

Summarized Minutes of the regular meeting of the City of Fort Pierce Retirement and Benefit System January 17, 2019 2:00 p.m., in the 2nd Floor Conference Room at City Hall.

Present:

Keith Stephens, Chairperson
Caleta Scott, Vice-Chairperson
Comm. Tom Perona
Johnna Morris
Brian Avilla
Nina Penick
Mayor Linda Hudson

U.A. General Member
General Member
City Commission Member
Director of Finance
Police Officer Member
U.A. Board Appointee
Commission Appointed Member

Attorney Jim Walker
Christina Paz

Attorney for the Retirement Board, Advisory
Retirement Clerk

Recording:
Queen Thompkins

Executive Assistant to the Director of Finance

ITEM NO. 1 & 2 ~ ROLL CALL

Mr. Keith Stephens called the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m., the first item on the agenda being the “Roll Call”.

ITEM NO. 3 ~ COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Mr. Stephens, the next item on the agenda was comments from the public. There were no comments from the public.

ITEM NO. 4 ~ APPROVAL OF SUMMARIZED MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 15, 2018

Mr. Stephens said the next item was the approval of the summarized minutes of November 15, 2018, and if there was a motion to approve the minutes. **A motion was made by Comm. Tom Perona and seconded by Mr. Brian Avilla to approve the summarized minutes of November 15, 2018.**

All those in favor of the motion signified by saying aye. A poll was done of each Board member. There was no opposition and the motion was carried unanimously.

ITEM NO. 5 ~ ATTORNEY’S REPORT

Mr. Walker said there’s nothing of legal interest to report this month. I did have a brief question of my own, collectively to the Board. I received a copy of the annual report from the Florida Division of Retirement and thought that it might be interesting for the other members of the Board unless you all also received it. If not, I will get that out to you.

Mr. Stephens said we will move on to the public hearing.

ITEM NO. 6 ~ PUBLIC HEARINGS ON BENEFIT APPLICATIONS

Mr. Stephens opened up the public hearing for comments on the request for Retirement (DROP Program) from Barbara G. Moore with 25 years and 1 month of service with the City of Fort Pierce. He asked if there was anyone here who would like to publicly comment on this request. Seeing none, Mr. Stephens closed the public hearing. He opened up the matter for the Board. **A motion was made by Comm. Perona and seconded by Mayor Linda Hudson to approve the request for retirement (DROP Program) from Barbara G. Moore.** Mr. Stephens asked for any questions or comments on this request before the motion was called. **All those in favor of the motion signified by saying aye. A poll was done of each Board member. There was no opposition and the motion was carried unanimously.**

Mr. Stephens opened up the public hearing for comments on the request for Retirement (DROP Program) from Donald Christman with 25 years of service with the City of Fort Pierce Police Department. He asked if there was anyone here who would like to publicly comment on this request. Seeing none, Mr. Stephens closed the public hearing. He opened up the matter for the Board. **A motion was made by Ms. Johnna Morris and seconded by Comm. Tom Perona to**

approve the request for retirement (DROP Program) from Donald Christman. Mr. Stephens asked for any questions or comments on this request before the motion was called. **All those in favor of the motion signified by saying aye. A poll was done of each Board member. There was no opposition and the motion was carried unanimously.**

Mr. Stephens opened up the public hearing for comments on the request for Retirement (DROP Program) from John Schramm with 25 years of service with the City of Fort Pierce Police Department. He asked if there was anyone here who would like to publicly comment on this request. Seeing none, Mr. Stephens closed the public hearing. He opened up the matter for the Board. **A motion was made by Comm. Tom Perona and seconded by Mayor Linda Hudson to approve the request for retirement (DROP Program) from John Schramm.** Mr. Stephens asked for any questions or comments on this request before the motion was called. **All those in favor of the motion signified by saying aye. A poll was done of each Board member. There was no opposition and the motion was carried unanimously.**

Mr. Stephens opened up the public hearing for comments on the request for Retirement from Christopher Bender with 25 years of service with the City of Fort Pierce Police Department. He asked if there was anyone here who would like to publicly comment on this request. Seeing none, Mr. Stephens closed the public hearing. He opened up the matter for the Board. **A motion was made by Ms. Johnna Morris and seconded by Ms. Caleta Scott to approve the request for retirement from Christopher Bender.** Mr. Stephens asked for any questions or comments on this request before the motion was called. **All those in favor of the motion signified by saying aye. A poll was done of each Board member. There was no opposition and the motion was carried unanimously.**

Mr. Stephens opened up the public hearing for comments on the request for Retirement from Elizabeth Woodruff with 8 years of service with the City of Fort Pierce. He asked if there was anyone here who would like to publicly comment on this request. Seeing none, Mr. Stephens closed the public hearing. He opened up the matter for the Board. **A motion was made by Mr. Brian Avilla and seconded by Ms. Caleta Scott to approve the request for retirement from Elizabeth Woodruff.** Mr. Stephens asked for any questions or comments on this request before the motion was called. **All those in favor of the motion signified by saying aye. A poll was done of each Board member. There was no opposition and the motion was carried unanimously.**

ITEM NO. 7 ~ OLD BUSINESS

None.

