

OPEN MINUTES OF THE MEETING
1,283rd BOARD MEETING
STATE RETIREMENT BOARD

DATE: December 19, 2024

TIME: 10:00 AM

PLACE: One Winter Street, Boston, MA 02108/Remote

There being a quorum present, the December 19, 2024, meeting of the State Retirement Board ("Board") was called to order at 10:02 a.m. by the Chair & Treasurer, Deborah Goldberg.

Chair Goldberg announced that pursuant to the Commonwealth's Open Meeting Law Massachusetts General Law Chapter 30A, §20, as amended by Chapter 107 of the Acts of 2023, that the meeting of the Board was being held via the Internet and was being called to order with the following members who would be participating remotely for all or part of the meeting and who were identified at this time: Deborah Goldberg, Chair, Treasurer, & Receiver General; Archibald Gormley, Jr., Chosen Member; Theresa McGoldrick, Elected Member; Joanne Goldstein, Appointed Member. Unless otherwise noted, all votes taken at the meeting were taken by roll call vote.

Board staff that were present or participated remotely for all or part of the December 19, 2024 meeting were: Kathryn Kougas, Executive Director; Sandor Zapolin, Deputy Executive Director/ Chief Operating Officer; Sharon Sullivan, Budget & Finance Manager; Yande Lombe, Associate Board Counsel; Joisei Horton, Manager, Disability Unit; Jennifer Hunt, Associate General Counsel; Stephanie Sicard, Assistant Director of Benefit Calculations; Robert Liford, Disability Retirement Case Counselor; Kwaku Duah, Senior Auditor; Matthew Szafranski, Associate Board Counsel; Diana Reyes, Director of Disbursements & Survivor Benefits; Alison Eggers, Deputy General Counsel; Athila Soares-Nunes, Paralegal; Lisa Zale, Assistant Director, Disability Unit; Marsha Knight, Disbursement Unit Manager; Paula Daddona, Director of Member Experience, Communications & Operations; Zachary Pierce, Communications Coordinator II; Lauren Lavanchy, Communications Coordinator; and Laura Mercure Executive Assistant & Office Manager.

Treasury staff that participated remotely for all or part of the meeting were: Sarah Kim, Deputy Treasurer/ General Counsel; Chandra Bork, Chief of Staff; Elizabeth Morrocco, Associate General Counsel/ Procurement Director; Brendan McGough, Associate General Counsel; Andrew Napolitano, Deputy Communications Director; Sandra DeSantis Lynch, Associate General Counsel; Emily Kowtoniuk, Legislative Director; Alexa Michon, Senior Policy Analyst; and Lizandra Gomes, Deputy Chief of Staff, ED&I Program Manager.

A guest participated remotely for all or part of the meeting. The guest's name was Anthony Crupi.

Members of the public were provided access to the meeting via a GoToWebinar link. No members of the public registered.

Chair Goldberg announced in accordance with the Commonwealth's Open Meeting Law that any person may make a video or audio recording of an open session of a meeting to a public body, and she was obligated to inform participants of any recording at the beginning of the meeting.

Chair Goldberg announced that for any members of the public accessing the open portion of the Board meeting, that access would conclude when the Board entered executive session and resume when the Board returned to Open Session.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NOVEMBER 21, 2024

On a motion made by Ms. McGoldrick, and seconded by Mr. Gormley, Jr., the Board voted unanimously to approve the Open Session Minutes and to approve the Executive Session Minutes of the 1,282nd Board Meeting held on November 21, 2024.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

| | |
|------------------|--------|
| Mr. Valeri | Absent |
| Ms. McGoldrick | Yes |
| Ms. Goldstein | Yes |
| Mr. Gormley, Jr. | Yes |
| Chair Goldberg | Yes |

THE BOARD ENTERS INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

At **11:07 a.m.**, the Board entered Executive Session for today's meeting on December 19, 2024, to review applications for disability retirement, associated benefits, litigation strategy, and to consider the reputation, character, physical condition, or mental health of individuals with business before the Board. Chair Goldberg indicated that the Board would reconvene in Open Session after the Executive Session.

