

**ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MARYLAND STATE RETIREMENT AND PENSION SYSTEM**

October 6, 2020

The Administrative Committee meeting convened, via video/audio conference call, beginning at 9:30 a.m.

The Committee Members present included:

Kenneth Haines, Chairman, Presiding	Thomas Brandt
Richard Norman, Vice Chairman	Marc Nicole
Bernadette Benik	

Agency Staff members attending included: R. Dean Kenderdine, Executive Director/Board Secretary

Melody Countess	Angie Jenkins	Janet Sirkis
Anne Gawthrop	Kim O’Keeffe	Scott Bolander (live stream)
Michael Golden	Ken Reott	
Ira Greenstein	David Rongione	

Assistant Attorneys General present included: Rachel Cohen and Kathleen Wherthey

Other attendees included: Trustees Sheila Hill and Doug Prouty

Minutes On a motion made by Mr. Brandt and seconded by Mr. Norman, the Administrative Committee approved the September 1, 2020 open session meeting minutes.

2021 Administrative Committee Meeting Dates On a motion made by Mr. Norman and seconded by Mr. Nicole, the Administrative Committee approved the 2021 Administrative Committee Meeting dates, as follows:

Tuesday, February 2, 2021	Tuesday, March 2, 2021
Tuesday, April 6, 2021	Tuesday, June 1, 2021
Tuesday, August 3, 2021	Tuesday, September 7, 2021
Tuesday, October 5, 2021	Tuesday, December 7, 2021

Proposal to Adopt Emergency Amendments to COMAR 22.03.01.06 - Nomination of Candidates Mr. Kenderdine reported that proposed amendments for emergency regulations were being presented to the Committee, which would change the current requirement for qualification as a candidate for two upcoming trustee elections. The elections are for an active Employees’ System and an active Teachers’ System representative, positions currently held by Trustees Craddock and Prouty, respectively. Mr. Kenderdine reported that the amendments would lower the member signature requirement from 500 signatures to 50 signatures.

Mr. Reott reported that currently the regulation requires potential candidates to obtain 500 signatures from their membership in order to be eligible for a nomination to the Board. However, in light of the continuing public health crisis, requiring a potential candidate to gather the signatures of 500 individuals before the deadline could be nearly impossible. Mr. Reott reported that to mitigate the public health risks for the candidate and signatory, a temporary reduction to the signature requirement from 500 to 50 is prudent.

Mr. Reott reported that should the Committee recommendation to adopt the amendments be approved by the Board of Trustees, the emergency regulations would be submitted to the Administrative, Executive and Legislative Review

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("AELR") Committee. If the AELR Committee approves the action, the emergency amendment would go into effect for a period not to exceed 180 days when the regulation would revert back to its original status once the emergency period expires.

Mr. Reott further reported that in addition to the regulatory change, the Agency is also making changes to the acceptance of nominations. Mr. Reott explained that, in the past, the nomination form had sufficient spaces for multiple signatures on each form. A new nomination form has been created with a single signatory line and the Agency will be accepting fax and email copies of nomination forms.

Chairman Haines asked if the Board of Trustees should be concerned about the proposed threshold being too low.

Mr. Reott responded that staff believes reducing the requirement from 500 to 50 is the most reasonable threshold amount.

Mr. Norman asked if there was any discussion to include the future State Police election. Mr. Norman stated that if the health crisis continues next year, it may be prudent to include the State Police election now.

Ms. Cohen responded that the expiration of the emergency regulation would be 180 days from the AELR's approval, a 6-month window in which the regulation would be in effect and then it would revert to the original language. Ms. Cohen stated that the Board could take emergency action again, in the future, if need be for another election.

Mr. Reott further responded that even if we included the State Police election to the regulation, it would expire before the timeframe to nominate a candidate for the State Police representative, therefore, we would still need to come back to the Board with a new emergency regulation proposal.

Ms. Gawthrop clarified that the title "emergency regulations" refers to the process for getting the regulations adopted, not the State of Emergency that we are in.

Ms. Cohen further responded that emergency amendments to a regulation are only temporary and added that if we find ourselves in the same situation for the State Police election, the Board can utilize the same process again.

