

OPEN MINUTES OF THE MEETING
1,284th BOARD MEETING
STATE RETIREMENT BOARD

DATE: January 23, 2025

TIME: 10:00 AM

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

There being a quorum present, the January 23, 2025, meeting of the State Retirement Board ("Board") was called to order at 10:01 a.m. by the Chair & Treasurer, Deborah Goldberg.

Treasurer 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; Emily Kowtoniuk, Legislative Director; Archibald Gormley, Jr., Chosen Member; Theresa McGoldrick, Elected Member; Frank Valeri, 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 January 23, 2025 meeting were: Kathryn Kougias, Executive Director; Sandor Zapolin, Deputy Executive Director/ Chief Operating Officer; Kim Griffin, Director of Information Systems & Technology; Yande Lombe, Associate Board Counsel; Jennifer Hunt, Associate Board Counsel; ; Joisei Horton, Manager, Disability Unit; Stephanie Sicard, Assistant Director of Benefit Calculations; Sharon Sullivan, Budget & Finance Manager; Robert Liford, Disability Retirement Case Counselor; Cecilia Yau, Audit Supervisor; 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; Drenna Barrett, Assistant Director of Member Account Management; Jasmine Chasse, Disability Retirement Case Counselor; 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: Chandra Bork, Chief of Staff; John Durgin, Associate Counsel; Brendan McGough, Associate Counsel; Andrew Napolitano, Deputy Communications Director; Sandra DeSantis Lynch, General Counsel.

Three guests participated remotely for all or part of the meeting. The guests' names were: Jan Arabas, Angela DiGregorio and attorney Adam Troupe.

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

Treasurer 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. Treasurer 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 DECEMBER 19, 2024 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 1,283rd Board Meeting held on December 19, 2024.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

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

THE BOARD ENTERS INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

At **10:05 a.m.**, the Board entered Executive Session for today's meeting on January 23, 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. Treasurer Goldberg indicated that the Board would reconvene in Open Session after the Executive Session.

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

At 11:00 a.m. Treasurer Goldberg departed the meeting as announced and appointed Emily Kowtoniuk, Legislative Director, as the presiding officer for the remainder of the session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION CONCLUDES AND THE BOARD RECONVENES IN OPEN SESSION

At 11:02 a.m. the Board concluded Executive Session and voted to reconvene in Open Session.

Ms. McGoldrick motioned to conclude Executive Session and reconvene in Open Session. Mr. Gormley, Jr., seconded the motion and the Board voted to conclude Executive Session and Reconvene in Open Session.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

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

TAB 2: GROUP CLASSIFICATIONS

Group 2

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

1. **Yoleine Bain** - RN II, Hogan Regional Center, DDS
2. **John Curley** - Senior Prison Steward/C.O., Hampden County Sheriff's Department
3. **Elizabeth Dougherty** – Nurse Practitioner, Lemuel Shattuck Hospital, DPH
4. **Michael Durben** - Clinical Social Worker A/B, DMH
5. **Philip Ekeson** - Social Worker III, DCF
6. **Bernice Gero** - Compliance Officer III, Worcester Recovery Center and Hospital, DMH
7. **Samantha Lee** - Social Worker III, DCF

GROUP 2 (Board Review)

1. **Robert Anzola** – Clinical Social Worker C, Brockton Multi Service DMH

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

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

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

2. **Sheila Rivest** – RN II, Central Residential Services, DDS

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

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

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

3. **Linda Wyndham** – Rehabilitation Counselor C, DMH

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

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

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

GROUP 2 HSC II (Board Review)

1. **Kendra Mello** – HSC II, DMH

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

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

Mr. Valeri	Yes
Ms. McGoldrick	Yes
Ms. Goldstein	Yes
Mr. Gormley, Jr.	Yes
Ms. Kowtoniuk	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. **Mafalda Gomes**

Chelsea Soldier's Home

CNA I – 05/02/2005 - 06/30/2014

2. **Robin Pergola**

Chelsea Soldier's Home

LPN I - 07/21/1991 - 08/31/1996
RN II - 09/01/1996 - 09/20/2006

Group 2 Pro-Rate (Board Review)