Ms. McGoldrick motioned to enter Executive Session. Mr. Gormley, Jr., seconded the motion, and the Board voted to enter Executive Session.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

| | |
|------------------|--------|
| Mr. Valeri | Absent |
| Ms. McGoldrick | Yes |
| Ms. Goldstein | Yes |
| Mr. Gormley, Jr. | Yes |
| Chair Goldberg | Yes |

EXECUTIVE SESSION CONCLUDES AND THE BOARD RECONVENES IN OPEN SESSION

At 10:26 a.m. the Board concluded Executive Session and voted to reconvene in Open Session.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

| | |
|------------------|--------|
| Mr. Valeri | Absent |
| Ms. McGoldrick | Yes |
| Ms. Goldstein | Yes |
| Mr. Gormley, Jr. | Yes |
| Chair Goldberg | Yes |

Chair Goldberg thanked Ms. Sarah Kim for her work and service as General Counsel to the Office of the State Treasurer, her contribution to the State Retirement Board, staff and members. The Treasurer announced the news of Ms. Kim's recent judicial appointment to the Massachusetts Superior Court. With Ms. Kim's departure, Sandra DeSantis Lynch, was newly appointed as General Counsel to the Office of the State Treasurer.

Board members offered their congratulations and best wishes to Ms. Kim.

TAB 2: GROUP CLASSIFICATIONS

Group 2

Pursuant to the Board's Classification Policy the following are reported as approved for Group 2 Classification:

1. **Richard Bienvenue** – State Building Inspector 3, Division of Professional Licensure
2. **Catherine Boyson** – Social Worker II, DCF
3. **Patricia Collier** – Paraprofessional II, South Coast Educational Collaborative
4. **Karen Mazzini** – Social Worker D, DCF
5. **Kellie Perrault** – Social Worker II, DCF
6. **Nicole Ryan** – Habilitation Coordinator I, Wrentham Developmental Center, DDS
7. **Wilfredo Santana** – Youth Service Groupworker I, DYS
8. **Susan Sherman** – Residential Supervisor I, Central Residential Services, DDS

GROUP 2 (Board Review)

1. **Marcella Chapdelaine** – Medical Support IV, Hampden County Sheriff's Department

On a motion made by Ms. McGoldrick, and seconded by Ms. Goldstein the Board voted to deny Ms. Chapdelaine's Group 2 classification application.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Mr. Valeri | Absent |
| Ms. McGoldrick | Yes |
| Ms. Goldstein | Yes |
| Mr. Gormley, Jr. | Yes |
| Chair Goldberg | Yes |

2. **Lori Riccio** – Victim Witness Advocate, Middlesex County District Attorney's Office

On a motion made by Ms. McGoldrick, and seconded by Mr. Gormley, Jr., the Board voted to deny Ms. Riccio's Group 2 classification application.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| Mr. Valeri | Absent |
| Ms. McGoldrick | Yes |
| Ms. Goldstein | Yes |

| | |
|-------------------------|------------|
| Mr. Gormley, Jr. | Yes |
| Chair Goldberg | Yes |

3. Paul Valante – Social Worker III, DCF

On a motion made by Ms. McGoldrick, and seconded by Ms. Goldstein the Board voted to deny Mr. Valante's Group 2 classification application.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Mr. Valeri | Absent |
| Ms. McGoldrick | Yes |
| Ms. Goldstein | Yes |
| Mr. Gormley, Jr. | Yes |
| Chair Goldberg | Yes |

GROUP 2 (Tabled) (Board Review)

1. Mafalda Gomes – CAN I, Chelsea Soldiers' Home

On a motion made by Mr. Gormley, Jr., and seconded by Ms. Goldstein the Board voted to deny Mr. Gomes's Group 2 classification application.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Mr. Valeri | Absent |
| Ms. McGoldrick | Yes |
| Ms. Goldstein | Yes |
| Mr. Gormley, Jr. | Yes |
| Chair Goldberg | Yes |

GROUP 2 (RECONSIDERATION) (BOARD REVIEW)

