

Lawrence Retirement Board Meeting Minutes

August 28th, 2025 at 8:30 am

Meeting called to order at 8:32 am.

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

New Business:

Second Assistant Majority Leader of the 17th Essex District, **Frank Moran**, emailed requesting to attend the board meeting in order to contest his denial of liability for non-contribution time while a Lawrence City Councilor. Representative Moran was present.

Representative Moran stated that he was elected to the Lawrence City Council for 3 terms 2007-2013. He stated that he was very young at the time and paid little attention to paperwork. I was not told to join the system. Flash forward as a State Representative I was told to sign up for retirement by personnel. I was told by the State Board of Retirement that they would allow the buyback if the Lawrence Board would allow it. I also spoke to a friend who said he was allowed to purchase his time by the Lynn Retirement Board. I am here to ask the board if you would allow for this time to be purchased.

Attorney Sacco stated that he's not sure how the Lynn Board allowed a purchase unless the situation was different. There is case law that is very clear showing that if you chose not to join you cannot purchase. Even if this board said yes, PERAC would not approve the time when you went to retire and it would be taken away. I believe there is a house bill currently in committee at the state level that would do away with this.

Andrea McCann – Cost correction on make-up payment.

Inspectional Services, Enforcement Prosecutor, Andrea McCann's make-up payment was approved at the board meeting on 6/30/2025. During the initial calculation of her make-up payment, a "new member" interest rate was utilized and the calculated cost for her purchase was \$8,462.74. Although she is in a new position after being inactive for a long period of time, she is retaining all prior rights to membership therefore not considered a new member and unable to take part in the new member discounted interest rate (Chapter 176:09 acts of 2011 and MGL, Ch. 32 S 3(5)). The corrected total amount that she will be required to deposit for this service is **\$19,072.30 for a total of 1 year 7 months** of creditable service. This is on the agenda for transparency and information purposes. The board approved the make-up payment on June 30th, 2025, however the calculation method is a condition of law. Once an error is discovered, the board must correct said error.

An application for superannuation has been received from **Tammy Lefebvre** a 58-year old School LPN with 31 years of service. If approved, member will retire on September 30th, 2025, under an annual Option A allowance.

Diane Cockroft made a motion to approve the superannuation retirement for Tammy Lefebvre. Motion was seconded by Sheryl Wright. Roll Call –, Cockroft-yes, Wilson-yes, Ruiz-yes, Wright-yes, Ceballos-yes. Motion was approved on a unanimous roll call, 5-0.

An application for superannuation has been received from **Charles Gentile** a 59-year old City Water Meter Installer with 29 years and 1 month of service. If approved, member will retire on September 5th, 2025, under an annual Option C allowance.

Diane Cockroft made a motion to approve the superannuation retirement for Charles Gentile. Motion was seconded by Sheryl Wright. Roll Call –, Cockroft-yes, Wilson-yes, Ruiz-yes, Wright-yes, Ceballos-yes. Motion was approved on a unanimous roll call, 5-0.

An application for superannuation has been received from **Edward Paris** a 78-year old DPW Plumber with 32 years of service. If approved, member will retire on September 1st, 2025, under an annual Option B allowance.

Diane Cockroft made a motion to approve the superannuation retirement for Edward Paris. Motion was seconded by Sheryl Wright. Roll Call –, Cockroft-yes, Wilson-yes, Ruiz-yes, Wright-yes, Ceballos-yes. Motion was approved on a unanimous roll call, 5-0.

Council on Aging Program Assistant, **Dulce Hiaciono** would like to purchase her prior part time City of Lawrence service. If approved member would be entitled to 4 months (prorated) creditable service for time worked from 09/26/2022-08/18/2023. The cost to purchase is \$1,606.34. Payroll records were obtained via MUNIS

Diane Cockroft made a motion to approve the make-up payment for Dulce Hiaciono. Motion was seconded by Sheryl Wright. Roll Call –, Cockroft-yes, Wilson-yes, Ruiz-yes, Wright-yes, Ceballos-yes. Motion was approved on a unanimous roll call, 5-0.

