

**FRANKLIN REGIONAL RETIREMENT SYSTEM
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES
September 25, 2024**

A meeting of the Franklin Regional Retirement Board, duly posted to be held via remote participation on the above date, was called to order at 8:30 AM by Board Chair Sandra Hanks, also present were Co-Chair Paul Mokrzecki with Board Members Angel Bragdon and Gabriele Voelker present. Present in the Board office located at 101 Munson Street, Suite 108, Greenfield MA was Executive Director Kristine Mathis, Assistant Director Ashley Manley, Member Services Accountants Nicole Gaspar, and Diane Wright. Data Maintenance Clerk Patricia Hume joined remotely. Mary Stokarski is not present.

Review and Acceptance of Meeting Minutes

On a motion made by Angel Bragdon and a second by Gabriele Voelker, the Board voted to approve the following minutes. Paul Mokrzecki recused himself, 3 ayes.

- o August 28, 2024, regular minutes

Payroll, Refunds, Transfers and Bills Warrants

A motion was made by Paul Mokrzecki to approve the following warrant totals, Angel Bragdon seconded the motion. 4 ayes.

Retirees		\$1,264,353.78
Refunds 09-24R		\$82,573.22
09-24Ra		\$2,658.45
Transfers		\$45,159.40
Invoices	2024	\$56,706.47
Less Norfolk & Dedham on 8-24W		(\$582.00)
Less Comcast Mobile on 8-24W		(\$62.60)
For an adjusted total		\$1,450,806.72

Mary Stokarski joined the meeting at 8:36 AM.

Cash Transfer between Investments and Bank

On a motion made by Angel Bragdon and a second by Mary Stokarski, the Board voted unanimously to transfer \$1,100,000.00 from PRIT Core Fund to cover October's warrants.

Visitors: Franklin Regional Retirement's IT Specialist, Mark Smith

Membership (new members, new positions, additional positions)

A motion was made by Angel Bragdon and seconded by Mary Stokarski to accept the following new members, new positions, and additional positions. All ayes.

<u>New Memberships</u>	<u>HIRE DATE</u>	<u>C.S. %</u>	<u>New %</u>	<u>UNIT</u>	<u>POSITION</u>
Blasco, Michael	8/19/2024	100%	-	FCH	HMLP Administrator
Boutwell, Desiree	8/26/2024	100%	-	MOH	Paraprofessional
Brow, Kathryn	8/26/2024	100%	-	MOH	Nurse
Call, Allison	8/26/2024	100%	-	FCH	Resident Service Coordinator
Chagnon, Elizabeth	9/9/2024	100%	-	ERV	Paraprofessional
Chase, Laura	8/21/2024	100%	-	MHR	Night Custodian
Churchill, Kimberly	8/26/2024	80%	-	FRN	Instructional Assist.
Coache, Adam	9/3/2024	100%	-	MHR	Custodian
Forsythe, Jamie	8/26/2024	80%	-	FRN	Instructional Assistant
Galvin, Alexis	8/26/2024	100%	-	ERV	Paraprofessional
Hoyt, Regina	8/26/2024	100%	-	DER	Instructional Assistant
Hillock, Raymond	9/3/2024	100%	-	CON	Highway Worker
Lemay, Julie	9/9/2024	100%	-	MHR	Paraprofessional
Lutenecker, Rhonda	8/19/2024	50%	-	DER	Special Ed Secretary
Mack, Heather	8/26/2024	100%	-	MOH	Cafeteria Assistant
Maillet, Brianna	8/26/2024	90%	-	OGE	Title 1 Paraprofessional
Marshall, Taylor	8/26/2024	80%	-	FRN	Instructional Assistant
Martin, Katherine	8/26/2024	100%	-	MOH	Paraprofessional
McClain, Claire	8/26/2024	80%	-	FRN	Instructional Assistant
Murphy, Patrick	9/3/2024	100%	-	ASH	Chief Operator, WWTP
O'Brien, Garrett	9/12/2024	100%	-	MOH	Behaviorist - BCBA
Paige, Mary	8/26/2024	100%	-	MOH	Nurse
Peterson, Ashley	9/6/2024	100%	-	OGE	Paraprofessional
Rivard, Melanie	8/26/2024	100%	-	DER	Instructional Assistant
Rose, Cheri	8/26/2024	100%	-	OGE	LPN
Rypinski, Emily	8/26/2024	90%	-	FRN	Building Monitor
Snedeker, Gregory	9/9/2024	100%	-	DER	Asst. Town Admin
Thurston, Christina	8/26/2024	100%	-	DER	Principal's Secretary
Torras, Joseph	8/26/2024	80%	-	FRN	Instructional Assistant
Truehart, Michael	2/2/2024	100%	-	WCK	Highway Laborer
Unaitis, Madalyn	9/6/2024	100%	-	MOH	Paraprofessional
Wegiel, Samantha	8/27/2024	50%	-	DER	Cafeteria Assistant
Whitaker, Mikaela	8/26/2024	100%	-	MOH	Nurse

