

Municipal Police Employees' Retirement System
Minutes of the Legislative Committee Meeting
October 16, 2024

The Legislative Committee of the Municipal Police Employees' Retirement System held a meeting on Wednesday, October 16, 2024, at the system's office at 7722 Office Park Boulevard in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

I. **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Major Raymond Burkart, Jr. (Chair) at 9:24 am.

II. **Roll Call**

Members Present

Major Raymond Burkart, Jr, Chairman
Mayor Rick Allen
Mayor Greg Cromer
Asst. Chief Jason DiMarco
Lt. (Retired) Chad King

Members Absent

Chief Edwin Bergeron, Jr.
Major (Retired) Kelly Gibson

Others Present

Rep. Tony Bacala
Mr. Julius Roberson, State Treasurer Designee
Lt. Tyrone Warren, MPERS Board member
Chief Beth Westlake, MPERS Board member
Chief Christopher Wilrye, MPERS Board member
Mr. Benjamin Huxen II, MPERS Executive Director and General Counsel
Ms. Taylor Camp, MPERS, Chief Financial Officer
Ms. Melissa Frazier, MPERS, Benefits Administrator
Ms. Emily Thurston, Accountant
Mr. David Barnes, NEPC, Investment Consultant
Mr. Greg Curran - Curran Actuarial Consulting, Actuary
Ms. Sheri Morris - Daigle, Fisse, & Kessenich
Mr. Joey David, Louisiana House of Representatives
Ms. Laura Gail Sullivan, Attorney
Mr. Tyler Brannan, Curran Actuarial Consulting, Actuarial Analyst
Ms. Peyton Ohmstede (virtual)

III. Approval of the May 15, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Motion by Asst. Chief Jason DiMarco, seconded by Mayor Rick Allen, to approve the minutes of the meetings held May 15, 2024. Without objection the motion carried.

IV. New Business

A. Nomination of Committee Chair (Action Item)

Major Raymond Burkart, Jr. was nominated by Mayor Greg Cromer and Asst. Chief Jason DiMarco was nominated by Lt. (Retired) Chad King. Without a vote, Mr. Burkart suggested that Asst. Chief DiMarco take on the role.

Without objection, Asst. Chief Jason DiMarco was selected as Legislative Committee Chairman

B. Special Session on Taxes

Mr. Huxen explained that the special session on taxes could potentially impact retirement, especially because MPERS retirement benefits were currently exempt from state income tax. He stated that it seems no one is opposing the exemption and some of the things that are being discussed are more beneficial for retirement.

Rep. Bacala spoke about some of the proposals for the special session. He stated that legislators expect to be called into special session on November 4th through probably November 24th. Rep. Bacala said the session would concentrate largely on Article 7, the state spending side. He stated that the goal was to be revenue neutral, changing the way that local and state entities receive tax dollars. He stated that he did not see anything specifically related to retirement systems.

C. Other Legislation

Mr. Huxen stated that he believed Ms. Morris attended a city attorney's conference and heard that LMA may be attempting to introduce House Bill 42 again, but he had not heard that directly from anyone.

Mayor Allen stated that he believed everyone involved in that was just waiting to see that there is cooperation on both sides. He said he did not think anyone necessarily wanted to run with House Bill 42 again. Mayor Allen informed the board that he had a private conversation with Senator Sebaugh who said that as long as it was working and they could help municipalities and MPERS stay healthy, they would not introduce House Bill 42 again. Mayor Allen stated that he was speaking for the LMA and that they were not going to push for anyone

to rerun HB 42. He said if they can negotiate and talk about options for these municipalities, he doesn't feel there is a need for HB 42.

Mr. Huxen stated that he agreed with Mayor Allen.

Asst. Chief DiMarco stated that if everyone would just enroll their officers, the backpay could be worked out in time. He stated this would be a big help for everyone.

Mayor Allen said he felt that face-to-face meetings are needed to solve the problems. He stated that a CSR may need to be hired to have the face to face meetings so that they understand that MPERS is trying to help them.

Rep. Bacala stated that he feels an invitation to a conversation with a mayor and two to three board members shows good will and merit. He stated that if they can't come to Baton Rouge, then MPERS needs to go to them. Rep. Bacala explained that it shows MPERS is working with them instead of working against them in legal battles.

Mr. Huxen explained that they have been having meetings like these and he had been trying to stay out of them and let Ms. Camp handle it. Mr. Huxen stated that the municipalities that are represented by RMI have stated Ms. Camp can't talk to the municipalities anymore.

Ms. Camp asked if MPERS would be able to go through RMI and their attorneys and set up a meeting that way. Mayor Allen stated that he sits on the RMI board, and he was not aware of this roadblock. He stated that he would address the issue. Mayor Allen said if MPERS sets up those meetings, he would be there so the municipalities can see a friendly face like they did in the meeting held earlier that morning. Mayor Allen stated that if the roadblocks are with RMI, he would remedy the problem.

Mr. Huxen stated that he appreciated Mayor Allen's help. He also stated that they had one meeting that did not go well. Mr. Huxen explained that the municipality was very confrontational and stated that MPERS was taking away the rights of police officers to not be enrolled in retirement.

Ms. Laura Gail Sullivan reiterated that they have been having these meetings but maybe the suggestion of having a board member, a local representative, or someone familiar would be beneficial. She stated that understanding the process helps.

Rep. Bacala added that due to the adversarial relationship between MPERS and some mayors, he believes that having a familiar face in the meeting to be a mediator would help everyone get on the same page.

Mayor Cromer stated that MPERS needs to let LMA know about the victories and successes and that they need to push that information out so that the

small communities won't be fearful of coming to the meetings. Mayor Cromer explained that they need to know MPERS is coming to them with open hands and an open heart to work with them to help them take care of their police officers. He stated this message is not coming through.

Mr. Huxen stated that he appreciated the help Mayor Allen was offering and that MPERS would take him up on it. He stated that in reference to Mayor Cromer's comments, the staff would work on getting some written material together on the successes they have had.

Mayor Cromer stated that if MPERS could get this in a narrative format they could potentially get it in the LMA monthly newsletter to show that MPERS is not the enemy. Mr. Huxen said that he and Ms. Camp would work on that.

Rep. Bacala said that he did not know if a motion needed to be made or not to authorize the Director to follow a script in future meetings to negotiate at a specific level to make offers, which would prevent him from having to go to the board multiple times for approvals.

Mr. Huxen stated that he agreed with that idea but thought it would need to be brought up in the regular meeting.

V. Other Business

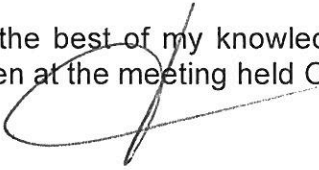
There was no other business brought before the committee.

VI. Adjourn

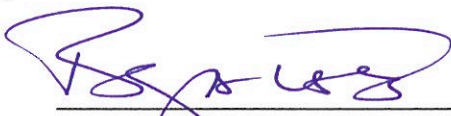
Motion by Lt. (Retired) Chad King, seconded by Asst. Chief Jason DiMarco, to adjourn the meeting at 9:46 a.m. Without objection, the motion carried.

The next meeting date is November 13, 2024.

To the best of my knowledge, the foregoing minutes accurately represent the actions taken at the meeting held October 16, 2024.



Major Raymond Burkart, Jr.
Legislative Committee Chairman



Ben Huxen
Executive Director and General Counsel