

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

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mike Burton, Vice President  
Kirsten Baesler, State Supt. DPI  
Thomas Beadle, State Treasurer  
Scott Evanoff, Trustee  
Cody Mickelson, Trustee

**BOARD MEMBER ABSENT:** Dr. Rob Lech, President

**STAFF PRESENT:** Scott Anderson, CIO  
Jayme Heick, Retirement Spec.  
Missy Kopp, Exec. Assistant  
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  
Tami Volkert, Retirement Compliance Spec.  
Denise Weeks, Retirement Program Mgr.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Jill Baber, NDIT  
Dean DePountis, Atty. General's Office  
Sam Unruh, NDIT  
Members of the Public

**CALL TO ORDER:**

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

**THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS WERE PRESENT REPRESENTING A QUORUM: SUPT. BAESLER, TREASURER BEADLE, MR. BURTON, MR. EVANOFF, AND MR. MICKELSON.**

**ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA:**

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

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

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

**NAYS: NONE**

**ABSENT: PRES. LECH**

**MOTION CARRIED**

Ms. Murtha provided an update on the appointment of a new TFFR Board member.

**ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:**

The Board considered the minutes for the April 25, 2024, TFFR Board meeting.

**IT WAS MOVED BY MR. MICKELSON AND SECONDED BY MR. EVANOFF AND CARRIED BY A VOICE VOTE TO ACCEPT THE APRIL 25, 2024, MINUTES AS DISTRIBUTED.**

**AYES: MR. MICKELSON, MR. EVANOFF, TREASURER BEADLE, SUPT. BAESLER, AND MR. BURTON**

**NAYS: NONE**

**ABSENT: PRES. LECH**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**GOVERNANCE:**

Election/Appointment of Officers:

Board members made the following nominations:

- Dr. Lech as Board President
- Mr. Burton as Board Vice President
- Mr. Mickelson and Dr. Lech as State Investment Board (SIB) Representatives
- Mr. Burton as SIB Alternate
- Mr. Mickelson, Mr. Burton, and Dr. Lech as TFFR GPR members
- Mr. Mickelson as the SIB Audit Committee representative

**IT WAS MOVED BY MR. EVANOFF AND SECONDED BY TREASURER BEADLE AND CARRIED BY A ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE AND APPOINT THE NOMINATION SLATE.**

**AYES: TREASURER BEADLE, SUPT. BAESLER, MR. EVANOFF, MR. BURTON, AND MR. MICKELSON**

**NAYS: NONE**

**ABSENT: PRES. LECH**

**MOTION CARRIED**

Annual Governance and Policy Review Report:

Mr. Mickelson provided an overview of the review process for the governance manual by staff and the Governance and Policy Review (GPR) Committee. Mr. Roberts commented on the proposed edits to the manual.

**IT WAS MOVED BY MR. MICKELSON AND SECONDED BY MR. EVANOFF AND CARRIED BY A ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE THE INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING OF TFFR GOVERNANCE MANUAL POLICIES: SECTION 1, SUBSECTIONS A, B, C, D, E, G, H, J, K, M, O, Q, R AND SECTION 2, SUBSECTIONS D, E, F, AND G.**

**AYES; MR. BURTON, MR. MICKELSON, SUPT. BAESLER, MR. EVANOFF, AND  
TREASURER BEADLE  
NAYS: NONE  
ABSENT: DR. LECH  
MOTION CARRIED**

Annual TFFR Program Review:

Mr. Roberts provided the Annual TFFR Program review which includes the Board's mission, goals, policies, and by-laws. The materials included a program monitoring summary, board awards, customer satisfaction reports, and the annual code of conduct policy affirmation. Each Board Member is required to complete the code of conduct affirmation annually. Board discussion followed.

**IT WAS MOVED BY MR. MICKELSON AND SECONDED BY TREASURER BEADLE AND  
CARRIED BY A ROLL CALL VOTE TO ACCEPT THE ANNUAL TFFR PROGRAM REVIEW.**

**AYES: MR. EVANOFF, MR. MICKELSON, SUPT. BAESLER, TREASURER BEADLE, AND  
MR. BURTON  
NAYS: NONE  
ABSENT: DR. LECH  
MOTION CARRIED**

Employee Benefits Programs Committee Update:

Ms. Murtha provided an update from the June 17, 2024, EBPC meeting. Staff appeared before the EBPC to present on the actuarial impact of two bills relating to the TFFR program. Board discussion followed.

