

16 Unicorn Street
Newburyport, MA 01950
August 25, 2022
Meeting Minutes

1. Call to order

A regular monthly meeting of the Newburyport Retirement Board was held on Thursday, August 25, 2022. In attendance at the meeting were Chairman Joseph Spaulding, as well as Board Members Jeff Cutter, Larry Giunta, and John Moak. Derek Minervini, Assistant to the Executive Director, and Laurie Burton, Executive Director were also in attendance. Chairman Spaulding called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment

3. Chairman's comments

The Chairman did not make a comment.

4. Approval of July 21, 2022 regular monthly meeting minutes

Mr. Giunta motioned to approve the July minutes. Mr. Cutter seconded. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote, Mr. Cutter, yes, Mr. Moak, yes, Mr. Giunta, yes, Mr. Spaulding, yes.

5. Approval of August 18, 2022 office payroll for \$17,135.67

Mr. Moak motioned to approve the August office payroll. Mr. Giunta seconded. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote, Mr. Cutter, yes, Mr. Moak, yes, Mr. Giunta, yes, Mr. Spaulding, yes.

6. Approval of August 31, 2022 retiree payroll and administrative warrant \$880,846.84

Mr. Giunta motioned to approve; Mr. Cutter seconded. Mr. Moak asked why the amount was so much higher than previous months. Mr. Minervini stated that there were eleven new retirees, most of who were paid a retro for all or part of July. Ms. Burton added that this warrant included a rather large 3(8)c payment to the state retirement board.

7. Approval of June 2022 Trial Balance, Bank Statements, and Books

Mr. Giunta motioned to approve. Mr. Cutter seconded. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote, Mr. Cutter, yes, Mr. Moak, yes, Mr. Giunta, yes, Mr. Spaulding, yes.

8. Prim June 2022 Statement GAA \$108,391,570.01 Cash \$0.00

Mr. Moak motioned to receive and file. Mr. Cutter seconded. Mr. Moak asked if the \$4.4 million deposit was included in the July statement Ms. Burton confirmed that it was, and that the change in account balance due to investments was roughly \$3.6 million. The motion was

approved by a unanimous roll call vote, Mr. Cutter, yes, Mr. Moak, yes, Mr. Giunta, yes, Mr. Spaulding, yes.

9. PRIM July 2022 Statement GAA \$116,477,768.40 Cash \$50,501.86

Mr. Moak motioned to approve. Mr. Giunta seconded. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote, Mr. Cutter, yes, Mr. Moak, yes, Mr. Giunta, yes, Mr. Spaulding, yes.

10. Approval of new member applications

a. Justin Burl Fire 7/25/2022

Mr. Cutter motioned to approve Justin Burl's application. Mr. Giunta seconded. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote, Mr. Cutter, yes, Mr. Moak, yes, Mr. Giunta, yes, Mr. Spaulding, yes.

b. Justin Murray DPW 1/03/2022

Mr. Cutter motioned to approve Mr. Murray's application. Mr. Moak Seconded. Mr. Moak asked why it took so long for this application to come before the board. Mr. Minervini stated that the member did not complete his paperwork until August. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote, Mr. Cutter, yes, Mr. Moak, yes, Mr. Giunta, yes, Mr. Spaulding, yes.

c. Maureen Ingalls Schools 8/29/2022

Mr. Moak motioned to approve. Mr. Giunta seconded. Mr. Moak asked if the school provides the total number of hours to be worked per week by a new member. Mr. Minervini stated that the school provides the member's offer letter which either includes the number of hours to be worked, or the percentage of full time. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote, Mr. Cutter, yes, Mr. Moak, yes, Mr. Giunta, yes, Mr. Spaulding, yes.

d. Carley Siemasko Police 8/01/2022

Mr. Cutter motioned to approve Ms. Siemasko's application. Mr. Giunta seconded. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote, Mr. Cutter, yes, Mr. Moak, yes, Mr. Giunta, yes, Mr. Spaulding, yes.