1. Virginia McCullough – Physician Assistant, Lemuel Shattuck Hospital, DPH

On a motion made by Ms. McGoldrick, and seconded by Mr. Gormley, Jr., the Board voted to reconsider Ms. McCullough's Group 2 classification application.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Mr. Valeri | Absent |
| Ms. McGoldrick | Yes |
| Ms. Goldstein | Yes |
| Mr. Gormley, Jr. | Yes |
| Chair Goldberg | Yes |

On a motion made by Mr. Gormley, Jr., and seconded by Ms. Goldstein the Board voted to approve Ms. McCullough's Group 2 classification application.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

| | |
|------------------|--------|
| Mr. Valeri | Absent |
| Ms. McGoldrick | Yes |
| Ms. Goldstein | Yes |
| Mr. Gormley, Jr. | Yes |
| Chair Goldberg | Yes |

GROUP 2 Pro-Rate

Pursuant to the Board's Classification Policy the following are reported as approved for Group 2 Pro-Rate Classification:

1. **Shelly Bellve**
UMass Medical School
Case Manager- 05/21/2000 – 10/28/2009
Transition Manager – 10/29/2009 – 02/20/2010
Case Manager – 02/21/2010 – 02/22/2014
2. **T. Joshua Lubbers**
Department of Children and Families
Social Worker I – 02/05/1995 – 11/22-1997
Social Worker III – 11/23/1997 – 12/15/2001
Social Worker C – 12/16/2001 – 05/19-2007
3. **Pamela Solomon**
Department of Children and Families
Social Worker I – 09/26/1993 – 08/05/1995
Social Worker III – 08/06/1995 – 12/15/2001
Social Worker C – 12/16/2001 – 06/28/2014
Social Worker D – 06/29/2014 – 01/23/2016
Social Worker III – 01/24/2016 – 10/23/2021

GROUP 4

Pursuant to the Board's Classification Policy, the following are reported as approved for Group 4 Classification

1. **Roberto Baez** – Correction Officer I, DOC
2. **John Fortune** – Lieutenant, Hampden County Sheriff's Department
3. **Michael Krol** – Correction Officer V, Essex County Sheriff's Department
4. **John Lima** – Lieutenant, Bristol County Sheriff's Office
5. **William Lopez** – Correction Officer I, DOC
6. **Thomas Meehan** – Firefighter/EMT, Military Division
7. **Kenneth Paquette** – Correction Officer, Middlesex Sheriff's Office
8. **Charles Plaskasovitis** – Correction Officer, Suffolk County Sheriff's Department
9. **Scott Rose** – Assistant Deputy Superintendent/Security, Bristol County Sheriff's Office
10. **Michael Scott** – ADA, Bristol District Attorney's Office/Plymouth County District Attorney's Office
11. **Michael Shultz** – Captain, Essex County Sheriff's Department
12. **Christopher Summers** – Captain, Suffolk County Sheriff's Department

13. **James Terrazzano** – Correction Officer, Suffolk County Sheriff’s Department
14. **Lynn Thoresen** – Correction Officer, Berkshire County Sheriff’s Department

GROUP 4 (Board Review)

1. **Anthony Crupi** – Laboratory Supervisor III, EOEEA

Mr. Crupi was in attendance and addressed the Board of the details of his position. Ms. McGoldrick stated that there has been some confusion among members regarding titles, particularly “slashed” titles. Classification of the job title and any reclassification does not carry over to the Group Classification process. The Board is bound by the statute for examining the group classification eligibility. To be eligible for Group 4 classification the job title has to be included in the statute. The Board understood the member’s disappointment, and greatly appreciated Mr. Crupi’s attendance and thoughtful statement. Mr. Crupi suggested that Board communications led him to believe his title would qualify him for the Group 4 classification.

