

OPEN MINUTES OF THE MEETING
1,286th BOARD MEETING
STATE RETIREMENT BOARD

DATE: March 27, 2025

TIME: 10:00 AM

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

There being a quorum present, the March 27, 2025 meeting of the State Retirement Board ("Board") was called to order at 10:03 a.m. by the acting Chair, Emily Kowtoniuk.

Ms. Kowtoniuk 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; Emily Kowtoniuk, Acting Chair; Archibald Gormley, Jr., Chosen Member; Frank Valeri, Elected Member; Joanne Goldstein, Appointed Member. Theresa McGoldrick, Elected Member, was absent. Treasurer Goldberg joined the meeting at 12:04 p.m. 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 March 27, 2025 meeting were: Kathryn Kougas, Executive Director; Sandor Zapolin, Deputy Executive Director/ Chief Operating Officer; Yande Lombe, Associate Board Counsel; Jennifer Hunt, Associate Board Counsel; Joisei Horton, Manager, Disability Unit; Robert Liford, Disability Case Counselor; Stephanie Sicard, Assistant Director of Benefit Calculations; Jasmine Chasse, Disability Retirement Case Counselor; Sharon Sullivan, Director, Finance & Budget; Cecilia Yau, Audit Supervisor; Kimberly Griffin, Director of Information Systems & Technology; Joanna Kolis, Project Lead; Matthew Szafranski, Associate Board Counsel; Diana Reyes, Director of Disbursements & Survivor Benefits; Alison Eggers, Deputy General Counsel; Pam Diggs, Senior Paralegal; Athila Soares-Nunes, Paralegal; Lisa Zale, Assistant Director, Disability Unit; 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: Lizandra Gomes, Deputy Chief of Staff, DE&I Program Manager; Emily Kowtoniuk, Legislative Director; Ellie Morrocco, Associate General Counsel/Procurement Director; Andrew Napolitano, Deputy Communications Director; Sandra DeSantis Lynch, General Counsel.

Four guests participated remotely for all or part of the meeting. Their names were: Bill Sweeney, Kevin Sweeney, Hearing Officer, Jim Salvie, and Hearing Officer, Rachel Healey.

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

Ms. Kowtoniuk 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. Ms. Kowtoniuk 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 FEBRUARY 20, 2025 BOARD MEETING

On a motion made by Mr. Gormley, Jr., and seconded by Mr. Valeri, the Board voted to approve the Open Session Minutes and the Executive Session Minutes of the 1,285th Board Meeting held on February 20, 2025.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

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

THE BOARD ENTERS INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

At **10:05 a.m.**, the Board entered Executive Session for today's meeting on March 27, 2025, 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. Ms. Kowtoniuk indicated that the Board would reconvene in Open Session after the Executive Session.

On a vote made by Mr. Gormley, Jr., and seconded by Ms. Goldstein, the Board voted to enter Executive Session.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION CONCLUDES AND THE BOARD RECONVENES IN OPEN SESSION

At **11:43 a.m.** the Board concluded Executive Session and voted to reconvene in Open Session. Mr. Valeri made a motion to reconvene in Open Session, Mr. Gormley, Jr., seconded the motion.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

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

GROUP 2

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

1. **Fernando Amaral** – First Residential Supervisor – C.O., Hampden Co. Sheriff's Department
2. **Nicholas Cotto** – Youth Services Program Officer C, DYS
3. **Michael Doherty** – Industrial Instructor III – C.O., Hampden Co. Sheriff's Department
4. **John Garvey** – Assistant Chief Probation Officer, MA Trial Court
5. **Mary Morley** – RN II, Worcester Recovery Center and Hospital, DMH

GROUP 2 (Board Review)

1. **Judith Cavanaugh** Clinical Social Worker D, Worcester Recovery Center and Hospital, DMH

On a vote made by Mr. Gormley, Jr., and seconded by Mr. Valeri, the Board voted to approve Ms. Cavanaugh's Group 2 classification application.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

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

2. **Deborah Hornstein-Berger** Social Worker C, DCF

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

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

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

3. **Laura McGillis** MHW IV, DMH

On a vote made by Mr. Valeri, and seconded by Mr. Gormley, Jr., the Board voted to approve Ms. McGillis's Group 2 classification application.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

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

4. Dawn Turcotte

LPN II, Holyoke Soldier's Home

On a vote made by Mr. Valeri, and seconded by Mr. Gormley, Jr., the Board voted to deny Ms. Turcotte's Group 2 classification application.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

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

GROUP 2 HSC I (Board Review)

1. Emralde Destin-Brun

HSC I, DMH

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

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

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

GROUP 2 PRO-RATE (Board Review)

1. Kelly Buckley

Department of Children and Families

Social Worker I: 11/24/1989 - 03/19/1995

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

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

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

2. Cynthia Ferrick

Department of Public Health
(Tewksbury Hospital)

