

**CITY OF FORT PIERCE RETIREMENT AND BENEFIT SYSTEM
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD
July 20, 2023**

Summarized Minutes of the regular meeting of the City of Fort Pierce Retirement and Benefit System July 20, 2023, 2:07 p.m., in the Commission Chambers at City Hall

Present:

Comm. Arnold Gaines	City Commission Member
Comm. Michael Broderick	City Commission Member
Wendy Rydzewski	City of Fort Pierce General Member, Vice-Chair
Kyle McCarthy	Police Officer Member
Keith Stephens	U.A. General Member
Johnna Morris	Secretary/Treasurer

Guest by Conference Call:

Attorney Jim Walker	Attorney for the Retirement Board, Advisory
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Absences:

Barbara Mika	U.A. Board Appointed Member, Chair
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Recording:

Junelly Sebastiano	Executive Assistant to Director of Finance
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ITEM NO. 1 & 2~ ROLL CALL

Mrs. Wendy Rydzewski called the meeting to order at 2:07 pm on Thursday June 20, 2023, the first item on the agenda being the “Roll Call”.

ITEM NO. 3 ~ COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Mrs. Rydzewski said next, we will move on to comments from the public? Seeing no public, we will move on to the consideration of minutes.

ITEM NO. 4 ~ CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

Mrs. Rydzewski said consideration of minutes, any discussion?

A motion was made by Mrs. Johnna Morris and seconded by Mr. Keith Stephens. All those in favor of the motion signified by saying aye. There was no opposition, and the motion was carried unanimously.

ITEM NO. 5 ~ ATTORNEY’S REPORT

Mrs. Rydzewski said, next, we move on to a report from the board attorney. Mr. Walker?

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Mr. Jim Walker said thank you madame Chair. I apologize for the difficulties in connecting. There was attendance at this years' educational conference, the National Association of Public Pension Attorneys. Everyone will be getting a memory stick of the conference material. Other than that, there is nothing to report of legal interest at this point. My report in August will be detailing some legislation that came out. Otherwise, I'm very happy to entertain any questions, comments, or concerns.

ITEM NO.6 ~ PUBLIC HEARING ON BENEFITS APPLICATIONS

Mrs. Rydzewski said we will open the public hearing for the request for retirement from Robert Davis With 24 Years and 2 months of Service with The Fort Pierce Utility Authority. Seeing no public, we will close the public hearing and open it for discussion.

A motion was made by Mr. Keith Stephens and seconded by Comm. Arnold Gaines. All those in favor of the motion signified by saying aye. There was no opposition, and the motion was carried unanimously.

Mrs. Rydzewski said we will open the public hearing for the request for retirement from Wilburn Crawford with 25 years and 1 month of service with The Fort Pierce Utility Authority entering DROP. Seeing no public, we will close the public hearing and open it for discussion.

A motion was made by Mrs. Morris and seconded by Mr. Stephens All those in favor of the motion signified by saying aye. There was no opposition, and the motion was carried unanimously.

Mrs. Rydzewski said we will open the public hearing for the request for retirement from Seddrick Dixon with 6 years and 3 months of service with The Fort Pierce Utility Authority. Seeing no public, we will close the public hearing and open it for discussion.

A motion was made by Mr. Stephens and seconded by Comm. Gaines. All those in favor of the motion signified by saying aye. There was no opposition, and the motion was carried unanimously.

Mrs. Rydzewski said we will open the public hearing for the request for retirement from Kevin McDonald with 6 years and 1 month of service with The Fort Pierce Utility Authority. Seeing no public, we will close the public hearing and open it for discussion.

A motion was made by Mrs. Morris and seconded by Comm. Gaines. All those in favor of the motion signified by saying aye. There was no opposition, and the motion was carried unanimously.

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Mrs. Rydzewski said we will open the public hearing for the request for retirement from James L. Carnes III with 17 years and 1 month of service with The Fort Pierce Utility Authority. Seeing no public, we will close the public hearing and open it for discussion.

A motion was made by Mr. Stephens and seconded by Mr. Kyle McCarthy. All those in favor of the motion signified by saying aye. There was no opposition, and the motion was carried unanimously.

Mrs. Rydzewski said we will open the public hearing for the request for service buy-back for Caroline Valentine. Seeing no public, we will close the public hearing and open it for discussion.

Mrs. Morris said Caroline was an employee of the City of Fort Pierce, and she left employment, and she took her contribution that she had into the system. She is now employed with the UA, and she wants to buy-back the time and our current plan allows for that. She must pay the \$400.00 for the actuarial calculation and then the actuary provides the amount that would make her whole for that time that she was originally in the system. For her to capture that time, from May of 2016 to October 2018, the cost is \$15,174.84 and then \$3 for each day beyond the two-week period. She has agreed to this. She's paid the amount for the actuary to do the calculation and the board must approve it.