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<u>New Positions</u>					
Elliott, Eric	9/7/2024	100%	100%	WTY	Operator-3 years plus
Frey, Alyssa	8/28/2024	90%	80%	FRN	Instructional Assistant
Gilbert, Nathan	8/19/2024	100%	100%	COL	Interim Highway Superintendent
Moro, Rebecca	8/26/2024	100%	100%	MOH	Before/After School Director
Richardson, John Jr.	9/1/2024	100%	100%	GIL	Police Sargeant
Torrey, Jessica	8/26/2024	100%	100%	MOH	ABA Paraprofessional
Jenkins, Robin	8/28/2024	60%	<u>100%</u>	MOH	Guidance Admin. Asst.
Wallace, Jennifer	8/26/2024	0%	<u>100%</u>	ERV	Paraprofessional
<u>Additional Positions</u>					
Boutwell, Desiree	9/2/2024	100%		MOH	After School Assistant
Chadwick, Joseph	8/19/2024	100%		MOH	Coach - Cross Country
Fisher, Ashley	9/2/2024	100%		MOH	After School Assistant
Meservey, Julia	8/26/2024	100%		MOH	Long Term Sub - Music
Purington, Nancy	9/2/2024	100%		MOH	Before/After School Assistant
Roberts-Crawford, Amy	8/26/2024	100%		MOH	Musical Accompanist
Sawyer, Julie	9/3/2024	100%		MOH	Before School Assistant
Thompson, Kevin	3/20/2024	100%		FRN	Softball Coach
Unaitis, Andrea	8/12/2024	50%		MOH	Summer Camp Howe
Woofenden, Alia	8/28/2024	100%		MOH	ILT Community Support
Wrisley, Nicole	9/3/2024	100%		MOH	After School Assistant

A motion was made by Angel Bragdon to accept the Liability for Buybacks, and Makeups. Paul Mokrzecki seconded the motion. All ayes

Accept Liability for Buybacks and Makeups Through Other Systems:

Beth Cebula – The Hampshire County Retirement System has asked FRRS to accept creditable service liability if their current member, Beth Cebula, re-deposits a refund taken from this system. The refund, approved by the Board effective as of 08/27/2020, was for deductions of \$4,277.79 and interest of \$2.85. This refund included deductions with the State Retirement Board from 08/28/2018 through 08/13/2019. Of this refund, FRRS received deductions in the amount of \$1,992.59, and a transfer of deductions from the state in the amount of \$2,285.20. Mrs. Cebula worked as an Instructional Assistant with the Sunderland Elementary School from 09/19/2019 through 07/13/2020. Total service FRRS will accept is 11

months, 26 days if Mrs. Cebula re-deposits funds with the Hampshire Country Retirement System.