RFP – Legal – Current contract ends 12/31/2025.

Update: RFP request dates: RFP Available upon request from 8/8/25-9/5/25.

In following the mandated competitive procurement process, an RFP for legal services was created and posted in the following places: PERAC Website (approval received from PERAC), Secretary of State website, Lawyers Weekly in published print for 2 weeks, 8/11 & 8/18 (Board credit card used, cost for posting \$805.00), board website and office door. Opening of sealed bids will take place September 8th and sent to board members for their review and evaluation. This will be on the agenda in September for phase one and phase two reviews. The board, may interview prospective candidates in October if it chooses.

Request for consideration to **increase the Retirement Board member stipend** from \$3K to \$4,500. Treasurer stipend to remain at \$3K.

Update: This item went before the City of Lawrence Ordinance Committee on August 26th. Committee sent it to full council with a favorable recommendation. This will be discussed at the full council meeting on September 2nd.

Retirement Board Member Specialist, **Briana Cuddy** – Health Insurance, 20% cost as other staff members as specified in contract.

Sheryl Wright made a motion to add a non-pensionable payroll line item for the 5% difference in employee health insurance cost and issue a one-time current fiscal reimbursement. Motion was seconded by Pascual Ruiz. Roll Call –, Cockcroft-yes, Wilson-yes, Ruiz-yes, Wright-yes, Ceballos-yes. Motion was approved on a unanimous roll call, 5-0.

Tabled Items:

We are in receipt of the PERAC issued medical records review on Raymond Fay. **Theresa Fay**, spouse of Raymond Fay who retired December 22, 1991 under an accidental disability has applied for accidental death benefits. *The board tabled this item and sent to PERAC for further clarification. - STILL PENDING*

Diane Cockcroft made a motion to take the Cola Base off tabled items for discussion. Motion was seconded by Sheryl Wright. Roll Call –, Cockcroft-yes, Wilson-yes, Ruiz-yes, Wright-yes, Ceballos-yes. Motion was approved on a unanimous roll call, 5-0.

Cola Base Increase - Discussion - provisions of Chapter 188 of the Acts of 2010, Section 19, amending Section 103 of said chapter 32 regarding the COLA base. – Linda Bournival provided a cost analysis which was provided to the board.

Sheryl Wright stated that our investment return is assumed at 7% and we came in around 9%. This should help absorb the cost of increasing the base. Ramona Ceballos said that she called Linda Bournival to make sure she was reading her cost analysis correctly. I'm afraid the city cannot afford a 2M increase to the appropriation. I'd like to see an amortization schedule for each estimate. Sheryl Wright said to not forget that the board added a 5% smoothing. What if we got rid of this? Diane Cockcroft said that most boards will never be fully funded by 2040 and that the Mass Retirees Association is telling boards to increase while they've had great returns. Sheryl Wright said maybe we can skip a year in-between as well.

Sheryl Wright said she would contact Linda directly.

Diane Cockcroft made a motion to ask KMS to do further studies. Pushing the schedule out to 2040, skipping years of increase and supplying amortization schedules for each. Motion was seconded by Sheryl Wright. Roll Call –, Cockcroft-yes, Wilson-yes, Ruiz-yes, Wright-yes, Ceballos-yes. Motion was approved on a unanimous roll call, 5-0.

Items on appeal:

Ianello – DALA appeal

Bradley – CRAB appeal

Coughlin - CRAB appeal

Wood – CRAB appeal

Bistany – CRAB appeal

Olivero-Oviedo – DALA appeal

New Members:

Name	UNIT	Dept or Position	Group
Batista, Rachel	CTY	Confidential Secretary	1
Abreu, Julio	VOC	Custodian	1
Reyes, Annie	CTY	Traffic Control	1
Vargas, Adelina	LHA	Project Clerk	1
Perez, Christian	POL	Police Recruit	4
Holt, Tucker	FIR	Fire Fighter	4
Blanchard, Matthew	FIR	Fire Fighter	4
Rojas, Elpidio	CTY	Mechanic	1
Shaw, Calum	FIR	Fire Fighter	4
Abreu, Justin	FIR	Fire Fighter	4
Perez, Kaira	VOC	Paraprofessional	1
Bejamin, Patrice	CTY	Library Assistant	1
Pereira, Simon	CTY	Supervisor of Energy Projects	1

Diane Cockroft made a motion to approve the new members as submitted. Motion was seconded by Sheryl Wright. Roll Call –, Cockroft-yes, Wilson-yes, Ruiz-yes, Wright-yes, Ceballos-yes. Motion was approved on a unanimous roll call, 5-0.

