

**COMMUNICATIONS AND MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING  
MARIN COUNTY EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION**

**Retirement Board Conference Room  
One McInnis Parkway, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
San Rafael, CA**

**October 4, 2011 - 9:00 A.M.**

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**CALL TO ORDER** Acting Chair Gladstern called the meeting to order at 9:01 A.M.

**ROLL CALL** PRESENT: Brenk, Gladstern, McFarland, Webb

ABSENT: Phillips

**MINUTES**

It was M/S McFarland/Webb to approve the July 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.

**B. OLD BUSINESS**

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

MCERA Communications staff Syd Fowler will participate in this week's meeting of the County's Public Information Team. The main topic of the group's discussions continues to be the progress of the County's social media efforts to enhance customer service. Ms. Fowler indicated that the team's focus is on educating staff on the use of social media tools.

Retirement Administrator Jeff Wickman said the topic of social media was part of the recent CalAPRS Administrator's Institute Communications roundtable. The Administrators heard an example of how a posting to social media resulted in an immediate opportunity to address a customer satisfaction issue. Pension systems using social media for this type of customer interaction have invested the staff and information technology to allow for instantaneous monitoring and follow-up to actions posted to social media.

Mr. Wickman said most Administrators were interested in using social media to get pension system information out to a broader audience but all were concerned about the potential to have to add staff to properly manage the tools. Trustee Webb expressed appreciation to staff for bringing these items to the attention of the Committee, and Chair Gladstern recommended agendizing "Media" as an ongoing topic of discussion for the Committee.

Chair Gladstern discussed with Mr. Wickman the degree to which MCERA shares the County's communications brand, such as its new logo. The Administrator indicated that he

works closely with the County's to see what direction they are taking and where it makes sense to have uniformity with the County, MCERA would do so. There may also be instances where it makes sense for MCERA to retain a unique look and feel.

### C. NEW BUSINESS

#### 1. Fall MCERA newsletter (Action)

Discuss and potentially approve topics and copy to recommend to Board

Mr. Wickman reported that the newsletter's front-page article on social security responds to member interest in the topic based on survey results. Trustee McFarland approved of the article as clear and well-written. Edits were discussed based on Chair Gladstern's observation that interested members include those whose spouses receive Social Security benefits and/or survivor benefits. To assist members further, Trustees Webb and Brenk suggested providing links to the Social Security Administration.

The Committee continued reviewing and considering edits for the newsletter copy in detail. The pending Safety election was discussed, with Mr. Wickman indicating that he will communicate to the heads of Safety agencies the election materials and offer assistance on how the process works and the role of the trustees.

Another goal of the newsletter is to clarify member benefits, based on Mr. Wickman's observation that 78% of survey respondents requested information on how benefits are calculated. One focus would be to improve understanding of the Annual Benefit Statement. Ms. Gladstern suggested that members be advised to retain the Annual Benefit Statements for reference, and she also suggested adding the percentage of salary information to the document. Additional means of clarifying retirement benefits were discussed, including more newsletter articles, more information for the Web site, supplementing pre-retirement seminars with outside experts, and having a representative at County human resource events.

The Committee also discussed the challenge of providing medical benefit information to members. Administrator Wickman reiterated that MCERA's role is to facilitate the administration of the County's post-retirement medical program. Information on MCERA's role and the role of the County would help reduce some of the frustration over medical program changes.

Clarifications to newsletter copy regarding release of member information required by law (Public Records Act) were considered. Information that will not be released, according to counsel, includes birth date and age at retirement. Other items discussed included clarifications to Board Meeting Highlights regarding resolutions and policies, and providing access to other County Web sites. Ms. Gladstern observed that the County Web site is changing its address.

For the Investment Insights article, Ms. Fowler used the Callan Associates asset/liability study as one resource. The Committee agreed to copy revisions of the article based on discussions.

Ms. Fowler discussed potential topics for future articles based on newsletter survey results, noting that 6% of active members responded to the initial survey. Articles on CPAS and buybacks were recommended by Ms. Gladstern.

2. Report on upcoming Communication priorities

Ms. Fowler said that her top priorities are the member handbook, Web site enhancement, and survey analysis.

3. Discuss agenda topics for next meeting

No discussion.

There being no further business, Acting Chair Gladstern adjourned the meeting at 10:36 A.M.

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Maya Gladstern, Acting Chair

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Attest: Jeff Wickman, Retirement Administrator