Debora Fritz – Current member requesting to purchase service for her non-membership eligible time where she worked as a part-time Teacher's Aide and Cafeteria Assistant during the 2014-2015 school year for the Leverett Elementary. She is eligible for 3 months, 25 days at a cost of \$850.74 if paid by 12/31/2024.

A motion was made by Gabriele Voelker and seconded by Angel Bragdon to accept the new retirees as presented. All ayes

New Retirees:

Allis, Carol – The retirement packet has been submitted to PERAC to retire Carol Allis for a Superannuation, Option B retirement allowance. Her last day of work was 02/26/2024 and her retirement benefit will begin on June 30, 2024. Mrs. Allis was a group 1 member working as a teacher's aide for Leverett Elementary School, accruing 18 years, 2 months of creditable service.

Hartnett, Robin – The retirement packet has been submitted to PERAC to retire Robin Hartnett for a Superannuation, Option A retirement allowance. Her last day of work was 5/14/2019 and her retirement benefit will begin on 06/30/2024. Robin Hartnett was a group 1 member working as an elected town clerk for the Town of Colrain, accruing 16 years of creditable service.

Manners, Laura – The retirement packet has been submitted to PERAC to retire Laura Manners for a Superannuation, Option D retirement allowance. Robert Manners was our member who passed away on January 19, 2024, at the age of 59, and his wife, Laura, was his Option D beneficiary. Mr. Manners was a group 1 member working as a selectboard member for the Town of Shelburne, accruing 20 years, 5 months of creditable service.

Shippee, Mark – The retirement packet has been submitted to PERAC to retire Mark Shippee for a Superannuation, Option B retirement allowance. His last day of work was July 26, 2024, and his retirement benefit will begin on July 27, 2024. Mr. Shippee was a group 1 member working as Highway Superintendent for the Town of Shelburne, accruing 34 years, 9 months of creditable service.

Death:

Hubler, Jeff Lee – Option B retiree since 07/01/1998, Mr. Hubler was a laborer for the Town of Shutesbury, accruing 23 years, 4 months of creditable service. DOD was 08/27/2024 at the age of 82. No annuity balance remains.

General Business

1. IT Update

Mark Smith began at 8:48 AM, he reiterated the need to update or replace the office and WFH computers, due to Microsoft no longer supporting Windows 10. If the decision is made to update, updates available for Windows 10 after October 2025 will incur a cost. The costs of new machines versus updates were discussed. Pros and cons were discussed. No decision was made, and the discussion was tabled to a later date. It was decided to begin implementing the PTG accounting system prior to the decision to update or replace the computers.

2. Cybersecurity Insurance (Brown & Brown quote)

The Board is still waiting for additional quotes. Brown & Brown will be contacted for conditions to qualify for cybersecurity Insurance for data breaches. Mark Smith left at 9:44 AM.

3. Veterans Buyback Policy

Buyback requests are generating many phone calls from Veterans. Several Veterans are implementing the new policy. PERAC states there will be no interest on Military buybacks. Executive Director Kristine Mathis suggests amending the present regular and Military Buyback policy to include “the minimum monthly payment must be \$150.00 arranged through payroll deduction for a payment plan.” Also, an amendment is suggested to our present policy to end charging interest on Military buybacks going forward. The Board is currently aware of 3 veterans who purchased military service as a lump sum and were charged interest. The Board will refund the interest charged on the military buyback. (See addendum A)

A motion was made by Paul Mokrzecki to amend our policy regarding Veterans’ buybacks to include the language as presented by our Executive Director. Angel Bragdon seconded the motion. All ayes.

4. Education Classes (hopefully this fall):

The Municipal Accounting classes will begin September 30, 2024. They will be a self-paced class. Open to everyone in the office. The Board will fully cover the cost of the class as they are requiring the staff take the course.

A motion was made by Gabriele Voelker to have the staff sign up for the municipal accounting course at \$309.00 cost per person, so they can start taking the course and, through Kristine’s guidance be allowed to take the training every week during work hours. Angel Bragdon seconded the motion.