ITEM NO. 8 ~ NEW BUSINESS

None.

ITEM NO. 9 ~ CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Stephens said the next item is the Consent Agenda. **A motion was made by Comm. Tom Perona and seconded by Mayor Linda Hudson to approve the refund of member contributions.**

All those in favor of the motion signified by saying aye. There were no opposition and the motion carried unanimously.

ITEM NO. 10 ~ CONSIDERATION OF ABSENCES

Mr. Stephens said we have no members absent.

Comm. Perona said he would like to welcome our new member. We have been a Board missing one member for so long and I know the Mayor has a passion for the Retirement Board because there's a lot of money connected to it. I think the Mayor is going to bring a complete good set of eyes that will help us do a better job. I want to welcome the Mayor and for once we have a full Board.

Mr. Stephens said he second what Comm. Perona is saying.

ITEM NO. 11 ~ BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Ms. Penick welcome the Mayor to the Board. It is pleasant to see a smiling face here.

Mayor Hudson said thank you.

Comm. Perona said he likes the letter that was put in under Miscellaneous on the court issue that went through. It was interesting. First it didn't make sense and then it did. Mayor, if you get a chance you can read it. CYPEN Newsletter has a lot of interesting facts in it, like 37% of all funds right now are 95% funded which is unbelievable. I think the market has a lot to do with that. There's a lot of good stuff in CYPEN. Mr. Walker keeps us updated on anything interesting that is happening in our State. Mayor, this agenda is not typical of what we do. We are all saying if you take a look at the minutes from the last meeting, it was over 2 hours; almost 3 hours.

Mayor Hudson asked if it was one issue.

Comm. Perona said we have money managers. Twice a year we have our money managers come in; they divide them up; they come in and tell us a little bit of the story. If you have any questions about funding practices, their fees, anything; what's happening in the industry; they've got their 10 minute presentation; they tell you what's going on. It is overwhelming in the beginning. Please feel overwhelmed because we all do. Caleta and Brian are some of the newer people. They sat here in awe, but you catch up really fast, especially when you go to the FPPTA. Ask as many questions as you possibly can; it's the only way you are going to get up to speed. We all need to be conscious of that too when we start talking and asking questions, to make sure that we are bringing everybody up to the same level. They have their own language; their own words.

Mayor Hudson said I think I attended one of them before I was mayor and they were all sitting out there in suits; it was quite fancy money talk.

Comm. Perona said our consultants will talk you through what's going to happen. They help us out so they are very good in getting us up to speed by the time the money managers hit the table. This Board just went through a slump. We fired our first money manager and it was quite an experience. You will learn a little bit about how we are set up and how everybody is connected to us when you terminate somebody. Welcome aboard and if you have any questions, you can go through Mr. Walker because you really can't talk to us. If you're here in a meeting and you have questions, you can do that. Are you going to go to the FPPTA?

Mayor Hudson said yes. I'm going to get the dates; I can't go this February.

Comm. Perona said I go once a year for that. You will start in the Fall and if you go to the Winter one three or four months later, seven months later, you will finish up. We all are either in the process or we are FPPTA certified. That is one thing that has happened over the last 5 years we've all decided, and for doing that, chairmanship and officers are going to change a little bit more frequently. I think we've had two chairmen in the last 15 years.

Ms. Scott had no comments outside of welcome.

Mayor Hudson said thank you.

Mr. Stephens asked the Mayor if she had any questions.

Mayor Hudson said she was going to ask about the certification process. I will find out about that and get there as soon as I can.

Mr. Avilla said he had no comments.

Ms. Morris said welcome aboard to the Mayor.

Mr. Stephens said he is in his fifth year now and the first year, you take it all in and you do understand and you feed off the other members. We have two finance people here and there are things that they've learned over the years, especially when you go to the FPPTA. When you go there, you will see how many public pensions there are in the State of Florida. That's what is amazing. When you see all these people, they are going every year. As a matter of fact, they send out a newsletter and once you register with them, you will start receiving this newsletter. When you start receiving this newsletter, it will wow you. Anytime you want to go to them for any kind of information, they will give you the real information.

Mayor Hudson asked who they were.

Mr. Stephens said Florida Public Pension Trustee Association. They actually have their own Board and members and it's a very detailed organization. Two things that I would like to talk about. First, are we all registered that want to go, for the end of February?

Ms. Paz said she has the ones that contacted her; yes.

Mr. Stephens asked Ms. Paz if she has all the Board members cell phone numbers.

Ms. Paz said no.