11. Approval of member transfers/refunds

a. Madeline Alfonso Refund \$1,063.06 5 months

Mr. Moak motioned to approve Ms. Alfonso's refund. Mr. Giunta seconded. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote, Mr. Cutter, yes, Mr. Moak, yes, Mr. Giunta, yes, Mr. Spaulding, yes.

b. Olivia Couturier Transfer to MTRS \$1,813.23 9 months

Mr. Moak motioned to approve Ms. Couturier's transfer. Mr. Cutter seconded. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote, Mr. Cutter, yes, Mr. Moak, yes, Mr. Giunta, yes, Mr. Spaulding, yes.

c. Sarah Armano Transfer to MTRS \$4,026.79 2 years

Mr. Moak motioned to approve Ms. Armano's transfer. Mr. Cutter seconded. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote, Mr. Cutter, yes, Mr. Moak, yes, Mr. Giunta, yes, Mr. Spaulding, yes.

d. Karin Ward Refund \$3,749.86 1 year 8 months

Mr. Giunta motioned to approve Ms. Ward's refund. Mr. Cutter seconded. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote, Mr. Cutter, yes, Mr. Moak, yes, Mr. Giunta, yes, Mr. Spaulding, yes.

12. Approval of member buybacks

a. Jason Kohan 2/01/1999-6/30/2000 \$2,569.87 1 year 4 months

Mr. Cutter motioned to approve Officer Kohan's buyback. Mr. Giunta seconded. Ms. Burton noticed that the wrong cost had been put on the agenda, she pointed out that the \$2,569.87 figure represented the deductions owed, but with interest the total cost of the purchase is \$5,656.65. Mr. Moak motioned to amend the amount to \$5,656.65. Mr. Giunta seconded. \$5,656.65. Mr. Cutter asked how this buyback differs from Robert Vatcher's recent buyback. Ms. Burton stated that Officer Vatcher was dispatcher in Newburyport, while Jason Kohan and Michael Sugrue worked in municipalities covered by the Essex Regional Retirement System, and that Essex was not accepting liability for this service, however the retirement board may be able to force Essex to accept the liability when these members retire. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote, Mr. Cutter, yes, Mr. Moak, yes, Mr. Giunta, yes, Mr. Spaulding, yes.

b. Michael Sugrue 1/13/1998-2/14/1999 \$1,012.23 1 year 1 month

Mr. Moak motioned to approve Officer Sugrue's buyback in the amount of \$2,352.99, which represents deductions owed, plus interest. Mr. Cutter seconded. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote, Mr. Cutter, yes, Mr. Moak, yes, Mr. Giunta, yes, Mr. Spaulding, yes.

13. Approval of member retirement applications

a. Anthony Furnari DPS 8/17/2022

Mr. Cutter motioned to approve Anthony Furnari's retirement application. Mr. Giunta seconded. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote, Mr. Cutter, yes, Mr. Moak, yes, Mr. Giunta, yes, Mr. Spaulding, yes.

14. PERAC Memos

a. #19/2022 Extension of Open Meeting Law Waivers

b. #20/2022 Reinstatement to Service under G.L. c. 32 § 105

c. #21/2022 Vernarva II – Important update

d. #22/2022 Cost of Living Increase for Supplemental Dependent Allowances Paid to Accidental Disability Retirees and Accidental Death Survivors

Mr. Giunta motioned to receive and file the above PERAC memos collectively. Mr. Cutter seconded. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote, Mr. Cutter, yes, Mr. Moak, yes, Mr. Giunta, yes, Mr. Spaulding, yes.

15. Jerry Cronin v. Newburyport Retirement Board Scheduling Order

Mr. Giunta motioned to receive and file the notice. Mr. Moak seconded. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote, Mr. Cutter, yes, Mr. Moak, yes, Mr. Giunta, yes, Mr. Spaulding, yes.

16. Approval of purchase of desk and table

Ms. Burton stated that she was currently using the old board meeting table as a desk, and that it was in poor condition, Ms. Burton also stated that she would additionally like to purchase an area rug to go underneath the new conference table. Discussion followed regarding the size and style of the table. Mr. Giunta asked that the board consider purchasing a piece of glass to protect the surface of the table.

Mr. Moak then asked about the style of the desk. Ms. Burton stated that it was similar in style to the desk currently used by the Assistant to the Executive Director. Mr. Moak move to approve purchase of a conference table and desk in the amount of \$3,672.76. Mr. Cutter seconded. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote, Mr. Cutter, yes, Mr. Moak, yes, Mr. Giunta, yes, Mr. Spaulding, yes.

