

Lawrence Retirement Board Meeting Minutes

February 18th, 2025 at 8:30 am

Meeting called to order at 8:30.

Members Ceballos, Wright and Cockroft were present. Members Wilson and Ruiz were remote. Attorney Michael Sacco was present.

An application for involuntary superannuation has been received from Acting Police Chief Melix Bonilla for **Carl Farrington**, a 55-year old police officer with 24 years and 6 months of service. Sgt. Picard was present as the Chiefs representative. Officer Farrington did not show up for the meeting.

Attorney Sacco reminded the board that in April of 2024, the Chief filed an involuntary accidental disability package on behalf of Officer Farrington. He was called to the station to pick it up and refused. He did show up for the evidentiary hearing and PERAC was unable to reach him to confirm his medical panel appointments. Director Rizzo said that Officer Farrington came to the office in early October, denied ever going to the station or receiving the invitations. At that point he updated his phone and address and confirmed his email was good. He briefly spoke about wanting to file his own application under the violent assault bill. Director Rizzo mailed him a disability packet which he hasn't returned. On January 21, 2025, acting police Chief Melix Bonilla filed an Involuntary Superannuation application on behalf of Officer Farrington, he also refused pick up and has ignored all the invitations which were mailed and emailed. He is clearly unable to do his duties per the medical records we have on file. Attorney Sacco asked Sgt. Picard if the department was able to hold his direct deposit in order to force him in to sign for his packet?

Sgt. Picard said the department would not allow her to hold his direct deposit. He refused to come in when we called him. We tried to serve him at his address in Stratham NH, but we couldn't find him. We spoke with the local PD in Stratham and they said they had pulled him over the week before, so we do know he is in the area. He is refusing all of our calls and attempts to reach him. We are recommending that the board retire him as he has not proved he's fit for duty. I confirmed with payroll and we can have him off the payroll on February 22nd.

Attorney Sacco said that Officer Farrington will be able to appeal and/or file for Accidental on his own and is leaving the board no choice but to act on the application before them.

Diane Cockroft made a motion to Involuntarily retire Officer Carl Farrington under Superannuation effective February 22nd, 2025. Motion was seconded by Sheryl Wright. Roll Call – Ceballos-yes, Ruiz-yes, Cockroft-yes, Wright-yes, Wilson-yes. Motion was approved on a unanimous roll call, 5-0

*Sheryl Wright made a motion to go out of order and remove **Anti-Spiking provision – Position of Director of Office of Finance to CAFO** from tabled items. Motion was seconded by Diane Cockroft. Roll Call – Ceballos-yes, Ruiz-yes, Cockroft-yes, Wright-yes, Wilson-yes. Motion was approved on a unanimous roll call, 5-0*

Tabled Items:

Anti-Spiking provision – Position of Director of Office of Finance to CAFO.

Mark Ianello was present as a follow up to discuss why he feels he should be exempt from the Anti-Spiking provision. Mr. Ianello feels that his position change should qualify for an exemption since it was a bonified change in position. As CAFO he took on many additional responsibilities including reviewing all proposed contracts and obligations. All department budgets and requests for budget transfers must be submitted to the CAFO for review and recommendation before submission to the Mayor, City Council or School Committee. The CAFO must now certify in writing any appropriation order, collective bargaining agreement, vote to authorize borrowing and any other vote which may require the expenditure of funds. He now oversees Personnel/HR, Labor Relations Director and IT.

Attorney Sacco stated that at the boards request he conducted some additional research following Mr. Ianello's last appearance before the board. He said with respect to what appears to be a delay in Mr. Ianello's salary increase his further research showed a similar situation occurred in the Nancy Peterson v. State Board of Retirement case and provided information on the case.

Member Cockroft said that in the Peterson case the woman never received a pay increase along the way for the additional duties yet Mr. Ianello received a 25K increase in 2019 when he took on the new duties and another 5K in March of 2020 and another 5K in March of 2021. He received all of these increases along the way while doing the job as CAFO. The point of anti-spiking is to not give someone a golden handshake going out the door.

Chairman Ceballos said this is not the case here. It is an unfair circumstance. He had to wait for the position to be ordinated because the City was changing the ordinances for all non-union employees. They were waiting for a study to be done by the Collins Center. He could have asked and received the pay retro-actively but didn't want to hurt the city.

Mark Ianello said that he was appointed CAFO by the state in 2019. I received the 25K raise under the Finance Director contract which was still in place. The State law trumps the City Ordinance which didn't allow an increase until it was an ordinance. I came to the City of Lawrence to help because they needed me. I was hired as the fiscal overseer at a salary of 130K which was quite discounted. I'm standing with the fact that a Bonified Change in position occurred.

Member Cockroft said she was not disputing how hard Mr. Ianello worked, its more of the delay in the raise but also getting raises all along the way for doing more duties.

Member Wright said there was clearly a change in position but it occurred in 2019 with raises in 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2023.