On a motion made by Ms. McGoldrick, and seconded by Mr. Gormley, Jr., the Board voted to deny Mr. Crupi’s Group 4 classification.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Mr. Valeri | Absent |
| Ms. McGoldrick | Yes |
| Ms. Goldstein | Yes |
| Mr. Gormley, Jr. | Yes |
| Chair Goldberg | Yes |

2. **John Curley** – Senior Prison Steward/ C.O., Hampden County Sheriff’s Department

On a motion made by Ms. McGoldrick, and seconded by Ms. Goldstein, the Board voted to deny Mr. Curley’s Group 4 classification.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Mr. Valeri | Absent |
| Ms. McGoldrick | Yes |
| Ms. Goldstein | Yes |
| Mr. Gormley, Jr. | Yes |
| Chair Goldberg | Yes |

3. **John Turowsky** – Industrial Instructor III/ C.O., Hampden County Sheriff’s Department

On a motion made by Ms. McGoldrick, and seconded by Mr. Gormley, Jr., the Board voted to deny Mr. Turowsky’s Group 4 classification.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

| | |
|------------------|--------|
| Mr. Valeri | Absent |
| Ms. McGoldrick | Yes |
| Ms. Goldstein | Yes |
| Mr. Gormley, Jr. | Yes |
| Chair Goldberg | Yes |

Prior to the vote, Ms. McGoldrick again spoke to “slashed” job titles, the impact to members who apply for the Group 4 classification and the consequences of missing out on a statutory benefit.

Note: Post the meeting, educational materials were re-examined to assure continued accuracy. Board materials explain the process and requirements regarding the title.

20/50

Pursuant to the Board’s Classification Policy the following are reported as approved for 20/50 Classification:

1. **James Gaudette** – Correction Officer, Middlesex Sheriff’s Office
2. **Eric Iverson** – Correction Officer, Barnstable County Sheriff’s Office
3. **Nelson Resendes** – Captain, Bristol County Sheriff’s Office
4. **Scott Wellington** – Correction Officer, Barnstable County Sheriff’s Office

TAB 3: REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Business Operations Report

Ms. Kougias addressed the Board and provided a year-end wrap up of the team’s accomplishments. Ms. Kougias stated that it had been a rebuilding year with growth in staff, processes improvements, and technology enhancements. Wait times for payments have been cut by approximately 50 percent. In addition, legislative changes have been implemented quickly. Staffing levels have increased significantly throughout the agency (from a post-pandemic low of 70 to 105). Processing disbursements have increased significantly with an average of 100-150 per week. A full report is provided in the Board materials on Pages 205-206.

Ms. Kougias acknowledged the support of Treasurer Goldberg and the Board Members.

These collective efforts allow SRB to deliver outstanding service for all members. The team will continue with these efforts daily in the coming year.

Board Members offered positive feedback on this year’s initiatives and accomplishments.

FY2024 Annual Report

PERAC requires an Annual Report be filed each year. Ms. Kougias summarized the report noting the following: In FY2024, the MSRB system had 94,000 plus active members as well as 70,000 plus retirees and beneficiaries. There were 2,614 new retirements and total retirement allowances was

\$2.94 billion and nearly 5,400 refunds, rollovers, and transfers. To adequately assist this large member base, staffing at the MSRB has increased from a post-pandemic low to nearly full staffing.

In February, Estimated Initial Benefit Payment (EIBP) was launched and has reduced processing time for payments to within 60 days of the eligible Member's retirement date. The enactment of the HERO Act necessitated sending over 96,000 letters to active members to alert them to an additional opportunity to purchase creditable service.

Technological improvements included software upgrades to send notices to those active members as their individual deadlines to make veterans service purchases approached and the modernization of the MSRB's accounting system. The planning, design and implementation of a Members Self-Service (MSS) platform are in process and will further improve efficiency for both the Board and its members.

Sharon Sullivan, Budget & Finance Manager offered the following highlights specific to the financials: The net assets increased by \$2.5 billion dollars, approximately double the increase between FY2022 to FY2023. Gains in the PRIT Fund as well as the supplemental pension funding from the Commonwealth also contributed to the increase.

Even with increases in retirements, as well as refunds and transfers out of the system, the Annuity Savings Fund, which holds the members' contributions, increased by \$294 million compared to the increase of \$251 million for FY2022 to FY2023. Factors such as higher member earnings, ratification of retroactive union increase, for example, attributed to the increase in the Annuity Savings Fund. Overall receipts outweighed disbursements for FY2024.