1. **Lisa Papazian**

Plymouth County Sheriff's

Department

Assistant Program Manager

11/30/2014 - 01/17/2025

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

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

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

2. **Robin Pergola**

Chelsea Soldier's Home

RN III - 02/24/2008 - 03/28/2020

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

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

Mr. Valeri	Yes
Ms. McGoldrick	Yes
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. **George Almeida** - Correction Officer, Bristol County Sheriff's Office
2. **Richard Chambers** - Correction Officer, Essex County Sheriff's Department
3. **Mark Chanaki** - Industrial Instructor II, DOC
4. **William Clark** - Senior Correction Officer, Middlesex County Sheriff's Office
5. **Victor Correia** - Correction Officer III, DOC
6. **Paul Dougherty** - Correction Officer I, DOC
7. **Stephen Fagan** - Correction Officer I, DOC
8. **Mark Heisler** - Correction Officer I, DOC
9. **Jason King** - Correction Officer II, DOC
10. **Daniel Macwhinnie** - Sergeant, Berkshire County Sheriff's Office
11. **Garry Moriarty** - Correction Officer I, DOC

12. **Russell Page** - Corporal, Hampden County Sheriff's Department
13. **Richard Paiva** - Lieutenant, Middlesex County Sheriff's Office
14. **Sylvester Santos** - Correction Officer, Bristol County Sheriff's Office

GROUP 4 (Board Review)

1. **Fernando Amaral** - First Residential Supervisor/C.O., Hampden County Sheriff's Department

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

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

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

2. **Michael Doherty** - 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. Doherty's Group 4 classification application.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

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

3. **Kevin Pendleton** - Shift Supervisor/C.O. II, Hampden County Sheriff's Department

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

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

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

Group 4 CPO (Board Review)

1. John Cunningham - CPO A/B, DOC

On a motion made by Ms. McGoldrick, and seconded by Mr. Gormley, Jr., the Board voted to approve Mr. Cunningham's Group 4 classification application.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

Mr. Valeri	Yes
Ms. McGoldrick	Yes
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. **Craig Bassett** - Correction Officer I, DOC
2. **Reginald Green** - Corporal, Hampden County Sheriff's Department
3. **Heather Pacheco** - Correction Officer II, DOC
4. **Garry Youmell** - Correction Officer, Hampshire County Sheriff's Department

TAB 3: REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Business Operations Report

- Ms. Kougias provided an update about the passage of the Repeal of the Windfall Elimination Provision and Government Offset Program and the passage of the Social Security Fairness Act. MSRB has been referring inquiries to the Social Security Administration. Mr. Valeri said that the scale of the implementation will require substantial planning, but that Mass Retirees and other organizations will continue to monitor developments. Ms. Kougias acknowledged Mass Retirees efforts on the passage of the Social Security Fairness Act on behalf of the SRB Membership.
- An internal review suggested that at least half of the 57 non-commonwealth agencies that participate in the State Employees Retirement System (SERS) are delinquent in submitting the employee contributions and employer reimbursements and reporting. Some delinquencies are recurring, and some are delayed up to six months. These agencies have been sent letters. Overall, the letter was well received but staffing levels at the non-commonwealth agencies remain a key issue. Ms. Kowtoniuk said that the Treasury is in conversation with these agencies to find a legislative solution to general funding issues.
- Ms. Kougias provided follow-up on the Salary Transparency Act ("Act") and impact of waiving the Anti-spiking provisions, Section 14 and Section 18, and the project plan to resolve for

impacted retirees. At this time, calculations have been completed for 15 cases impacted by Section 14. The greater population of approximately 250 that were subject to Section 18 or both Sections and may need their retirement allowance recalculated. A letter has been drafted to send to the agencies of the last place of employment of the retirees to gather updated payroll information.