*Pascual Ruiz made a motion regarding Mark Ianello and his Position of Director of Office of Finance to CAFO, that the **exemption** in anti-spiking **does apply** in this case. Motion was seconded by Robert Wilson. Roll Call – Ceballos-yes, Ruiz-yes, Cockroft-no, Wright-no, Wilson-no. Motion fails on a 3-2 vote.*

Michael Sacco said that because of this vote, anti-spiking will now apply to the calculation of Mr. Ianello's pension and that he would send him his appeal rights.

Chairman Ceballos left the meeting at 9:32

Diane Cockroft made a motion to make Robert Wilson, temporary Chairman. Motion was seconded by Sheryl Wright. Roll Call –Ruiz-yes, Cockroft-yes, Wright-yes, Wilson-yes. Motion was approved on a unanimous roll call, 4-0

New Business:

An application for superannuation has been received from **Timothy B Dube**, a 55-year old Police Officer with 32 years of service. If approved, member will retire on March 22, 2025, under an annual Option A allowance.

Diane Cockroft made a motion to approve the superannuation retirement of Timothy Dube. Motion was seconded by Sheryl Wright. Roll Call –Ruiz-yes, Cockroft-yes, Wright-yes, Wilson-yes. Motion was approved on a unanimous roll call, 4-0

An application for superannuation has been received from **Marisol Marte**, a 59-year old LPS Parent Liason with 26 years and 6 months of service. If approved, member will retire on March 28, 2025, under an annual Option C allowance.

Diane Cockroft made a motion to approve the superannuation retirement of Marisol Marte. Motion was seconded by Sheryl Wright. Roll Call –Ruiz-yes, Cockroft-yes, Wright-yes, Wilson-yes. Motion was approved on a unanimous roll call, 4-0

Save the date: The Kevin J. Regan Trustees Educational Session and Annual Conference will be held from Saturday, June 1st through Wednesday, June 4th, 2025, at the Emerald Resort in Hyannis, MA. - Noted

PERAC Memo #6/2025 – Cola Notice – Public hearing in March

Diane Cockroft made a motion to notify City Council and units of a public hearing in March on the COLA. Motion was seconded by Sheryl Wright. Roll Call –Ruiz-yes, Cockroft-yes, Wright-yes, Wilson-yes. Motion was approved on a unanimous roll call, 4-0

Cemetery Laborer, **Jeanne Ouellet** would like to purchase her prior refunded City of Lawrence service. If approved member would be entitled to 2 years and 1 months of creditable service for time worked from 07/11/2017-09/06/2019. Ms. Ouellet would also like to purchase 1 month and 27 days of service that she refunded from the Middlesex County Retirement System for time worked from 09/09/2019-11/06/2019. The total combined cost to purchase this time is \$11,370.86. Refund transcripts were retained by our office and the Middlesex County Retirement System will accept liability for their portion.

Diane Cockroft made a motion to approve the buyback of time from Lawrence and Middlesex County for Jeanne Ouellet. Motion was seconded by Sheryl Wright. Roll Call –Ruiz-yes, Cockroft-yes, Wright-yes, Wilson-yes. Motion was approved on a unanimous roll call, 4-0

LPS Administrator, **Lizbeth Gonzalez** would like to purchase her prior refunded State service. If approved member would be entitled to 6 years and 6 months of creditable service for time worked from 07/30/2000-08/24/2007 (prorated). The cost to purchase this time is \$34, 817.80. The State Board of Retirement will assume all liability.

Diane Cockroft made a motion to approve the buyback of time from the State Board for Lizbeth Gonzalez. Motion was seconded by Sheryl Wright. Roll Call –Ruiz-yes, Cockroft-yes, Wright-yes, Wilson-yes. Motion was approved on a unanimous roll call, 4-0

LPS Paraprofessional, **Mary Brady** would like to purchase her prior City of Lawrence Aide service. If approved member would be entitled to 1 year and 11 months (prorated) creditable service for time worked from 09/11/2008-10/27/2011. The cost to purchase is \$11,209.94. Payroll records were obtained via MUNIS.

Diane Cockroft made a motion to approve the makeup payment for Mary Brady. Motion was seconded by Sheryl Wright. Roll Call –Ruiz-yes, Cockroft-yes, Wright-yes, Wilson-yes. Motion was approved on a unanimous roll call, 4-0

Items on appeal:

Coughlin - CRAB appeal

Wood – CRAB appeal

Bradley – DALA appeal

Bistany – CRAB appeal

Olivero-Oviedo – DALA appeal

New Members:

Name	UNIT	Dept or Position	Group
Murnane, Jamie	VOC	Cafeteria Aide	1
Martinez, Katherine	VOC	Cafeteria Aide	1
Figuera, Angelica	CTY	Assesors Assistant	1
Caceres, Francisco	CTY	Painter	1
Ovalles Garcia, Juan	SCH	Para	1
Ulysse, Laurie	SCH	BBE	1
Cancel, Glenda	SCH	Residency/Attendance Specialist	1
Betances, Dhayanara	SCH	Para	1
Gonzalez Guzman, Roberto	SCH	Safety Officer	1
Colon, Wendy	SCH	Para	1
Badia, Elaine	CTY	Principal Accounts Clerk	1
Rodriguez, Anthony	CTY	Principal Accounts Clerk	1
Frias Garcia, Karla	CTY	HSE II-Grant	1
Ceballos, Manuel	CTY	DPW Cross Connection Insepector	1
Valdez, Minio	CTY	Library Custodian	1
Moreno Reyes, Ramon	SCH	Custodian	1
Beck, Kimberly	VOC	Employer Engagement Manager	1
Cruz Amador, Edward	CTY	HME0	1

Rodriguez, Gianna	SCH	Para	1
Urena, Yairys	SCH	MLL Assessment Specialist	1
Marte, Gina	SCH	Para	1
Ortiz, Susan	SCH	Para	1
Guillermo, Johanny	CTY	Executive Assistant	1
Champagne, Bryan	SCH	IT Specialist	1
McCue, Ashley	SCH	Behavior Specialist	1

Diane Cockroft made a motion to approve the new members as submitted. Motion was seconded by Sheryl Wright. Roll Call –Ruiz-yes, Cockroft-yes, Wright-yes, Wilson-yes. Motion was approved on a unanimous roll call, 4-0

Refunds: * = Rollover

Chantel Peralta	SCH	Paraprofessional	\$1,024.06
Leonardo Paulino	VOC	Paraprofessional	\$2,650.54

Diane Cockroft made a motion to approve the refunds as submitted. Motion was seconded by Sheryl Wright. Roll Call –Ruiz-yes, Cockroft-yes, Wright-yes, Wilson-yes. Motion was approved on a unanimous roll call, 4-0

Monthly Expenses:

Warrant # 14	Voucher #	\$ 203,039.29 * approximate due to early meeting
Retiree End Checks		\$ 13,776.07

Sheryl Wright made a motion to approve the monthly expenses as submitted with the ability to add other changes that may come in before final processing (to be reviewed next month). Motion was seconded by Diane Cockroft. Roll Call –Ruiz-yes, Cockroft-yes, Wright-yes, Wilson-yes. Motion was approved on a unanimous roll call, 4-0

Monthly pension payroll for January 31st, 2024 \$ 2,594,541.48 * approximate due to early meeting

Voids \$ -0-

Sheryl Wright made a motion to approve the pension payroll as submitted with the ability to add Mark Ianello and any other changes that may come in before final processing (to be reviewed next month). Motion was seconded by Diane Cockroft. Roll Call –Ruiz-yes, Cockroft-yes, Wright-yes, Wilson-yes. Motion was approved on a unanimous roll call, 4-0

PRIT Wire redemption - too early to finalize amount (to be reviewed next month)

Approval of the January 30th, 2024 retirement board minutes as submitted.

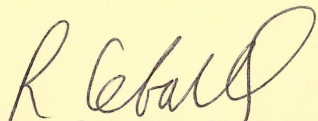
Sheryl Wright made a motion to table the minutes until next month so that the remote members could review. Motion was seconded by Diane Cockroft. Roll Call –Ruiz-yes, Cockroft-yes, Wright-yes, Wilson-yes. Motion was approved on a unanimous roll call, 4-0

Copies of bank statements, cashbooks investment reports and recent PERAC Memos are available for review. Warrants and vouchers are present for approval and review.


Next meeting will be Tuesday, March 25th, 2025 at 8:30 a.m.

Being no further business, Diane Cockroft made a motion to adjourn at 9:45 AM. Motion was seconded by Sheryl Wright. Roll Call –Ruiz-yes, Cockroft-yes, Wright-yes, Wilson-yes. Motion was approved on a unanimous roll call, 4-0

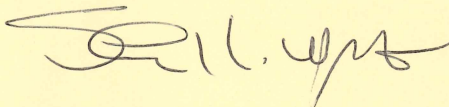
Respectfully Submitted,



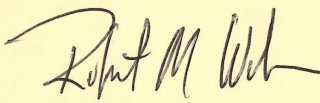
Ramona Ceballos, Chairman



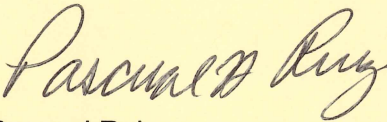
Gina Rizzo, Executive Director



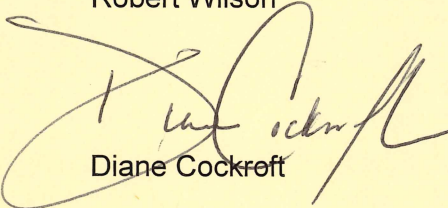
Sheryl Wright



Robert Wilson



Pascual Ruiz



Diane Cockroft