

**Municipal Police Employees' Retirement System
Minutes of the Legislative Committee Meeting
January 28, 2026**

The Legislative Committee of the Municipal Police Employees' Retirement System held a meeting on Wednesday, January 28, 2026, 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 Asst. Chief Jason DiMarco (Chair) at 9:06 a.m.

II. Roll Call

Members Present

Major Raymond Burkart, Jr.
Chief Edwin Bergeron, Jr.
Asst. Chief Jason DiMarco, Chairman
Major (Retired) Kelly Gibson
Lt. (Retired) Chad King
Chief (Retired) Beth Westlake

Members Absent

None

Others Present

Mr. Craig Cassagne, Commissioner of Administration's Designee
Mayor Lee Dragna, LMA Appointee
Mayor Jonathan Taylor, MPERS Board Member
Lt. Tyrone Warren, 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, MPERS, System Analyst
Mr. David Barnes, NEPC
Ms. Sherri Morris, Attorney, Daigle, Frisse, & Kessenich
Mr. Gregory Curran, Curran Actuarial Consulting, Ltd., Actuary
Ms. Laura Gail Sullivan, Attorney
Ms. Kay Burke, BLB&G
Ms. Cathy Smith, BLB&G
Ms. Karen Correll, MPERS, Membership Analyst (remote)
Ms. Christie Ziadeh, MPERS, Benefits Analyst (remote)
Ms. Sarah Daniel, MPERS, Accounts Analyst (remote)
Ms. Erin Estilette, Curran Actuarial Consulting (remote)

III. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

IV. Approval of the December 17, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Motion by Chief Edwin Bergeron, Jr., seconded by Chief (Retired) Beth Westlake to approve the minutes of the meeting held December 17, 2025. Without objection, the motion carried.

V. New Business

A. Review and Recommendation of Prefiled Legislation Affecting MPERS for the 2026 Regular Legislative Session (Action Item)

Mr. Huxen reviewed the prefiled bills as follows:

House Bill 8 by Representative Bacala deals with the authority of the legislative staff members to attend executive sessions. He stated it would extend the effective period of letters of authority from one year to four years. Mr. Huxen recommended the Committee vote to support it.

House Bill 26 by Representative Freeman changes the trigger for a partial dissolution from a drop of 50 from year-to-year to a drop of 100. Mr. Huxen noted that if this bill passes, New Orleans will likely not trigger dissolution in the future. Chief Bergeron asked if this bill pertained only to New Orleans, or to all agencies. Mr. Huxen stated that it would apply to all agencies, but a decrease of 100 employees would be impossible for many employers. Mr. Huxen noted that this bill would not change other rules like the 30% drop that is currently in place. He stated it would really only affect what has been triggering New Orleans, with the potential for other bigger agencies to be affected. Mr. Curran added that it essentially would exempt New Orleans from a likely partial dissolution. Mr. Curran went on to review some of New Orleans' history and stated he sees this bill as saying only the 30% drop applies in dissolution which could be a major shift in a large employer. Mr. Curran stated that dissolution protections were most important over the next nine years. He stated that after nine years the largest outstanding UAL base will be paid off and MPERS will likely have a much higher funded ratio and a much lower employer cost. He ended by stating this bill would place a limitation on New Orleans' chance of future partial withdrawal. Ms. Sullivan then spoke about the actuarial note that was prepared for the 2024 bill, which was identical to this bill. She stated it would make a difference for about five employers. Mr. Huxen stated his recommendation is to not take action at this time due to upcoming meetings and other bills to discuss that could affect the decision on a recommendation for House Bill 26.

Ms. Sullivan stated to the Committee that this year is a general session which means unlimited bills can be introduced. However, only five bills per legislator can be introduced after pre-filing which was required by last Friday. The last day for the second notice to run is tomorrow. After checking before the meeting, Ms. Sullivan stated there was a notice that popped up and it looks as though it will be a House Bill that would be relative to MPERS and the New Orleans Municipal Employees' Retirement System, to provide relative to employees of the New Orleans Police Department, to provide relative to membership in the system, and to provide affidavits to related matters. Ms. Sullivan stated they cannot tell what it will be, but it looks like a bill request that has been put in by a legislator and not necessarily run directly by the municipality. Ms. Sullivan went on to review past bills and stated that based on that, she feels New Orleans is trying to get a similar law where their employees outside of their officers would be covered by their municipal system.

House Bill 30 by Representative Bacala is a Board sponsored bill which proposes a law that applies to all the municipalities that employ or may employ municipal police officers who are covered under Social Security who under the current law may elect to opt out. The bill requires the Board to develop and provide annual retirement education at no cost to municipalities, and it requires municipalities to participate in those presentations. At a minimum, the education will include employer participation, reporting and contribution obligations, the interaction between MPERS and the federal social security program, DROP information, employer responsibilities related to employer classification, elections and service credit, and common compliance errors. MPERS can provide this education in person or virtually. The people who will be required to get at least one hour of education each calendar year are the Chief Executive Officer or Chief Administration Officer, municipalities payroll officer, and the Chief of Police or their designee.

