

CITY OF FORT PIERCE RETIREMENT AND BENEFIT SYSSYTEM MINUTES OF
MEETING HELD OCTOBER 16, 2025

Summarized Minutes of the regular meeting of the City of Fort Pierce Retirement and Benefit System October 16, 2025, 2:00 p.m., in the Commission Chambers at City Hall

Present:

Kyle MacCarthy	Police Officer Member, Chair
Wendy Rydzewski	City of Fort Pierce General Member, Vice-Chair
Comm. Arnold Gaines	City Commission Member
Johnna Morris	Secretary/Treasurer
Michele Harris	U.A. Board Appointed Member

Guests:

Attorney Bonni Jensen	Attorney for the Retirement Board, Advisory
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Recording:

Megan LeGrand	Executive Assistant to Director of Finance
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Absent:

Comm. Michael Broderick	City Commission Member
Keith Stephens	U.A. General Member

ITEM NO. 1 & 2 - ROLL CALL

Mr. Kyle MacCarthy called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm on Thursday, October 16, 2025, the first item on the agenda being the “Roll Call”.

ITEM NO. 3 ~ COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Mr. MacCarthy opened for comments from the public. Seeing as there was no public, Mr. MacCarthy closed the comments.

ITEM NO. 4 ~ CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Ms. Johnna Morris and seconded by Commissioner Arnold Gaines to approve the minutes. All those in favor of the motion signified by saying aye. There was no opposition, and the motion was carried unanimously.

ITEM NO. 5 ~ REPORT FROM THE BOARD ATTORNEY

Attorney Bonni Jensen reminded the Board that there is a comprehensive report that must be filed this year. It is a report that is done every 2 years stating that the Board is not making any decisions based on any social, political, or ideological reasons but on whether or not money can be made.

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ITEM NO. 6 ~ PUBLIC HEARINGS ON BENEFIT APPLICATIONS

Mr. MacCarthy opened the public hearing for the request for retirement from Janey Vanderhorst Wessigk with 22 years and 11 months of service with the City of Fort Pierce. Seeing no public, the hearing was closed and the request was opened for Board discussion. **A motion was made by Ms. Michele Harris and seconded by Ms. Wendy Rydzewski to approve the request. All those in favor of the motion signified by saying aye. There was no opposition, and the motion was carried unanimously.**

Mr. MacCarthy opened the public hearing for the request for deferred retirement for Margaret M. Arraiz with 18 years and 11 months of service with the City of Fort Pierce. Seeing no public, the hearing was closed and the request was opened for Board discussion. **A motion was made by Ms. Morris and seconded by Ms. Harris to approve the request. All those in favor of the motion signified by saying aye. There was no opposition, and the motion was carried unanimously.**

Mr. MacCarthy opened the public hearing for the request for deferred retirement from Angela Brathwaite with 5 years and 6 months of service with the City of Fort Pierce. Seeing no public, the hearing was closed and the request was opened for Board discussion. **A motion was made by Ms. Morris and seconded by Comm. Gaines to approve the request. 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

Atty. Jensen gave an update from last meeting's conversation about the overpayment to a deceased retiree. The family has been in contact with herself and with the Pension Analyst. They are currently going through the bank to finalize payment details, so she has not retained a probate lawyer.

ITEM NO. 8 ~ NEW BUSINESS

Mr. MacCarthy opened the discussion on the election results of 2025.

Ms. Morris informed the Board that they received the results of the elections for the Police Member in their agenda packet. **Mr. MacCarthy** had the majority of votes and will stay on the Board.

Mr. MacCarthy next opened the discussion on the appointment of Chair and Vice Chair.

Ms. Morris stated that she thought they were doing a wonderful job in their roles.

A motion was made by Ms. Morris and seconded by Comm. Gaines to reappoint Kyle MacCarthy as Chair and Wendy Rydzewski as Vice-Chair of the Board. 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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ITEM NO. 9 ~ CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Comm. Gaines and seconded by Ms. Morris to approve the consent agenda. 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

Ms. Morris did confirm that both Mr. Stephens and Comm. Broderick had reached out to make her aware of their absences.

A motion was made by Comm. Gaines and seconded by Ms. Rydzewski to excuse Comm. Broderick and Mr. Stephens from this meeting. 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

Mr. MacCarthy gave an update on the recent FPPTA conference. There are concerns going through the cities about discussions on property taxes. There are a large portion of Florida cities that use a portion of property taxes for their retirement funds, and attendees were asked to bring some questions back to their pension boards to get some clarity on the impact of the situation. He isn't sure if it's something that can be brought up as an agenda item for the next meeting or if there was anything anyone could speak on as to now.

Ms. Morris confirmed that the concern is something that was talked about during the budgeting process. The City's main source of revenue is from the ad valorem property taxes, so losing that would affect not only the Retirement Fund, but all day-to-day operations.

Atty. Jensen said that it was shocking to see speakers from the Florida League of Cities presenting as scared of what could happen. Normally, they have a handle on themselves and on what's happening in Tallahassee, but there was a definitive shift at this conference. There was conversation indicating that using sales tax to supplement was off the table.

Ms. Morris agreed that there is no way to recoup any of the lost revenue. Sales tax wouldn't come close to replacing it.

Comm. Gaines stated that on the Commission side, there is a lot of uncertainty about how to adjust things for the better. On the Florida League of Cities side, they are scared, but they are prepared to fight Tallahassee on this issue. All committees seem prepared to push against this reform. As part of his leadership classes, the consensus was to take the information back to their cities, talk with their employees, talk with the people in their community, and make it known how dangerous this push is. There will be no room to play with employee raises. There will be changes to trash pick-up. There will be no overtime

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for the police. It's the responsibility of the Board to bring these concerns to their fellow employees and citizens in their community.

He also gave an update on his experience with the leadership class he took at the FPPTA. He confirmed that this Board is unique in that there are Commissioners that sit on this Board. In other cities, there is a disconnect between the commissioners and the board members which leads to a lot of tension and has historically cost those cities more money in both short-term and long-term cases.

Ms. Morris thanked Comm. Gaines for bringing up the uniqueness of the Board. She says the City has a good system because of the group who started everything making sure things were in place so there is open communication and collaboration on all decisions.

Mr. MacCarthy asked if there was a FLC conference in December to discuss the property tax situation.

Comm. Gaines confirmed that there was a committee meeting the day after this meeting where they discuss topics that the committee wants to address in Tallahassee. There is a vote in November, and there is a formal submittal of that vote in December. He can confirm that all of the committees he is on for the FLC is prepared to make property taxes the focus for this year. The rooms are open for the public to attend as well, so anyone who would like to attend can.

ITEM NO. 12 ~ NEXT MEETING

Next meeting will be held Wednesday, November 19, 2025, at 2pm in the Commission Chambers at City Hall.

ITEM NO. 13 ~ ADJOURMENT

Seeing that there were no further questions or comments. **Mr. MacCarthy** adjourned the meeting at 2:25 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.