RN II: 06/06/1993 - 01/06/2001

On a vote made by Mr. Gormley, Jr., and seconded by Mr. Valeri, the Board voted to table Ms. Ferrick's Group 2 classification application.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

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

Group 4

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

1. **Malikameer Andrade** - Sergeant, Hampden County Sheriff's Department
2. **Robert Barcomb** - Firefighter, 104th Firefighter Wing Fire Dept., Military Division
3. **Adam Baptista** - Correction Officer, DOC
4. **John Capodilupo** - Correction Officer II, DOC
5. **Brian Douaire** - Correction Officer I, DOC
6. **Joe Eugenio** - Correction Officer II, DOC
7. **Kacey Garvey** - Lieutenant, Hampden County Sheriff's Department
8. **Raymond Gelewski** - Correction Officer I, DOC
9. **Parris Lucas** - Correction Officer I, DOC – (*Posthumous*)
10. **Gary Mastrangelo** - Sergeant, Essex County Sheriff's Department
11. **James McKinnon** - Industrial Instructor III, DOC
12. **Nancy Pieraccini** - ADS, Berkshire County Sheriff's Office
13. **Steven Sevivas** - Correction Officer I, DOC
14. **Phillip Smits** - Environmental Police Officer, EOEEA

15. **Stefanos Tsoukalas** - Sergeant, Essex County Sheriff's Department
16. **Kenneth Woods** - Lieutenant, Middlesex County Sheriff's Office
17. **Edwin Wright Jr** - ADS, Middlesex County Sheriff's Office

GROUP 4 (Board Review)

1. Nicholas Moses

Residential Supervisor IX-C.O., Hampden
County Sheriff's Department

On a vote made by Mr. Gormley, Jr., and seconded by Ms. Goldstein, the Board voted to deny Mr. Moses's Group 4 classification application.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

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

2. Michael Polidoro

Food Service Manager-C.O., Hampden
County Sheriff's Department

On a vote made by Mr. Gormley, Jr., and seconded by Ms. Goldstein, the Board voted to deny Mr. Polidoro's Group 4 classification application.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

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

3. Stephen Sabol

Shift Supervisor-C.O., Hampden County
Sheriff's Department

On a vote made by Mr. Valeri, and seconded by Mr. Gormley, Jr., the Board voted to deny Mr. Sabol's Group 4 classification application.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

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

There was discussion about slash titles, and the title not included in statute defining Group 4. Mr. Valeri stated, and the other Board members agreed that their hands were tied by the legislation.

GROUP 4 CPO (Board Review)

1. **Jeremy Bray**

CPO A/B, DOC

On a vote made by Mr. Valeri, and seconded by Mr. Gormley, Jr., the Board voted to approve Mr. Bray's Group 4 classification application.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

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

GROUP 4 PRO-RATE (Board Review)

1. **Ellen Winschel**

Department of Corrections

CPO A/B: 07/27/1986 - 07/15/1994

CPO A/B: 08/25/1996 - 02/13/1997

On a vote made by Mr. Valeri, and seconded by Mr. Gormley, Jr., the Board voted to approve Ms. Winschel's Group 4 classification application.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

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

20/50

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

1. **Romand Cook** - Correction Officer, Suffolk County Sheriff's Department
2. **Joseph Glenny** - Correction Officer I, DOC
3. **Charles Plaskasovitis** - Corporal, Suffolk County Sheriff's Department

Executive Director's Report

- Ms. Kougias said that there was legislation in process to extend remote meetings through June 30, 2027, but that Board staff were ready to move ahead with in-person meetings for April if the need was there.

Post script: On Friday, March 28, we learned that the COVID-19 remote meeting provisions were extended through June 30, 2027, Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025.

- The Members Self-Service (MSS) Portal kickoff is scheduled for Monday, March 31. Ms. Kougias invited members of the Board to attend the MSS event. The event will include a project overview and introduction of Nagarro, the project vendor. Ms. Kougias introduced the Project Manager for the MSS project, Joanna Kolis. Ms. Kolis briefly provided the multi-year overview of the project timeline.
- Ms. Kougias, Ms. Eggers and Mr. Zapolin met with representatives of the Hampden County Sheriff's Department to discuss slash titles. Sheriff Cocchi had requested the meeting to advocate for Group 4 Classification positions, slash titles, recently denied. In conclusion, of a robust discussion, Ms. Kougias and Mr. Cocchi agreed that the appeals in process at DALA (seven through February) and subsequent outcomes will provide both parties with guidance on classifying the positions.

This matter is a complex one. The Board is confined by the wording in the statute and the legislation relies on job titles that are outdated and often incomplete. Mr. Valeri said that Group Classifications should incorporate a mix of the administration's human resources and retirement board resources. The Board has too much responsibility in defining the classification. Job description should be accurate and current, as roles evolve over time. Mr. Valeri noted that the MSRB is the only Board that is in the position of having to make these decisions.

