

Commission Meeting Minutes

March 11, 2026

Chairman Philip Y. Brown called the meeting (held at the PERAC Offices, 10 Cabot Road, Suite 300, Medford, MA 02155) to order at 11:01 AM. Present for all of the meeting at the PERAC offices were Commissioners James Guido and Richard MacKinnon. Present for all or part of the meeting but participating remotely were Chairman Philip Y. Brown, and Commissioners Michael Leung-Tat, Katie Fitzpatrick, Kathy Fallon, and Jennifer Sullivan. Because of remote participation on the part of some of the Commissioners, the Chairman explained that all motions made at this meeting will be voted on by roll call vote. The Chairman also announced the meeting was being recorded.

PERAC Staff in attendance at the PERAC offices: Executive Director Bill Keefe, First Deputy Executive Director Caroline Carcia, Deputy Executive Director Kenneth Hill, Assistant Deputy Director Patrick Charles, General Counsel Judith Corrigan, Actuary John Boorack, Director of Audits Caryn Shea, Communications Director Natacha Dunker, Systems Architect Anthony Tse, Senior Associate General Counsel Felicia Barrufi, Associate General Counsel Daniel Taylor, Compliance Manager John Galvin, Executive Assistant Doreen Duane, and Case Manager Christina Baccari.

PERAC Staff attending remotely: Deputy Compliance Manager Sarita Yee.

Guests attending in person: None

Guests participating remotely: John Brown representing the Middlesex County Retirement System and MACRS, and Jenn Pelavin from the general public.

Commissioner Richard MacKinnon made a motion to adopt the minutes of the Administrative Sub-Committee meeting of February 11, 2026. Commissioner James Guido seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was taken as follows:

Chairman Philip Brown YES, Commissioners Kathleen Fallon YES, Kate Fitzpatrick YES, James Guido, YES Michael Leung-Tat YES, and Richard MacKinnon YES. The minutes were unanimously adopted. Commissioner Jennifer Sullivan had no recorded vote.

Commissioner James Guido made a motion to adopt the minutes of the Commission meeting of February 11, 2026. Commissioner Richard MacKinnon seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was taken as follows:

Chairman Philip Brown YES, Commissioners Kathleen Fallon YES, Kate Fitzpatrick YES, James Guido YES, Michael Leung-Tat YES, and Richard MacKinnon YES. The minutes were unanimously adopted. Commissioner Jennifer Sullivan had no recorded vote.

Administrative Sub-Committee Update

An Administrative Sub-Committee meeting was held immediately prior to the Commission Meeting. Chairman Philip Brown, who is also the Chair of the Sub-Committee, reported that the purpose of the Sub-Committee meeting was to discuss the Executive Director's performance evaluation for the period of March 13, 2025 through March 13, 2026. The Chairman explained that the Sub-Committee

will be working off an evaluation form which outlines key competencies and success indicators for the period. This form also includes prior year goals, upcoming goals, unplanned actions/activities, and learning and development plans.

The Chairman stated that the Administrative Sub-Committee members will select their ratings for the various key competencies, complete an annual narrative, vote on a possible salary increase at the next Administrative Sub-Committee meeting on April 8, 2026 and bring it to the full Commission for a final vote on April 8, 2026.

Actuarial Update

John Boorack reported that PERAC bases its investment return assumption recommendation on several sources such as the NEPC study, (PRIM's Investment Consultant), the Horizon Study, NASRA, and other investment consultants. The NEPC study is our primary source in determining our recommendations. Although PRIM's returns for 2025 were 13.11%, basing an increase in the investment return assumption solely on the most recent one-year return would not be a good idea. Mr. Boorack reviewed the information from the sources mentioned above and recommended maintaining the current assumption of 7.0%.

Commissioner Guido made a motion to keep the investment return rate assumption at 7%. Commissioner Sullivan seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was taken as follows:

Chairman Philip Brown YES, Commissioners Kathleen Fallon YES, Kate Fitzpatrick YES, James Guido, YES Michael Leung-Tat YES, Richard MacKinnon YES, and Jennifer Sullivan YES. The motion was adopted.

Legal Update

Felicia Baruffi presented on her two panels from the National Association of Public Pension Attorneys ("NAPPA") conference held in Nashville, TN in February, where there were roughly 200 attendees. The first panel she discussed was the "Coffee Talk" panel where she focused on missing beneficiaries and obtaining current contact information from members, retirees, and beneficiaries. The main panel Ms. Baruffi presented on concerned PTSD applications and the notice requirements, specifically focusing on PERAC's practice, case law, and legislative initiatives. Ms. Baruffi indicated that the panel was well received and there was great discussion concerning PTSD applications, with other states having similar issues given the complicated nature of the disorder. Ms. Baruffi indicated that a lot of states do not have an agency like PERAC and so struggle with coordinating with the Legislature to amend their plan and make changes to the law. Ms. Baruffi reported that many attorneys were impressed that PERAC has such a good working relationship with the Legislature and can help work on behalf of all the retirement boards and members.