House Bill 31 by Representative Echols was presented by Ms. Sullivan. She stated there is already a law in section 157 that allows the employee who goes to work for an employer that covers that employee for Social Security to choose whether or not to become a member of MPERS. HB 31 states "notwithstanding R.S. 11:157" and it is not clear if it may be somehow related to section 157. Ms. Sullivan noted that this bill would allow the individual municipality to pass an ordinance and to have their employees no longer covered by MPERS. This bill does not relate to FRS, only MPERS. It is not limited to those employers that are enrolled in social security, but it is limited to municipalities with a population not exceeding 5,000. Ms. Sullivan stated that this group makes up between 2/3 and 70% of the employers covered by MPERS. This would be another cost-shifting bill where a reduced covered payroll would result in a higher contribution rate over the next nine years for the employers that remain. If every municipality used the bill as it's written right now, one-third, which does represent the largest employers, would then be paying for everything, including UAL that is left over from retirees or deferred vested employees of those municipalities who opt out. Ms. Sullivan stated there is nothing in this bill that requires a UAL payment to be carried along to that municipality and nothing in

this bill that relates to partial dissolution. The Committee has until March 9 to continue reviewing it as they do not know who asked for this bill. Ms. Sullivan suggested that the Committee's motion include asking staff to contact the author to find out what his mindset is with parts of this legislation as there are other ways to resolve this. The Committee members continued discussion and decided they need more information on what this bill is really about. Mr. Curran will provide an estimate on the impact to MPERS but stated it will be difficult to give a full impact due to the way the bill is drafted.

House Bill 40 by Representative Butler pertains to partial dissolution. Mr. Huxen and Ms. Sullivan explained that the bill says if an employer in MPERS is deemed to have partially dissolved after a transfer of employees to another employer in MPERS, the system will determine whether the partial dissolution would have occurred without the transfer. If not, the employer is not required to make the payments of partial dissolution required by the current law. Mr. Curran then provided additional examples of how the bill would operate. The Committee members continued discussions. Mr. Huxen recommended that the Committee not take a position yet and contact the author to get more information.

House Bill 45 by Representative Bacala is a Board-sponsored bill which provides the MPERS' Board of Trustees with the opportunity to allow retirees to bring DROP funds back in-house in the system where retirees would earn an actuarial rate of return less one-half of one percent. This bill also proposes bringing the subplan accrual rates up from 2 ½% and 3% to 3 ⅓% while still maintaining the subplan rules. Mr. Curran explained the expected cost to the Committee.

House Bill 49 by Representative Bacala is a Board-sponsored bill in which MPERS is working with FRS. The ability to allow an employee to opt out causes problems with administration as the employers have not consistently complied. This led to lawsuits. The bill proposes that employees hired on or after January 1, 2027 would not be allowed to opt out. The current law has no provision that gives the employer any control over whether employees become a member of MPERS. It happens automatically. The partial dissolution portion of this bill was also discussed by Ms. Sullivan. Part of this bill is to give the employer an additional 12 months to try to hire people after partial dissolution. The proposed bill also rewards employers who are making hiring a priority by offering a proportionate reduction in payments if they hire additional officers but do not reach the required number of enrolled officers to end the dissolution payments. Ms. Sullivan explained that going forward there would be an averaging period of two years followed by an averaging period of three years to be used to test for partial dissolution. This could help with certain timing issues for employers. Mr. Curran stated that averaging does not solve all problems but it will solve some problems.

Senate Bill 15 by Senator Price was briefly explained by Mr. Huxen. He stated that it would get rid of some reporting that is required by the legislature. Mr. Huxen recommended that the Committee support Senate Bill 15.

Senate Bill 16 by Senator Price was explained by Mr. Huxen who said it would decrease the amount of education that is required for trustees. Mr. Huxen recommended that the Committee support Senate Bill 16.

A position has already been taken by the Board on House Bill 30, House Bill 45, and House Bill 49 so no motion was needed.

Motion by Major (Retired) Kelly Gibson, seconded by Chief Edwin Bergeron, Jr., to recommend to the full Board that they support House Bill 8, take no position on House Bill 26 (pending further discussions with New Orleans and LMA officials), take no position on House Bill 31 pending review of the recommended actuarial report (Committee recommends the Board direct the actuary to study the bill's full financial impact), take no position on House Bill 40, support Senate Bill 15, and support Senate Bill 16. Without objection, the motion carried.

VI. Other Business

None

VII. Adjourn

Motion by Chief Edwin Bergeron, Jr., seconded by Major (Retired) Kelly Gibson, to adjourn the meeting at 11:04 a.m. Without objection, the motion carried.

The next meeting date is February 25, 2026.

To the best of my knowledge, the foregoing minutes accurately represent the actions taken at the meeting held January 28, 2026.


Asst. Chief Jason DiMarco
Legislative Committee Chairman


Ben Huxen,
Executive Director and General Counsel