Mr. Stephens said have we done it for anybody before?

Mrs. Morris said yes, it's been done before. Most people defer it and there aren't very many that come back to employment, either with the city or with the UA.

Mr. Stephens said Attorney Walker blessed it with his legal expertise?

Mr. Walker said yes, I was asked to and reviewed that. The principal question that was being addressed was whether the perimeters of the buy-back were within our code. We did look at that with particular focus on the interest rate embodied within the calculation, those were within the allowable range within our code.

Mr. Stephens said if somebody deferred, left the company and the same thing happened?

Mrs. Morris said they will just have the amount that's there if they want to buy the years that they were gone to make them whole, to make it seem as if they did not lose any of that time, they'd have to purchase that. They would start over; they would have what was deferred and then start fresh from there.

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Comm. Michael Broderick said in essence what this creates is that the two years that this person worked is now reestablished for their length of employment time moving forward. If they're working at 8, they'd have a 10-year end retirement scenario, because they're buying it back. If they didn't buy it back, they'd have net 8.

A motion was made by Mr. Stephens and seconded by Comm. Gaines. All those in favor of the motion signified by saying aye. 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

Mrs. Rydzewski said next, Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Comm. Gaines and seconded by Mrs. Rydzewski All those in favor of the motion signified by saying aye. There was no opposition, and the motion was carried unanimously.

ITEM NO. 10 ~ CONSIDERATION OF ABSENCES

Mrs. Rydzewski said next, consideration of absences.

Mrs. Morris said I move that we accept the absence of Barbara Mika

A motion was made by Mr. Stephens and seconded by Mr. McCarthy All those in favor of the motion signified by saying aye. There was no opposition, and the motion was carried unanimously.

ITEM NO. 11 ~ BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mrs. Rydzewski said are there any board member comments?

Mr. McCarthy said I can't remember if there was a final decision made on the Colas or the 13th check if it got put on the back burner or if there was a final determination on that.

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Mr. Stephens said if I'm not mistaken, Madam Chair, we tabled it for now. That doesn't mean it can't come back up, because it has come back up a couple times.

Comm. Gaines said Madam Chair, just to follow up on it, I know we had the discussions and I know what was said, but if board members are still getting emails and questions about it, is it something that we need to look at again? Just so they know that their pleads are not falling on deaf ears. If we can't do it, I'd rather say, this is why. If Walker says no, we've done it, I'm fine with that too, but the emails and requests are not going to stop.

Mrs. Morris said Just for us to even consider it, is going beyond what is allowed in our plan. However, considering the plan year that we just had and the \$20 million loss, I don't think it's really anything that we can honestly entertain. We already had a \$35 million unfunded liability to pay for members that are currently in the system and then we lost an additional \$20 million in the last plan year.

Mr. McCarthy said the retirees I spoke to understand that, especially where the economy is. So, I figured that maybe it might be a discussion somebody brings back up when we're on the up and up not when we're getting so many losses.

Mr. Stephens said right, Mrs. Morris answered the question. Make the statement, hey guys, we understand your pain, but we're dealing with a \$20 million loss after \$35 million shortfall. Let us recoup and try to recover if we can and then we go from there. That's that statement on record. It's not like we're not doing anything, but we're dealing with the facts and trying to recoup what the market did to us, once we get on the positive side, then maybe we can come back.

Mr. Stephens said one of the first things we would have to do is come up with some kind of consensus to send to our actuary and say 'If we did this, how much would it cost us'? At this point we know where we're at and that would be a waste of money right there. When we do get to a point then maybe we do that, and it won't be cheap for the actuary to do whatever we decide to do. said we're making a record now saying this is the reason. You can come back and say we're thinking about it, we would love to help. However, we have got to bring that number down a little bit before we can consider it, because that's our duty here.

Mr. McCarthy said thank you.

Comm. Gaines said I attended the Florida Public Pension Trustee Association Conference. It was a very interesting conference; I got some stuff out of some of the seminars. If they are on video, one of the sessions that was great was about diversity. The presenter just broke it down to 'this is where we are and this is where we're going, if you don't like it you might need to get out of this profession because it's coming'.

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It was a great presentation. I don't know if they have it on video, but if they do, go watch it. I just wanted to let the board know that I did go to the seminar.

Mr. Stephens said I believe we decided we think it's a good idea when that comes up once a year, that one of us goes to that as a representative.

ITEM NO. 13 ~ ADJOURMENT

Seeing that there were no further questions or comments. Mrs. Rydzewski adjourned the meeting at 2.30 pm.

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.