- Ms. Kougias and Ms. Daddona met with the Secretariat Human Resource Officers on March 19. This outreach was productive and covered a variety of topics relating to SERS, the Salary Transparency Act, the HERO Act, and the federal Social Security Fairness Act.
- Ms. Kougias announced that the Fiscal Year 2026 Operating and Capital Budget is in the planning phase and would be presented to the Board at the April Board Meeting.
- The monthly and weekly warrant data were presented to the Board for its review. The production numbers remain consistent with the continued success of the Estimated Initial Benefit Program.

- The monthly operation and capital expense reports through February 2024 were presented, the telephone call summary, and the PRIT Investment report as of February 2024 was shared with the Board and brief comments for the year ending December 31, 2024 showing investment returns compared to benchmarks.
- The electronic signature regulation was presented to the Board with an explanation of the PERAC requirements. The regulation will allow for electronic signatures and to be facilitated through the MSS portal implementation. This discussion was a continuation of earlier Board discussions. The updated regulation includes a list of the forms for which the SRB intends to allow for an electronic signature. This enhancement does not replace the current process of using “wet signatures” but rather an alternative.

Ms. Kougias requested that the Board approve the updated proposed Electronic Signature Regulation.

Ms. Goldstein made a motion, and Mr. Valeri seconded the motion to approve the proposed Electronic Signature regulation.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

Mr. Valeri	Yes
Ms. McGoldrick	Absent
Ms. Goldstein	Yes
Mr. Gormley, Jr.	Yes
Treasurer Goldberg	Yes

- Each year the MSRB selects a company to print and send out the Member Annual Statements pursuant to the Commonwealth’s procurement process. Ms. Kougias presented the memorandum that outlined the specifics for Standard Modern. The current contract with Standard Modern allows for an additional year. A Board vote would allow Board staff to engage Standard Modern at a cost of \$28,821.23 to print, fulfill, and mail the 2024 Member Annual Statements. Standard Modern has proven to be a reliable business partner with the expertise to perform the job. This year’s quote is approximately a 3% increase from last year’s statement production cost.

Mr. Gormley, Jr., made a motion to approve the recommendation for Board staff to engage Standard Modern to print, fulfill, and mail the 2024 Member Annual Statements. Ms. Goldstein seconded the motion.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

Mr. Valeri	Yes
Ms. McGoldrick	Absent
Ms. Goldstein	Yes
Mr. Gormley, Jr.	Yes
Treasurer Goldberg	Yes

Legal Update

This month's legal memorandum discussion focused on a recent decision from the Suffolk Superior Court in *Hardoon v. SBR and CRAB*, No. 2384CV2496. Mr. Hardoon, a former assistant district attorney, claimed that he received incorrect information as to when he was eligible to retire. In 2005, he was advised by an unknown member of Board staff that he could not retire with maximum benefits until age 65. In fact, he was Group 4 eligible and could have retired at age 55. Mr. Hardoon discovered this in 2012 and retired immediately. He requested the Board backdate his retirement date and pay him back benefits. The Board denied his request in part because backdating an application is prohibited by § 10(3), which limits retirement dates to "not less than 15 days nor more than four months after the filing of [an] application." DALA and CRAB affirmed the Board's decision and Mr. Hardoon appealed to the Superior Court. The Superior Court affirmed the Board's decision and held the plain language of the statute did not allow for his retirement day to be anything other than one within that statutory window. The Court also observed that even if DALA had found the staff member's statement to be misleading (which it had not), such a finding would not have affected the outcome of the case because "[a]n error of a MSRB employee cannot expand the retirement board's authorization." Ms. Diggs reported that Mr. Hardoon did not appeal to the Court of Appeals.

- Ms. Kougas was saddened to share the news of the passing of two people with ties to the MSRB community:

Carol Goldberg, Treasurer Goldberg's mother, was a trailblazing female executive, President of Stop and Shop grocery stores, served as the first woman on the board of the Federal Reserve, Boston, and an influential member of other boards. Her career and life were to be admired. Mrs. Goldberg passed on March 3, 2025.

Paul Shanley, friend and colleague who served as General Counsel to the Office of the State Treasurer for 20 years, was a PRIM Board Member, Mass Retirees officer, and professional who provided expertise to SRB. Mr. Shanley passed on February 27, 2025.

On behalf of the State Board of Retirement, we offer our deepest condolences.

At 12:45 PM, Treasurer Goldberg asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Valeri made a motion to adjourn in Mrs. Goldberg's and Mr. Shanley's honor. Mr. Gormley, Jr., seconded the motion.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

Mr. Valeri	Yes
Ms. McGoldrick	Absent
Ms. Goldstein	Yes
Mr. Gormley, Jr.	Yes
Treasurer Goldberg	Yes

The next meeting of the State Board of Retirement will be held on April 24, 2025 at 10:00 AM.