

MINUTES

COMMUNICATIONS AND MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING MARIN COUNTY EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION (MCERA)

Retirement Board Conference Room
One McInnis Parkway, 1st Floor
San Rafael, CA

July 5, 2011 - 9:00 A.M.

CALL TO ORDER Chair Karen Wofford called the meeting to order at 9:03 A.M.

ROLL CALL PRESENT: Maya Gladstern, Howard McFarland, Sean Webb, Karen Wofford

ABSENT: Greg Brenk, Jim Phillips

MINUTES

It was M/S Webb/McFarland to approve the April 5, 2011, Communications and Member Services Committee Meeting Minutes as submitted. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

A. OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Note: The public may also address the Committee regarding any agenda item when the Committee considers the item.

No public comment.

B. OLD BUSINESS

1. Update on involvement with Marin County's Public Information Team

MCERA Communications staff Sydney Fowler participated in Marin County's recent reduction in force (RIF) informational meeting. The focus of the meeting was to provide relevant information to County employees whose positions were being potentially eliminated. Ms. Fowler attended at the invitation of the County to respond to questions about the retirement process.

Ms. Fowler reported that the Marin County Public Information Team would be meeting later today and she would provide a full update at the next Committee meeting.

Recent updates to the MCERA Web site include the Welcome Guide for New Members, Disposition of Retirement Contributions and the quarterly newsletter.

The Committee addressed the need to provide for member services such as retirement estimates for a potentially increasing number of retirees. To address members' individual circumstances, individual retirement consultations may be arranged. The particular issues surrounding service requests for buybacks related to military leave without pay were discussed by the Committee.

C. **NEW BUSINESS**

1. **Summer MCERA newsletter (Action)**

Discuss and potentially approve topics and copy to recommend to Board

Staff presented the draft newsletter for the Committee's consideration and discussion. The Committee determined that, since it is referred to in a discussion of MCERA's retirement plan, information about the intersection of MCERA's benefit to any potential social security benefit should be referenced in the first article. The Committee discussed the definitions of defined benefit and defined contribution plans provided in the draft and requested language to help clarify the terms. The draft article on the Favorable Determination Letter filing with the Internal Revenue Service led to a request that a more expansive article be written for inclusion in a future newsletter.

To gauge the usefulness of the information provided in the newsletter, an article requesting participation in an online survey will be included. The Committee discussed the tool that will be used to administer the survey and how the data will be collected and disseminated.

Chair Wofford suggested that the Committee review the retirement process, with the goal of communicating to members the steps they should take when considering whether or not to retire and the timeline for each event. Staff reviewed the current process and discussed the information that is available through the seminar program. Staff also noted that the Winter Newsletter typically focuses on the retirement planning process to coincide with the volume of retirees in the spring of each year. The timing of retirement estimates was discussed, with Assistant Retirement Administrator Helen Moody explaining there are multiple factors that can impact benefit estimates. Members considering retirement should first request a formal estimate with a projected retirement date and if necessary schedule an individual consultation with MCERA staff.

2. **Report on upcoming Communication priorities**

Ms. Fowler reported that development of the member handbook continues to be a priority, along with plans to enhance the overall look of MCERA's Web site. Mr. Wickman said that the intent is for the Web site to fit within general county guidelines but also retain a unique look for MCERA.

3. **Discuss agenda topics for next meeting**

Chair Wofford requested feedback from Committee members regarding the timing and structure of meetings, and there was general agreement that the manner in which the Committee is operating is valuable and appropriate. The impact of the CPAS implementation on the retirement process was addressed, with Mr. Wickman explaining that the new system will allow members to receive retirement estimates in more detail from real-time data. Speed and efficiency will be the most important benefits of the initial CPAS installment, he said.

There being no further business, Chair Wofford adjourned the meeting at 10:25 A.M.

Maya Gladstern, Acting Chair

Attest: Jeff Wickman, Retirement Administrator