Judith Corrigan then updated the Commission on the recent Plymouth Superior Court decision, *Matthew Combra v. CRAB and State Board of Retirement*, Civil Action No. 2025-00256 (February 6, 2026). PERAC is not a party to this action, but Ms. Corrigan explained that the Commission should be made aware of it as it represents a departure from the strict causation standard regarding awards of accidental death and accidental disability applications.

This case involves a Department of Mental Health Procurement Specialist who was tragically killed in a car accident driving back to her office following a lunch with coworkers. For benefits to be awarded, the member would have had to be traveling from one place where she had a work obligation to another place where she had a work obligation when the accident occurred. With some exceptions not relevant here, lunch is generally not considered a work duty for the purposes of the statute which controls cases like this one. The question here centered around whether conversations at and after lunch about work matters transformed the lunch into a work obligation. The Contributory Retirement Appeal Board (“CRAB”) had found that there was no entitlement to benefits on these facts, as the lunch was a voluntary activity, not scheduled in advance, many of the conversations did not center around work, and no notes were taken.

Conversely, the Plymouth Superior Court characterized the lunch as a “work meeting at a restaurant” and reversed CRAB, finding that accidental death benefits should be awarded in this case. Ms. Corrigan promised to keep the Commission informed about any appeals filed in this unusual case.

Legislative Update

Patrick Charles reported that House Bill 5131, “An Act Empowering Municipalities and Local Government.” was reported favorably in part on February 19, 2026. This bill would make significant changes to municipal governance, public procurement, open meeting law and public records law, among other areas. He indicated that we are monitoring this legislation as it progresses and if passed, we will ensure compliance with all open meeting laws and public record changes. Mr. Charles reported that both he and the Executive Director met with Chairman Ryan and his staff at the Public Service Committee to discuss various pieces of legislation currently before the committee and are planning a briefing for committee members and their staff in the near future.

Mr. Charles then told the Commission that the Department of Revenue (DOR) Commissioner Geoffrey Snyder announced that preliminary revenue collections for February 2026 totaled \$2.336 billion, \$208 million or 9.8% more than actual collections in February 2025, and \$59 million or 2.6% above benchmark. The FY26 year-to-date collections totaled approximately \$26.305 billion, which is \$817 million or 2.3% more than actual collections in the same period of FY2025, and \$532 million or 2.3% above the year-to-date benchmark.

Compliance Update

John Galvin reported that PRIM’s returns for January 2026 were 3.43%. Therefore, the calendar year returns through January 31, 2026 were also 3.43%. The fund balance as of January 31, 2026 was \$125.5 billion.

Mr. Galvin reported that the deadline for submission of the Annual Vendor Disclosures was March 1 and that we have received 78% to date. He reported that we will be reaching out to those vendors who have not filed yet.

Mr. Galvin further reported that we have received 366 Statement of Financial Interests from active board members. The SFIs are due on May 1, 2026.

Audit Update

Caryn Shea reported that since the last Commission meeting, PERAC has released the Attleboro, Maynard, and Newburyport Retirement System Audits and a follow-up audit for the North Attleboro Retirement System. She discussed the findings for each of the audits. Ms. Shea reported that two findings from the North Attleboro follow-up audit are partially resolved and that four of the findings have been resolved. Ms. Shea then reported that Senior Auditor Richard Wrona and Auditor Connor Allan presented on the Annual Statement Training, which was held on Tuesday, February 24, 2026. Ms. Shea further discussed the status of other board audits as outlined in the Audit Tracking Log.

Executive Director's Report

Bill Keefe introduced Christina Baccari who we recently hired as a Case Manager and will be working in the Medical Panel Unit. Mr. Keefe acknowledged Executive Assistant Doreen Duane who is training and mentoring Ms. Baccari. Ms. Duane had previously worked as a Case Manager prior to transitioning to the Legal Unit some years ago. Mr. Keefe went over the staff activities that have occurred since the last Commission meeting on February 11, 2026. He reported that on February 23, 2026 the Commonwealth's new financial reporting system "MOSAIC" went live, and designated staff have tested, trained, and successfully processed documents in the new system. He then reported that members of PERAC's staff from various units presented at the Administrators' Training held in Norwood on March 3, 2026, with over 50 board staff and board members in attendance.

Mr. Keefe provided an update regarding the Quincy Retirement Board ("Board") reclassifying a city hall security guard from Group 1 to Group 4. Despite PERAC's efforts and written letters advising the Board to rescind their vote, the Board met on February 26, 2026 and did not rescind their vote. Mr. Keefe indicated that the Board will again have another vote at the next Retirement Board meeting in March. He also indicated that if the Board does not rescind their previous vote, PERAC has other actions which can be taken. He also informed the Commissioners that we are currently auditing that Board.