Refunds: * = Rollover

Carmen Rosario de Fiallo	SCH	Cafeteria Worker	\$9,538.95
Jovanny Marte Fabian	CTY	Electrician	\$13,436.90
Timothy Elkin	VOC	Custodian	\$49,887.50 *
Gabriela Rondon	SCH	Paraprofessional	\$6,260.09 *
Allyson Rennell Langstaff	SCH	BCBA	\$15,000.00
Allyson Rennell Langstaff	SCH	BCBA	\$25,564.52 *
Mikel Beltran	POL	Police Officer	\$17,891.98
Gabriela Ortega	SCH	Paraprofessional	\$1,767.02

Diane Cockroft made a motion to approve the refunds as submitted. Motion was seconded by Sheryl Wright. Roll Call –, Cockroft-yes, Wilson-yes, Ruiz-yes, Wright-yes, Ceballos-yes. Motion was approved on a unanimous roll call, 5-0.

Monthly Expenses:

Warrant # 9 Voucher # 223-259 \$ 730,941.41

Diane Cockroft made a motion to approve the monthly expenses as submitted. Motion was seconded by Sheryl Wright. Roll Call –, Cockroft-yes, Wilson-yes, Ruiz-yes, Wright-yes, Ceballos-yes. Motion was approved on a unanimous roll call, 5-0.

Monthly pension payroll for August 29th, 2025	\$ 2,683,937.74
Voids	\$ -
Retiree End Checks	\$ 14,313.11

Diane Cockroft made a motion to approve the pension payroll, voids and end checks as submitted. Motion was seconded by Sheryl Wright. Roll Call –, Cockroft-yes, Wilson-yes, Ruiz-yes, Wright-yes, Ceballos–yes. Motion was approved on a unanimous roll call, 5-0.

PRIT Wire redemption

Diane Cockroft made a motion to approve the PRIT wire as submitted. Motion was seconded by Sheryl Wright. Roll Call –, Cockroft-yes, Wilson-yes, Ruiz-yes, Wright-yes, Ceballos–yes. Motion was approved on a unanimous roll call, 5-0.


Approval of the July 21st, 2025 retirement board minutes and executive session minutes as submitted.

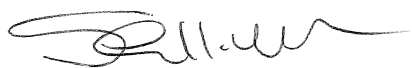
Diane Cockroft made a motion to approve the July 21st 2025 board minutes and executive session minutes as submitted. Motion was seconded by Sheryl Wright. Roll Call –, Cockroft-yes, Wilson-yes, Ruiz-yes, Wright-yes, Ceballos–yes. Motion was approved on a unanimous roll call, 5-0.

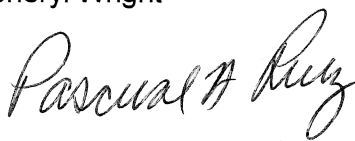
Copies of bank statements, cashbooks investment reports and recent PERAC Memos are available for review. Warrants and vouchers are present for approval and review.

Next meeting will be Tuesday, September 23rd, 2025 at 8:30 a.m.

Being no further business, Pascual Ruiz made a motion to adjourn at 9:33 AM. Motion was seconded by Sheryl Wright. Roll Call –, Cockroft-yes, Wilson-yes, Ruiz-yes, Wright-yes, Ceballos–yes. Motion was approved on a unanimous roll call, 5-0.


Ramona Ceballos, Chairman


Sheryl Wright


Pasqual Ruiz

Respectfully submitted,


Gina Rizzo, Executive Director


Diane Cockroft