Pioneer Project Update:

Mr. Roberts provided an update on the pension administration system project. The first and second phases of user acceptance testing was completed. Staff have begun training on the Employer Self-Service portal. The project is currently on time and within the budget. The vendor informed staff that they wouldn't be ready for an October go live date and provided options for a later date. Staff and the project manager discussed the options and decided to choose the later option to ensure the entire system is ready. Any cost related to a later launch date will be absorbed by the vendor. Board discussion followed.

**REPORTS:**

Quarterly Investment Report:

Mr. Anderson provided an investment performance update as of March 31, 2024, and July 16, 2024. Mr. Anderson provided a summary of market returns. As of March 31, 2024, TFFR's total relative return is 0.3% year to date. Mr. Anderson reviewed the returns for the one, three, and five-year periods. TFFR has performed at or above median compared to peers for most time periods. One time period shows lower performance because of real estate. Mr. Anderson reviewed the upcoming changes in the SIB investment program which is becoming more specialized. The consulting plan has been updated and approved by the SIB. Staff are currently in the process to hire an Asset Allocation consultant which will allow for a simpler more uniform

asset allocation. Mr. Anderson provided information from pension fund level studies on actuarial experience, asset/liability, and asset allocation studies and summarized the advantages of retaining an Asset Allocation consultant. Board discussion followed.

Quarterly Internal Audit Report:

Ms. Seiler provided the Internal Audit report for the quarter ended March 31, 2024. The Executive Limitations audit was completed, and no exceptions were found. Ms. Seiler summarized IA staff activities including committee meetings, meetings with the IA consultant, and retirement program activities. Board discussion followed.

Quarterly Outreach Report:

Ms. Mudder provided the outreach report for the quarter ended March 31, 2024. Lists were provided of media coverage on RIO programs and meetings in which RIO staff participated. Ms. Mudder provided a summary of outreach activities, publications sent through GovDelivery to TFFR members and Business Partners, and the engagement rates for TFFR topics. RIO now had a LinkedIn account which is mostly investment focused. The agency also made its existing YouTube page public. The content on this page is mostly retirement focused. Board discussion followed.

Quarterly TFFR Ends Report:

Mr. Roberts provided the TFFR Ends Report for the quarter ended June 30, 2024. The Retirement Specialists attended a customer service workshop hosted by the National Council on Teacher Retirement (NCTR). Ms. Murtha attended the NCTR Director's Meeting. The GPR Committee completed their annual review of the TFFR policy manual. Ms. Murtha and Mr. Roberts presented to the EBPC. Board discussion followed.

Executive Limitations/Staff Relations:

Ms. Murtha provided the Executive Limitations/Staff Relations report. The first year of the enhanced new board member onboarding process has been completed. RIO has begun posting some of the new internal investment positions. Two positions were posting internally and offers have been accepted by current RIO staff. Interviews are underway for the new Investment Accountant and Portfolio Manager of Fixed income positions. Ms. Murtha reviewed RIO participation in statewide initiatives, ongoing project activities, and ED activities. Board discussion followed.

**IT WAS MOVED BY MR. EVANOFF AND SECONDED BY MR. MICKELSON AND CARRIED BY A VOICE VOTE TO ACCEPT THE QUARTER INVESTMENT, QUARTERLY INTERNAL AUDIT, QUARTERLY TFFR ENDS, QUARTERLY OUTREACH, AND THE EXECUTIVE LIMITATIONS/STAFF RELATIONS REPORTS.**

**AYES: MR. BURTON, MR. EVANOFF, TREASURER BEADLE, AND MR. MICKELSON**

**NAYS: NONE**

**ABSENT: SUPT. BAESLER AND PRES. LECH**

**MOTION CARRIED**

The Board recessed at 2:50 p.m. and reconvened at 3:00 p.m.

**EDUCATION:**

Survey Approaches and Metrics:

Ms. Jill Baber and Mr. Sam Unruh, NDIT, presented on survey approaches. The presentation included information on collecting valid data, determining the purpose of the information you will collect, designing surveys, and the necessary communications during the survey process. Board discussion followed.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

**IT WAS MOVED BY MR. MICKELSON AND SECONDED BY TREASURER BEADLE AND CARRIED BY A ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE DISABILITY APPLICATIONS 2024-5D AND 2024-6D.**

**AYES: MR. MICKELSON, TREASURER BEADLE, MR. BURTON, AND MR. EVANOFF**

**NAYS: NONE**

**ABSENT: SUPT. BAESLER AND PRES. LEACH**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

With no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Burton adjourned the meeting at 3:45 p.m.

Prepared by,

Missy Kopp, Assistant to the Board