Mr. Keefe notified the Commission that Kathleen Kiley-Becchetti recently resigned from serving as President of the Massachusetts Association of Contributory Retirement Systems ("MACRS") and that John Brown is now be Acting President. Mr. Keefe indicated that the Spring Conference this year will be held at the Sheraton Hotel in Springfield as the Hyannis Resort has been sold and is no longer available.

Commissioner Richard MacKinnon made a motion to approve Commission Travel to attend the MACRS Conference in Springfield, MA in accordance with PERAC's Travel Policy #97-002. Commissioner Fallon seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was taken as follows:

Chairman Philip Brown YES, Commissioners Kathleen Fallon YES, Kate Fitzpatrick YES, James Guido YES, Richard MacKinnon YES, and Jennifer Sullivan YES. The motion was adopted. Commissioner Michael Leung-Tat had no recorded vote.

Mr. Keefe then reported that we reviewed the current list of PERAC memberships and cancelled two that were less utilized and joined the National Association of State Retirement Administrators (NASRA). He reported that NASRA will be holding their annual conference from August 8-12, 2026 in Boston, MA if Commissioners have an interest in attending.

Commissioner Jennifer Sullivan made a motion to approve Commission Travel to attend the NASRA Conference in Boston, MA from August 8-12, 2026 in accordance with PERAC's Travel Policy #97-002. Commissioner MacKinnon seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was taken as follows:

Chairman Philip Brown YES, Kathleen Fallon YES, Kate Fitzpatrick YES, James Guido YES, Richard MacKinnon YES, and Jennifer Sullivan YES. The motion was adopted. Commissioner Michael Leung-Tat had no recorded vote.

Mr. Keefe then reported on the e-mail that was sent to state employees from the Secretary of the Executive Office of Technology Services and Security, Jason Snyder, introducing its partnership with Open AI to bring a secure AI Assistant (ChatGPT) to the workforce. Mr. Keefe indicated that we are monitoring its progress and will update the Commission as necessary.

Mr. Keefe reported that PERAC's Annual Emerging Issues Forum has been scheduled for September 17, 2026 at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Westborough, MA. Mr. Keefe informed the Commissioners that he has invited Director of the Executive Office of Technology Services and Security, Jason Snyder and Evan Horowitz, Executive Director of the Center for State Policy Analysis at Tufts University, to speak at the event.

Lastly, Mr. Keefe reported that included in the packet for the Commission's review is the release of the latest PERAC Pension News and recent Memorandum #11/2026 regarding Disability Presumptions and Pre-Employment Physicals.

The Chairman then announced that the next meeting of the Commission will be held on Wednesday, April 8, 2026, at 11:00 AM.

Commissioner Richard MacKinnon made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner James Guido seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was taken as follows:

Chairman Philip Brown YES, Kathleen Fallon YES, Kate Fitzpatrick YES, James Guido YES, Richard MacKinnon YES, and Jennifer Sullivan YES. The motion was adopted. Commissioner Michael Leung-Tat had no recorded vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:02 P.M.

Commission Meeting Documents

Commission Agenda for the meeting of March 11, 2026

Administrative Sub-Committee minutes dated February 11, 2026

Commission Minutes dated February 11, 2026

Administrative Sub-Committee Update

Executive Director's Performance Review Form

Actuarial Update

Investment Return Assumption Summary

Commonwealth 2025 Valuation Results and 2026 Estimates

Legal Update

Matthew Combra v. CRAB & State Board of Retirement, Plymouth Superior Court – Civil Action No. 2025-00256

Legislative Update

Memorandum regarding Legislative updates

Compliance Update

Memorandum regarding Compliance updates

PRIM's PRIT Fund Performance Summary as of January 31, 2026

Audit Update

Attleboro Retirement System Audit

Maynard Retirement System Audit

Newburyport Retirement System Audit

North Attleboro Retirement System Follow-up Audit

Audit Tracking Report

Executive Director's Report

Staff Activities Memorandum

Pension News No. 70

Patriot Ledger Article titled "Quincy pension changes fund rate, how it could affect taxpayers".

Patriot Ledger Article titled "Quincy votes again on police pension for security guard, What happened."

NASRA 2026 Annual Conference – August 8-12, 2026 – Boston, MA

E-Mail Communication from Jason Snyder, Director of the Executive Office of Technology Services and Security titled "Introducing the Commonwealth's AI Assistant"

Save the Date Flyer – Emerging Issues – September 17, 2026 at DoubleTree by Hilton, Westborough, MA

PERAC Memorandum #11/2026 – Disability Presumptions and Pre-Employment Physicals

Handout – Letter from David A. Jacobs, Councillor, Ward One, City of Quincy regarding the reclassification of the position of security Guard at Quincy City Hall from Group 1 to Group 4.

Approved:



Philip Y. Brown, Chairman
Public Employee Retirement
Administration Commission