Additional discussion ensued and an amendment was made by Gabriele Voelker to amend the \$309.00 per person, to the total cost of \$1158.75. Angel Bragdon seconded the amended motion. All ayes

5. Finalize 2025 Budget

Discussion was held, and several changes were made to the preliminary 2025 Budget. Discussion was held to keep a line item of \$54,000.00 to use, to bring in as-needed help and to change the line item for Member services 4 position for that purpose.

A motion was made by Gabriele Voelker, that we reduce the position to \$25,000.00 and that the budget note states it is for temporary help. Angel Bragdon seconded the motion.

Further discussion was held, and *Gabriele Voelker made a motion to amend the amount from \$25,000.00 to \$10,000.00. Angel Bragdon seconded the amended motion. All ayes.*

The insurance line item for the Member services 4 position will be eliminated.

Past Executive Director Dale Kowacki will be informed of his health insurance change to Med X plan.

Cyber security expenses of \$9,083.00 for a one-year, pre-paid amount needs to be added to the 2025 budget.

New Business: Gabriele Voelker asks to discuss 2% deductions being eliminated for multiple town employees at the next available meeting.

The merit increases timetable for new employees was discussed. The Board decided to keep the past practice at this time.

Adjournment

On a motion made by Mary Stokarski and seconded by Paul Mokrzecki, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 10:58 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

THESE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AT THE OCTOBER 30, 2024 REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Patricia Hume, Data Maintenance Clerk

Sandra A. Hanks, Chair and Treasurer

Angelina J. Bragdon, Council Member

Gabriele H. Voelker, Board Member

Mary A. Stokarski, Board Member

Paul J. Mokrzecki, Vice Chair

Addendum A

Executive Director Kristine Mathis recommends the following changes to our regulation:

“When a member seeks, and is approved, to purchase veteran’s creditable service, previously refunded membership service (buyback), or non-membership service (a make-up), payments can be made by lump sum payment with a personal check, lump sum payment through a direct rollover, or on a payment plan through payroll deductions for up to 5 years. When a member seeks, and is approved, to purchase both refunded membership service (buyback) and non-membership service (a make-up) and the member chooses to make partial payments, the payments will be applied to membership service first, starting with the most recent, and the non-membership service, starting with the most recent. Periodic payments must be made in full within five years from the date the board votes the approval of a buyback and/or make-up (separately or together) unless a greater time is approved by the board and the member has signed a purchase agreement. The minimum monthly payment must be \$150 arranged through payroll deduction. At the conclusion of the five years from the date the board votes the approval (or an approved longer period), or if the member transfers to another retirement system, or if the member terminates service, or if the member retires; prorated service will be given and applied as a purchase of the most recent service first, and the approval for any balance of unpurchased service will be cancelled, after which, the member can re-request board approval, with the appropriate retirement board, for the unpurchased service.

Therefore, I suggest removing the wording in our supplemental policy (shown below)

Rules and Regulations of the Franklin Regional Retirement System

January 1, 2009 to present

credit related to the payment agreement will be reversed and no creditable service will be allowed. If a payment agreement is incomplete at the time a member requests a refund of their accumulated total deductions, the refund will include the payment received for the payment agreement and no creditable service will be included in the statement of total credit at the time of refund.⁻¹⁴

^{9a}Purchases of military service credit (as provided by Chapter 71 of the Acts of 1996) must be paid for in a lump sum. ^{9b}Beginning January 1, 2013, any new, or existing but unpaid approvals for the purchase of military service will accrue interest annually at the same rate as “regular interest” (as provided by M.G.L. c. 32, § 22(6)(b)) and be payable along with the base amount, in full, before service is credited to the member’s record. Interest will begin accruing 30 days after the military service purchase is approved by the retirement board, or notification of the approval, whichever is later. In the case of existing approvals prior to January 1, 2013, interest will begin to accrue 30 days after notification to the member of the change in policy regarding interest.