 3. MISCELLANEOUS – No discussion or questions from the Trustees.

ITEM 4. CONSULTANT/MANAGER PRESENTATION

Presentation by Michael “Wes” Aniton, Office of the General Counsel, Deputy General Counsel

Michael “Wes” Aniton, Deputy General Counsel, presented an Ethics and Fiduciary Responsibility Workshop. The Board is committed to completing an annual training session on ethics and fiduciary responsibilities as part of its work program. The Board and trustees from the Commission’s 115 Trust were provided a Fiduciary Ethics Presentation for review prior to the training. The training included a discussion of the legal requirements as a trustee under the Maryland Code governing fiduciary responsibilities and Public Ethics Law, as well as adherence to the ERS Ethics Policy included in the Governance Manual. The training also highlighted three (3) key fiduciary duties (Care, Obedience and Loyalty), prohibited transactions, whistleblowing, conflicts of interest, rules surrounding gifts, resolving conflicts of interest and disclosure of conflict, liability, enforcement and penalties, and confidentiality.

ITEM 5. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Ms. Rose presented the Executive Director’s report dated January 28, 2024. Ms. Rose informed the Board that technical upgrades delaying the annual disaster recovery test have now been resolved with testing rescheduled for February 8, 2024. The ERS issued an RFP for investment consulting services on January 4, 2024 and staff have responded to 40 questions from several investment consulting firms. The submission deadline for proposals is February 20, 2024. The Investment Monitoring Group will review RFP submissions beginning in March 2024 and presentations from the selected investment consulting finalists will be held in-person at the May 2024 Board meeting. Due to a scheduling conflict with the Commission Service Awards Ceremony, the May 7th Board meeting was moved to Wednesday, May 8, 2024. Ms. Rose informed the Board that after going live with the new MemberDirect self-service portal, active members are enrolling and gaining access to their retirement information and the ability to run personalized retirement benefit estimates. Staff plans to provide enrollment statistics, early feedback, and a demonstration of the portal at a future Board meeting.

ERS staff met with Cheiron, the Commission’s Deputy Executive Director, Secretary-Treasurer, and Human Resources Director on January 31, 2024 to discuss the impact of inflation and salary increases on the employer contribution rate and to determine whether an experience study to review the salary assumption study was warranted prior to the next Plan experience study. Given the current economy and unusual salary experience in recent years, Cheiron confirmed looking backwards to project future salary assumptions would result in outsized increases in liabilities and would not help develop a better salary assumption. Instead, Cheiron recommended the Commission involve Cheiron with future negotiations to see how any potential salary increases would impact the ERS. Given Cheiron’s recommendation, an expected tightening in the labor market and that the next experience study is scheduled to follow the June 30, 2025 valuation, ERS and Commission staff determined an experience study to review the salary assumption was not warranted prior to the next Plan experience study and no action was recommended at this time.

ITEM 6. CLOSED SESSION

ACTION: MS. GOGOL made a motion, seconded by VICE CHAIR HEDRICK to go into closed session pursuant to the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland Section 3-305(b)(1) to discuss the performance evaluation and compensation of an employee, over whom this public body has jurisdiction and Section 3-305(b)(7) to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice on a legal matter. The motion PASSED (9-0). (Motion # 24-3).

During Closed Session, the following action was taken:

1. The Board discussed the performance evaluation and compensation of an employee and approved a recommendation from the Administration & Personnel Oversight Committee.
2. The Board considered matters related to negotiation of a pending contract for professional services, received guidance from legal counsel, and approved actions as recommended by legal counsel.

Board of Trustees in Closed Session: Chair Shapiro, Vice Chair Hedrick, Gavin Cohen, Sheila Morgan-Johnson, Theodore Russell III, Elaine Stookey, Caroline McCarthy, Pamela Gogol, and Lisa Blackwell-Brown

ACTION: VICE CHAIR HEDRICK made a motion, seconded by MR. RUSSELL to ratify items taken in Closed Session. The motion PASSED (9-0) (Motion # 24-6).

ITEM 7. ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTION

The Board recessed to perform administrative functions not subject to the Open Meetings Act, pursuant to Section 3-104 of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

The Board meeting of February 6, 2024, adjourned at 11:37 a.m.

Respectfully,

Alicia C. Stanford

Alicia C. Stanford
Administrative Specialist

Andrea L. Rose

Andrea L. Rose
Executive Director