

**NORTH DAKOTA TEACHERS' FUND FOR RETIREMENT
MINUTES OF THE
JANUARY 25, 2024, BOARD MEETING**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Rob Lech, President
Mike Burton, Vice President
Kirsten Baesler, State Supt. DPI
Thomas Beadle, State Treasurer
Scott Evanoff, Trustee
Cody Mickelson, Trustee
Jordan Willgohs, Trustee

STAFF PRESENT: Mensah Anyide-Ocloo, Membership Spec.
Jayme Heick, Retirement Spec.
Rachel Kmetz, Accounting Manager
Missy Kopp, Exec. Assistant
Denise Leingang-Sargeant, Retirement Spec.
Sarah Mudder, Communications/Outreach Dir.
Jan Murtha, Exec. Director
Chad Roberts, DED/CRO
Sara Seiler, Supvr. of Internal Audit
Ryan Skor, CFO/COO
Rachelle Smith, Retirement Admin.
Dottie Thorsen, Internal Auditor
Denise Weeks, Retirement Program Mgr.

OTHERS PRESENT: Dean DePountis, Atty. General's Office
Krysti Kiesel, GRS
Dana Woolfrey, GRS
Members of the Public

CALL TO ORDER:

Dr. Lech, President of the Teachers' Fund for Retirement (TFFR) Board of Trustees, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 25, 2024. The meeting was held in the WSI Board Room, 1600 E Century Avenue, Bismarck.

THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS WERE PRESENT REPRESENTING A QUORUM: MR. BURTON, MR. EVANOFF, DR. LECH, MR. MICKELSON, AND MR. WILLGOHS.

ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA:

The Board considered the agenda for the January 25, 2024, meeting.

IT WAS MOVED BY MR. MICKELSON AND SECONDED BY MR. WILLGOHS AND CARRIED BY A VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS DISTRIBUTED.

AYES: MR. BURTON, MR. MICKELSON, MR. WILLGOHS, MR. EVANOFF, AND PRES. LECH

NAYS: NONE

ABSENT: SUPT. BAESLER AND TREASURER BEADLE

MOTION CARRIED

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:

The Board considered the minutes for the November 16, 2023, TFFR Board meeting.

IT WAS MOVED BY MR. BURTON AND SECONDED BY MR. EVANOFF AND CARRIED BY A VOICE VOTE TO ACCEPT THE NOVEMBER 16, 2023, MINUTES AS DISTRIBUTED.

AYES: MR. MICKELSON, MR. EVANOFF, TREASURER BEADLE, MR. BURTON, MR. WILLGOHS, AND PRES. LECH

NAYS: NONE

ABSENT: SUPT. BAESLER

MOTION CARRIED

EDUCATION:

Open Meetings & Records:

Mr. DePountis, Assistant Attorney General, presented education on open meeting and records law. The presentation included an overview of what is subject to open records laws, the definition of a record, public business, and protected records. Mr. DePountis defined what constitutes a meeting and quorum. An overview of open meeting exceptions, common violations, and executive session requirements was provided. Board discussion followed.

GOVERNANCE:

2023 GASB Report:

Ms. Dana Woolfrey and Ms. Krysti Kiesel, GRS, reviewed the GASB 67 and 68 Report for the Fiscal Year (FY) ending June 30, 2023. GASB established accounting and financial reporting standards for US state and local governments. GASB 67 and 68 address accounting and financial reporting for pension plans and focus on the employer's pension obligation. Ms. Keisel reviewed the comparison of net pension liability results from 2022 and 2023, pension expense, and cost sharing. Board discussion followed.

IT WAS MOVED BY MR. WILLGOHS AND SECONDED BY TREASURER BEADLE AND CARRIED BY A ROLL CALL VOTE TO ACCEPT THE 2023 GASB REPORT.

AYES: TREASURER BEADLE, MR. WILLGOHS, MR. EVANOFF, MR. BURTON, MR. MICKELSON, AND PRES. LECH

NAYS: NONE

ABSENT: SUPT. BAESLER

MOTION CARRIED

Administrative Rules Update:

Ms. Murtha provided an update on the administrative rules process. The proposed rules were reviewed by the Attorney General's Office. They found the rules to be in substantial compliance and requested some minor changes. Ms. Murtha reviewed the requested changes. Board discussion followed.

IT WAS MOVED BY MR. WILLGOHS AND SECONDED BY TREASURER BEADLE AND CARRIED BY A ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE THE REQUESTED CORRECTIONS AND FINAL ADOPTION OF RULES TO SUBMIT TO LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL.