17. Approval of Assistant to the Executive Director Contract

Mr. Spaulding commented that his neighbor is retiring and stopped by his house after filing her retirement paperwork to praise Mr. Minervini. Mr. Spaulding continued, stating that he had asked Mr. Minervini for items in the past, and that Mr. Minervini has always provided any requested items promptly. Mr. Spaulding stated that it is his hope that when the time comes, Mr. Minervini will move to the Executive Director position.

Mr. Giunta stated that the verbiage in the presented contract is consistent with that of the Executive Director's contract, as well as with that of prior contracts. Mr. Giunta then stated that he, Mr. Spaulding, and Ms. Burton put together a salary schedule to go along with the contract. He also stated that Mr. Minervini's current salary is approximately at the Step C, 6 months on the proposed scale, however based on recent openings for similar positions, Mr. Giunta believes Mr. Minervini should be compensated at Step F-1 year.

Mr. Moak took issue with the term "Step" as it may imply an automatic raise. Mr. Giunta pointed to language in the contract authorizing the board to increase the Assistant to the Executive Director's step on the salary schedule, and noted that there was no mechanism for this to happen automatically. Mr. Moak also stated that he believed job descriptions should be linked to each step. Discussion followed.

Mr. Moak motioned to approve contract as submitted, with Mr. Minervini to be paid the Step F-Year 1 salary as of July 1, 2022. Mr. Giunta seconded. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote, Mr. Cutter, yes, Mr. Moak, yes, Mr. Giunta, yes, Mr. Spaulding, yes.

18. Jeff Cutter: Request for Actuarial Valuation for Purpose of Increasing COLA Base

Mr. Cutter stated that the Newburyport Retirement Board is currently among only a handful of systems that still use a \$12,000 COLA base. Mr. Cutter stated that he believes it is time to raise the COLA base, and that the board should start the process, by reaching out to PERAC for an actuarial valuation showing how an increase in the COLA base would affect the funding schedule. Mr. Cutter mentioned that he would like to see the COLA base increased by \$1,000 per year for the next six years.

Mr. Moak asked if PERAC was already doing an actuarial valuation for our board this year. Ms. Burton stated that PERAC was, however we would need to request that they include the affects of an increase to the COLA base. Discussion followed.

Mr. Moak asked if there is a minimum COLA that the board is bound to grant. Ms. Burton stated that there is not, and some systems have given no COLA in past years. Mr. Moak stated that if the Board is not bound to a minimum number, then he does not see a downside in raising the COLA base all at once, as the Board could offer a COLA below 3%.

Mr. Cutter motioned to request an actuarial valuation from PERAC based on a scenario where the board increase the COLA base to \$15,000 and another based on an increase to \$18,000 both increases effective 7/1/2023. Mr. Giunta seconded. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote, Mr. Cutter, yes, Mr. Moak, yes, Mr. Giunta, yes, Mr. Spaulding, yes.

19. Executive Director's Report

Ms. Burton stated that PERAC would be holding its Emerging Issues forum in Worcester on 9/15/2022. Mr. Minervini would like to attend. Mr. Cutter stated that he would also be attending. Mr. Moak stated that he would like to attend, however was unable to due to a schedule conflict. Discussion followed regarding previous years' Emerging Issues Forums. Mr. Spaulding motioned to approve Mr. Cutter, Mr. Minervini and Mr. Manning's attendance at the forum. Mr. Giunta seconded. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote, Mr. Cutter, yes, Mr. Moak, yes, Mr. Giunta, yes, Mr. Spaulding, yes.

Mr. Spaulding stated that he would like to see the board produce a newsletter. Ms. Burton stated that her or Mr. Minervini would begin working on one.

20. Next Monthly Meeting September 29, 2022 at 9:00am

The next board meeting was set for September 29, 2022 at 9:00am by unanimous consent.

21. Motion to Adjourn

Mr. Moak motioned to adjourn. Mr. Giunta Seconded. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote, Mr. Cutter, yes, Mr. Moak, yes, Mr. Giunta, yes, Mr. Spaulding, yes.

Respectfully Submitted, _____
Derek Minervini, Assistant to the Executive Director

APPROVED - BOARD OF RETIREMENT

Joseph Spaulding, Elected Member, Chairman

Jeffrey Cutter, Elected Member, Vice-Chairman

Ethan Manning, Ex-Officio

John Moak, Mayor's Appointee Member

Larry Giunta, Board Appointee