Mr. Stephens asked the Board members to give Ms. Paz their cell phones numbers in the event they needed to be contacted. Because of the certification and what they're doing, I think it's a great idea when Comm. Perona brought it up, to rotate this position and we talked about frequency. Maybe we need to put it in writing as an official thing, whereas, do we do it for one year; two years. I'm probably half way done and I've only felt like I done two or three meetings. I don't know if one year is enough or should it be two years. Maybe one year is enough and I only had to fill in for Comm. Perona once. I wanted to open it up for discussion because I do think each Board member should get a chance to sit here and be able to fill in. Knowing that you are sitting here and running a meeting, you definitely pay attention.

Comm. Perona said he can see Mr. Stephen's point. By the time you figure out how to do everything, you're done. We do have a problem; some of you are elected into the positions, so if you are into a two or three year stent, you may be out before you are in. You have to keep that in mind also. If you are vice-chairman and all of a sudden you are not re-elected for some reason into the process, it disrupts us.

Mr. Stephens said to Mr. Avilla there weren't too many people that wanted what you are doing, were there.

Mr. Avilla said there wasn't many that went on the ballot, but they were afraid they didn't realize what the position was about. They didn't have a clue. I thought these young people had more time than me to sit in the position for several years. I don't think it should be someone who has a 1½ years left. I think it should be someone who has 5 to 10 years left who can continue on and make the calculated decisions you have made of the last 15-20 years or however long you've been doing it. You've done an amazing job, so I don't want a "fly by night" person sitting here, and the sad part about it is it may be me for the simple fact I may have to step in November when my time is up.

Mr. Walker said it's understood that this is a casual conversation. I think I get the gist of it. With your permission I will draft a proposed rule, then perhaps this can be identified and a formal item of discussion at the next meeting.

Mr. Stephens said if that's what you think we need to do. I just want you all to start thinking about it and I just wanted to bring it up for discussion.

Comm. Perona said he doesn't like the word, rule. I like common practice because there are times and we're managing a commitment to employees that's \$200 million; it's going to be \$300 million someday. Rather than a rule, I'd rather just a common practice. You need to adapt to whatever you have. We've been fortunate; we have a commitment to the Board; the Board has a commitment to

us. We have an expense in this because we are all certified. It's a big expense; towards institutional knowledge; it's a learning curve that's very steep. You get the wrong people in here and you have these rules, it may strangle what we've built.

Mr. Stephens said that's why he brought it up for discussion. I didn't know how the Board felt how we should handle it. We can do common practice like you say. I just didn't want to feel like we had to or we didn't have to. Like what you've said, we've had two chairpersons in 15 years. I don't think that's good either.

Comm. Perona said I am happy with a two year term. I think that's good. If we have one person pushing the buttons and pulling the levers, you don't get the experience moving around the table. I want everybody to have that feeling of discomfort when you are in charge of this and you have somebody screaming and yelling, attorneys in here and tape recorders and court reporters. You've got to be able to have that feeling because that's what it is to be a part of this Board. We are going to share the love and the pain. I'm agreeing to two years.

Mr. Stephens said we can talk formal. He want to put it as an agenda item.

Comm. Perona said the motion has to be made at that moment and time that will determine what is rule or not. I think you need to dictate what's going on; you need to make the statement, I'm going to be displace here shortly and I really haven't had a chance to do whatever. I don't think anybody is in a real hurry to be chairman of the Retirement Board. Just in practice, the Mayor has a Deputy Mayor. Is that what it's called?

Mayor Hudson said it's called Pro Term.

Comm. Perona said it's on a rotation list. There's nothing set in stone. That's the way it's been; it's common practice. The Fire Board; I just became Chairman of the Fire Board. It's through a common practice; the City has to be represented and whoever's next in line; the same thing with the Deputy Chairman or Vice Chairman. This is the way we do this and I think it's common practice and in case it goes south, the Board can say, here's the rule and here is what we are going to do now.

Mr. Stephens said I'm glad you brought that up. I was thinking in terms of how the UA Board does it. Is it a rule or do they have a common practice?

Comm. Perona said it is a Charter.

Mr. Stephens said they swap every year.

Comm. Perona said that's probably common practice.

Mayor Hudson said I'm not sure that is a rule. I think that's a common practice.

Mr. Stephens said it makes it easy for people to hear. That's just something to start thinking about and see how everyone feels.

Mayor Hudson said you might want to ease into it because once you establish it, it becomes, “Oh but this is the way we’ve been doing it.”

Mr. Stephens said I understand and that’s why I brought it up. There being nothing further, move for adjournment.

ITEM NO. 12 ~ ADJOURNMENT

The next item was next month’s meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for February 21, 2019 at 2:00 p.m.

All those in favor of the motion signified by saying aye. There was no opposition and the motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned the meeting at 2:48 p.m.

ATTEST:

Secretary/Treasurer

Chairperson

Note: These minutes are not verbatim, only important issues and motions are reproduced in writing for the benefit of the Fort Pierce Retirement and Benefit System members. The recording itself is the official record for the meeting. The meeting tape/cd is available.