

*MINUTES OF THE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING FOR THE COLUMBUS GEORGIA PUBLIC EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT
SYSTEMS PENSION AND BENEFIT TRUST FUND*

March 12, 2025

TRUSTEES PRESENT:

Mayor, Skip Henderson, Chairman; City Manager, Isaiah Hugley, Vice Chairman; Finance Director, Angelica Alexander, Secretary; Ricky Boren, Trustee; Roderick Graham, Trustee; Jack Warden, Trustee; Trustee; Dusty Wilson; Trustee; Elizabeth Cook; Trustee

TRUSTEES ATTENDING VIRTUALLY:

Lisa Goodwin, Trustee

TRUSTEES ABSENT:

None

OTHERS ATTENDING IN PERSON OR VIRTUALLY:

Pamela Hodge, DCM Finance, Planning & Development; Lucy Sheftall, Assistant City Attorney; Shannel Davison, Investment Officer; Reather Hollowell, Human Resources Director; Cynthia Holliman, Senior Pension Plans Administrator; Angela Allison, Columbus Water Works Representative; Joy Wells, Recording Secretary

ADVISORS:

Richard Swift, Raymond James

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor, Skip Henderson, called the March 12, 2025, meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Columbus Georgia Public Employee Retirement Systems Pension and Benefit Trust Fund to order.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes from February 12, 2025, regular Pension Board Meeting were submitted for approval. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Fray McCormick. Jack Warden seconded the motion. The board voted and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Minutes other than summary minutes will be released on a delayed schedule to protect the release of information made confidential by Official Code of Georgia Annotated Section 47-1-14(c) and (d).

INVESTMENT UPDATE

Performance Review

Richard Swift advised that Raymond James has been monitoring risk exposures, particularly balancing equities and fixed income. The total fund over three years averages 7%, 11% at five years and 8.5 in ten years. In 2024, 79% of the Russell Growth Index were up 60%. The total fund returned was 11.71% over the past year, slightly below the index's 12.60% but still strong given market challenges. Several investment managers that are underperforming were discussed. Manager William Blair is still under review due to performance. Mr. Swift will bring in an overlap report to the next meeting.

The funds that are doing well are Causeway, Vanguard FTSE EM VWO, Karpus Investment GL, and Allianz Short Duration Hi Yield ASHPX, Funds that are behind are William Blair, Capital Group Intl Equity, Westend Global Balanced. All other funds are in line. Mr. Swift then opened for discussion.

Asset Allocation

Mr. Swift then reviewed the asset allocation of the Pension fund. All the categories are in line with the investment policy. The fund is 61.2% in equities. Mr. Swift discussed potential adjustments if the market decline continues. A commitment was made to continue monitoring the portfolio and adjusting as needed.

OLD BUSINESS

The committee intended to be formed to review pension-related concerns has not yet been established. The delay was acknowledged by Mayor Henderson. There have been ongoing questions from employees regarding potential changes to the pension plan, particularly related to the required 8% employee contributions. The possibility of alternative benefits or adjustments was mentioned, but concerns were raised about the fairness and financial feasibility of the City. The Board discussed the difficulties in keeping and retaining employees due to the 8% pension contribution. It was noted that younger workers look at their take-home pay rather than the long-term pension benefits. Alternatives were discussed including other options such as 401k, different benefit tiers for new employees or adjusting salary structures to offset the impact of the contribution. Employees cannot opt out of the pension plan, only entire organizations can. The discussion of restructuring the pension plan would require closing out an old plan and introducing a new one. The city's pension unfunded liability was last analyzed in 2017 by Chuck Carr. The projections estimate this could potentially be paid off by 2026-2027. The floor was then opened for discussion.

Upon conclusion of the discussion, Mr. Swift excused himself from the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Richard Swift's contract will end March 31, 2025. Mayor Henderson made a motion to extend Mr. Swift's contract under the procurement ordinance through March 31, 2026. Motion was seconded by Elizabeth Cook and approved by the Board.

Other Business

There was no other business for this meeting.

Adjourn

With there being no further business to discuss, Mayor Skip Henderson declared the meeting adjourned.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 9, 2025, at 2:00 PM in the Information Technology Large Conference Room.

Joy Oliver Wells
Joy Oliver Wells
Recording Secretary