Specific to the Turnpike finances, assets increased modestly due to gains of the PRIT Fund. The Turnpike financial transactions are primarily disbursements, monthly pensions, and annuity payments.

Ms. Kougias noted that the FY2024 Annual Report was generated through the new PensionPro Software implemented this year. The Finance team successfully completed the conversion from Microsoft Dynamics. PensionPro is compliant with Chapter 32 and PERAC regulations which will allow improved efficiencies in the financial reporting.

As required, the Annual Report will be submitted to PERAC via PROSPER and will require the Board's approval.

On a motion made by Ms. McGoldrick, and seconded by Mr. Gormley, Jr., the Board voted to approve the Annual Report as presented.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Mr. Valeri | Absent |
| Ms. McGoldrick | Yes |
| Ms. Goldstein | Yes |
| Mr. Gormley, Jr. | Yes |
| Chair Goldberg | Yes |

Monthly Payroll and Other Disbursements

Ms. Kougias reviewed the November payment processes noting first payments of 251 that included 71 Estimated Initial Benefit Payments. The December payroll cut-off is on Friday, December 27, although early indication shows over 250 first payments processed. Telephone data, in person visits and outreach services continue to remain steady. Examination of the telephone data is under review in order to generate reliable metrics, reporting, and accountability.

YTD Fiscal Year 2025 Operating & Capital Spending through November, 2024 was presented. As of the close of November 30, 2024, operating expenses were at 30 percent and capital spending at 14 percent of budget.

MSRB Legal Update

Ms. Eggers discussed three Division of Administrative Law Appeals decisions. The first case, *Reed R. v. SBR*, concerned a former correctional officer and investigator who applied for accidental disability retirement based on post-traumatic stress disorder. The petitioner's last day on the job was in July 2016, he applied for worker's compensation in December 2016, and he applied for accidental disability retirement benefits in January 2018. The petitioner's medical panel was positive, but the Board denied his application, in part because he did not meet the § 7 statutory notice requirement. DALA affirmed the Board's decision. With respect to notice, the Magistrate narrowed the incidents upon which the Petitioner could rely to those in the two years before his application for worker's compensation (Dec. 2014 to Dec. 2016). In *Carey v. SBR*, the petitioner sought to buy back approximately 14 months of service from 1975-1976. The Board requested documentation from petitioner's employer showing his dates of employment, hours worked, and rates of pay, but his former employer said it didn't have those records. The petitioner produced sufficient documentation for his service in 1975 (including, among other things, a W-2), but could not produce documentation for 1976. The Board denied his application with respect to his service in 1976 and DALA affirmed the Board's denial under an abuse of discretion standard. The Magistrate held it was not an abuse of discretion for the Board to decline to rely on the Petitioner's decades old memory. Ms. Eggers also discussed *O'Connor v. SBR*, a case that turned on the question of whether the job of adjunct professor was substantially similar to the job of Assistant Dean of STEM for contract service buyback purposes. The Magistrate explained that "[a]dministrative precedents under § 4(1)(s) have (thus) asked whether an employee discharged the same 'core duties' in his or her membership-eligible and pre-membership positions." The Magistrate concluded the core duties of the two roles were not the same and affirmed the Board's decision.

Board & MSRB Communications

The MSRB December Retiree eNews Bulletin was not available at publication due to the early meeting. An article dated November 30, 2024, from *MoneyDigest* and titled, "What the House Passing the Social Security Fairness Act Means for Seniors," and a *Government Executive* article entitled, "Schumer Tells Feds He'll Call a Vote on Windfall Elimination Provision Repeal," from December 11, 2024 were shared.

Ms. Kowtoniuk, Legislative Director, entertained a motion to adjourn. On a motion made by Ms. McGoldrick and seconded by Mr. Gormley, Jr., the Board voted to adjourn at 11:52 a.m.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

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|-------------------------|---------------|
| Mr. Valeri | Absent |
| Ms. McGoldrick | Yes |
| Ms. Goldstein | Yes |
| Mr. Gormley, Jr. | Yes |
| Ms. Kowtoniuk | Yes |