

ASSOCIATION OF MONTANA RETIRED PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
Board Minutes
100 North Park – MPERA Office, 2nd Floor Conference Room
September 17, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

The Board meeting of the Association of Montana Retired Public Employees was called to order by Tom Livers at 9:33 a.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Tom Livers, Lois Menzies, Melanie Symons, Geoff Badenoch, Dave Ashley, and Tyler Coenen (staff) were present in person. Leo Hudetz, Bruce Brensdaal, Barbara Martens, and Carol Grell Morris were present by video call.

GUESTS

Bill Holahan (MPERA Executive Director) and Brian Thompson (AMRPE Lobbyist with Browning, Kaleczyc, Berry, & Hoven) were present in person.

MINUTES

Leo Hudetz suggested clarifying the Legislative Committee Report section in the May minutes by indicating that the MPERA administrative rules notice clarified the disability approval process but made no substantive changes. Geoff Badenoch moved to approve the minutes with Leo's suggested edit and Lois Menzies seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

MPERA PRESENTATION

Bill Holahan reported that he was hired as the MPERA Executive Director in June. Bill also reported that MPERA has continued participation in the interim study regarding pensions and recently provided the State Administration and Veterans' Affairs Interim Committee (SAVA) with several reports including accrued liability per GABA tier. Additionally, SAVA approved three (3) bill drafts. Bill also reported that an actuarial valuation will be coming soon, and MPERA anticipates good results in which each system will amortize in 30 years or less. Bill stated that MPERA will have one housekeeping bill introduced next session that has no impact on retirees, including working retirees.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Brian Thompson reported that redistricting happened in Montana, and Democrats are expected to take back some seats. He also reported that he anticipates playing a lot of defense this session, similar to the previous session. Regarding the discussion on reducing taxation of Social Security income, Brian reported that this carries a very large fiscal note and has not been favorably received in the past. Brian offered to index the current Social Security income exemption for inflation and determine how the exemption has eroded over time. This information will be available before the next Board meeting for review by the Legislative Committee.

REPORTS

Legislation Committee Report

The Legislation Committee met and discussed a plan of action around AARP working on the social security taxation issue and agreed that AMRPE should not be the lead but should support AARP. Support will be dependent on what AARP's strategy is and what they have done so far, but could look like a press release, talking with legislators in the halls, testifying, and utilizing the AMRPE membership to reach out and contact legislators. The rest of the Board agrees.

Treasurer Report

Bruce Brensdal reported that 66.67% of the year has elapsed and with that, 85% of projected revenue has been received, and 50% of expenses paid. There is a positive gain on the year so far.

Contract Coordination Committee Report

The BKBH contract expires at the end of the year, and Brian will submit a new proposal soon. The Robson Valley Associates (RVA) contract has been executed.

Membership Report

From the New Recruitment mailings, 3.6% signed up and from the Renewal mailings, 72.5% renewed. Both are lower than the previous year. There was a small increase in renewals likely resulting from the reminder placed in the newsletter. The 2024 New Recruitment mailing is planned to go out early October.

OLD BUSINESS

Social Media

Tyler Coenen reported that the Facebook page had been created and some basic content has been posted. The next step is to invite some Board members to set and test the rules of the group before it is rolled out to membership. Carol asked that the page be operational in time for the 2025 legislative session.

Committee Chair Descriptions

Each committee chairperson provided a brief description of their duties. Lois compiled these and referenced a lot of the duties to the bylaws. Board members are reviewing this document, and Lois asked for any comments by September 27th.

NEW BUSINESS

Fall Newsletter

The Board discussed if the ad hoc newsletter committee will continue to work on this and timing of the newsletter. There was support for the ad hoc committee continuing as is. The discussion for timing ranged from early/mid-November to early December with a lean towards early December.

Board Recruitment

There are no vacancies at the moment. Three members have terms that end at the end of the year and will decide if they are continuing.

Items for October Agenda

- Legislation updates
- Fall newsletter
- Membership and recruitment letter update
- New committees starting next year
- Social media
- Contract committee

Lois moved to adjourn the meeting and Geoff seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Tom Livers adjourned the meeting at 11:25 a.m.

The next meeting will be on October 15, 2024, at 9:30 a.m. by video conference call or in-person.