- The Violent Assault Disability Act (VADA) requires the implementation of a new disability benefit including processes and changes to the existing MARIS software. Ms. Kougias provided a summary of the meeting with PERAC staff and said that PERAC will be an important partner throughout the development and implementation. The initial estimate of a couple of hundred licensed health care professionals potentially may be eligible for a benefit as described by VADA.
- MSRB staff has been assisting retiring legislators navigate the retirement process. Ms. Kougias had the opportunity to speak to the incoming legislators and their staffs during the Treasurer's welcome session on January 13. Presenting the retirement board and its services provides a resource for them personally and for their constituencies.
- SRB staff and Treasury Legal met with representatives from the Office of the Veteran Advocate. The discussion with Mr. Robert Notch, Veteran Advocate, and Mr. Scott Pitta, Executive Chief of Staff/ General Counsel of the Office of the Veteran Advocate focused on the HERO Act legislation and its implementation. The conversation provided a higher level of awareness of SRB's services and how to better meet the veteran community's needs.
- Ms. Kougias said that staffing levels have remained strong. Overall, the team feels good about the work that they are doing. Ms. Kougias reviewed the information provided by National Public Employee Retirement Systems (NCPERS) that projects a noticeable increase in retirees over the next few years. Ms. McGoldrick referred to it as a potential tsunami. Age, demographics, economics, and post pandemic factors are some of the indicators for the increased projection. Ms. Kougias synopsised a recent webinar she participated in on recruiting efforts in the public sector. Merit increases will be announced this month, and Treasurer Goldberg approved Retention bonuses for 2025 that will be issued in February.

Information Systems Quarterly Update

Ms. Griffin provided an update on several Information Systems initiatives. She said that there has been good progress in moving the Self-Service portal project forward and the onboarding of the Business Lead positions. The last quarter operations were highlighted and included streamlining the printing and sending of the 1099-R forms and the strides made towards improving the functionality of both MARIS and OnBase. The MARIS interface file was completed to support the Office of the Comptroller's Business Enterprise Systems Transformation (BEST) Program.

Ms. Kougias added that the two recently filled positions of Business Lead and Project Manager are crucial in filling a gap between the technology and business teams. These two positions will continue to spend the majority of their time on the self-service portal for the immediate future but that will change over time.

MSRB Legal Update

Ms. Diggs discussed three decisions featured in the January Legal Update Memorandum. *Zaleskas v. CRAB* concerned a request by the estate of a deceased member for an “Option D” survivor allowance, even though the member had not completed an Option D form in his lifetime. The estate argued, among other things, that the Board had a duty to inform the member about Option D before his death and negligently failed to inform him that his file lacked a completed form. The court rejected these arguments, noted that the duties of the Board are outlined in G.L. c. 32, § 20(5), and explained that nothing in the statute establishes the duties the estate sought to impose on the Board. In *Mercadante v. SBR*, an applicant for accidental disability retirement argued she did not have the benefit of a proper medical panel evaluation because one member of the panel allegedly lacks pertinent information concerning her injury and the same panel member allegedly displayed bias against her. DALA found the medical panel member more credible than the member and CRAB affirmed that finding. Finally, in *Daley-Horgan v. SBR*, DALA affirmed the decision of the Board denying the member’s application for Group 2 classification of her job as a paralegal in the Inmate Legal Services Division at the Suffolk County Sheriff’s Department. The member argued, in part, that DALA was bound by a 2002 Boston Retirement Board decision classifying various Suffolk County Sheriff’s Department employees as Group 2. DALA disagreed, explained that DALA and CRAB, “are not bound by previous classification decisions by other boards, especially if the decisions are wrong,” and affirmed the Board’s decision.

As part of the Legal discussion, Ms. McGoldrick asked whether outreach is done regarding Option D. Mr. Valeri agreed that more outreach might be considered because members often do not realize that it is not an automatic benefit. Ms. Kougias has accommodated some agencies and provided reports of their employees and their elections. Further consideration will be discussed on how to best reach the membership in regard to Option D.

Board & MSRB Communications

Ms. Kougias highlighted the MSRB December Retiree eNews Bulletin that includes the 2024 year-end updates of the progress made in reducing wait times, increasing disbursement payments, and increase in staff. Mr. Valeri and Ms. McGoldrick thanked the Treasurer and staff for their work in accomplishing these goals and both said that members are beginning to notice the improvements.

Ms. Kowtoniuk entertained a motion to adjourn. On a motion made by Ms. McGoldrick and seconded by Mr. Valeri, the Board voted to adjourn at 12:11 p.m.

ON THE ROLL CALL, THE VOTE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

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