AYES; MR. WILLGOHS, MR. BURTON, MR. MICKELSON, MR. EVANOFF, TREASURER BEADLE, AND PRES. LECH

NAYS: NONE

ABSENT: SUPT. BAESLER

MOTION CARRIED

Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) Implementation:

Ms. Murtha provided an update on the RMD implementation. The Board approved and the Employee Benefits Programs Committee authorized an interim change in ND Century Code related to RMD to maintain compliance with federal law. Ms. Murtha outlined the communication methods RIO has used to update members on the change. Board discussion followed.

Pioneer Project Update:

Mr. Roberts provided an update on the Pioneer Project. A summary was provided of tasks that have been completed, are in progress, or have not been started. User acceptance testing has started and is going well. Data migration slowed down in November and December but has resumed and is expected to finish on schedule. The project remains under budget and is expected to go live in October 2024. The vendor informed RIO that they are subject to a lawsuit. Mr. Roberts will continue to monitor this issue and discuss it with the vendor. The Board will be updated if necessary. Board discussion followed.

Benefit Compliance Review:

IT WAS MOVED BY MR. MICKELSON AND SECONDED BY MR. BURTON AND CARRIED BY A ROLL CALL VOTE TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO NDCC 15-39.1-30, NDCC 44-04-19.1(2), AND 44-04-19.2 TO DISCUSS CONFIDENTIAL MEMBER INFORMATION AND ATTORNEY CONSULTATION.

AYES: MR. EVANOFF, MR. MICKELSON, MR. WILLGOHS, TREASURER BEADLE, MR. BURTON, AND PRES. LECH

NAYS: NONE

ABSENT: SUPT. BAESLER

MOTION CARRIED

The executive session started at 1:58 p.m. and ended at 2:19 p.m. The session was attended by Board Members, staff, and Mr. DePountis.

The Board recessed at 2:20 p.m. and reconvened at 2:32 p.m.

REPORTS:

Annual TFFR Ends Report:

Mr. Roberts provided the FY 2023 Annual Ends Report. The report summarizes and provides metrics for performance to demonstrate the program is adhering to policies and expectation of the TFFR Board and the SIB. The report provides statistics on membership and contributions, member services, account claims, and trust fund monitoring. Board discussion followed.

Quarterly TFFR Ends Report:

Mr. Roberts provided the Quarterly TFFR Ends report for the quarter ended December 31, 2023. The report highlights exceptions to the normal operating conditions of the TFFR program. Staff and the PAS vendor completed pilot 4 of the pension system design phase. Staff provided presentations at the annual conferences of the ND Council of Educational Leaders and the ND School Board Association. Educational presentations have been offered to business partners and members. The actuarial valuation was completed. Mr. Roberts and Ms. Murtha attended the National Council on Teacher Retirement annual conference. Board discussion followed.

Quarterly Outreach Report:

Ms. Mudder provided the TFFR Outreach report which reviewed outreach activities completed and upcoming. The report provided a breakdown of attendance at events offered by RIO, participation in Board education, and open/engagement rates for RIO publications. The report provided a list of upcoming events, publications, and staff presentations. Board discussion followed.

Executive Limitations/Staff Relations Report:

Ms. Murtha reviewed RIO's strategic planning process. The next new board member onboarding session is scheduled for January 29, 2024. Ms. Murtha provided an update on staffing and ongoing projects and initiatives. Ms. Murtha was appointed to committees for the National Association of Public Pension Attorneys (NAPPA) and the National Council on Teacher Retirement (NCTR). She will attend the winter meetings for NAPPA, NCTR, NASRA, and NIRS in February. Board discussion followed.

IT WAS MOVED BY MR. WILLGOHS AND SECONDED BY MR. MICKELSON AND CARRIED BY A VOICE VOTE TO ACCEPT THE ANNUAL & QUARTERLY TFFR ENDS, QUARTERLY OUTREACH, AND THE EXECUTIVE LIMITATIONS/STAFF RELATIONS REPORTS.

AYES: MR. BURTON, MR WILLGOHS, MR EVANOFF, TREASURER BEADLE, MR. MICKELSON, SUPT. BAESLER, AND PRES. LECH

NAYS: NONE

MOTION CARRIED

ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business to come before the Board, Pres. Lech adjourned the meeting at 3:26 p.m.

Prepared by,

Missy Kopp, Assistant to the Board