On a motion made by Mr. Nicole and seconded by Mr. Norman, the Committee voted to recommend that the Board of Trustees adopt the proposed emergency amendments to COMAR 22.03.01.06 and to submit them to the Administrative, Executive, Legislative and Review Committee.

Member Services
Update

Mr. Reott reported that while there was marked improvement over the July numbers, the Member Services unit was not able to meet its goals for the call abandonment rate and average call wait time for the month of August 2020. Mr. Reott noted that there was a typographical error on page1 of the report, in which

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the FY21 average was incorrectly reported to be 21.47% and should be corrected to reflect that the call abandonment rate for FY21 is 17.51%. Mr. Reott reported that the unit's call abandonment rate was 13.46% and the unit's average speed of answer was 213 seconds for the month of August.

Mr. Reott reported that 4 new specialists began taking calls in August and that in September, the Agency implemented an A-week/B-week rotation among staff, with half of the staff in the office and the other half teleworking. The staff who are working on-site are working from individual offices and not in a cubicle.

Mr. Reott further reported that Personal Statement of Benefits ("PSBs"), which typically generates an increase in the volume of calls, is now available to a member through the *my* SRPS member portal. In addition, there has been one enhancement to the member portal in that Chandra Puranam and his staff have implemented the ability for a member to change their beneficiary, in real-time through *my*SRPS.

Mr. Brandt commented that the metrics appear disappointing. Mr. Brandt asked if there is a course of action in place to get back to the 7.5% performance goal.

Mr. Reott responded that staff started a project before the State of Emergency, to look at all letters, forms and other material to make sure that language in those documents were coherent and understandable, in hopes that it would help eliminate the number of calls. In addition, staff has been diligent in working to get, and keep the unit fully staffed by fully trained personnel. Mr. Reott reminded the committee that from the point of hire to having a fully trained counselor, is at least a 6-month process.

Mr. Brandt commented that the idea of having people call and hanging up because they are frustrated is not acceptable and suggested that someone be available to take answer a call even if it was to take a message for a later callback.

Mr. Reott responded that there is an option, which was implemented about two years ago, that a caller can leave their telephone number and still maintain their place "in line" and receive a return call from a specialist.

Mr. Norman commented that the call abandonment rate is not to exceed 7.5% and asked if that rate is reasonable; if the unit, over the past five years has ever hit that rate; and should we be considering adjusting the goals.

Mr. Reott responded that he did not have the specific numbers but believes the unit has met the goals in certain past years. Mr. Reott further responded that it helps keeping calls around 600 calls per day or having at least 10-20 specialists answering calls.

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On a motion made by Mr. Norman and seconded by Mr. Nicole, the Administrative Committee voted to meet in a Closed Session, via video/audio conference call, beginning at 10:03 a.m. for the purpose of:

- (a) reviewing the closed session Administrative Committee meeting minutes, pursuant to General Provisions Art., § 3-103(a)(1)(i), the exercise of an administrative function and General Provisions Art., § 3-305(b)(13), to comply with a specific constitutional, statutory, or judicially imposed requirement that prevents public disclosure about a particular proceeding or matter, namely, General Provisions Art., § 3-306(c)(3)(ii), requiring that minutes of a closed session be sealed and not be open for public inspection.

CLOSED SESSION

The Committee Members present included:

Kenneth Haines, Chairman, Presiding	Thomas Brandt
Richard Norman, Vice Chairman	Marc Nicole
Bernadette Benik	

Agency Staff members attending included: R. Dean Kenderdine, Executive Director/Board Secretary

Melody Countess	Ira Greenstein	Ken Reott
Anne Gawthrop	Angie Jenkins	David Rongione
Michael Golden	Kim O'Keeffe	Janet Sirkis

Assistant Attorneys General present included: Rachel Cohen and Kathleen Wherthey

Other attendees included: Trustees Sheila Hill and Doug Prouty

On a motion made by Mr. Norman and seconded by Mr. Nicole, the Administrative Committee returned to open session, via video/audio conference call, at 10:04 a.m.

OPEN SESSION

During closed session, the Administrative Committee discussed and acted on the following matter:

Minutes	The Administrative Committee reviewed and approved the September 1, 2020 closed session minutes.
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Adjournment	There being no further business before the Committee, on a motion made by Mr. Norman and seconded by Mr. Nicole, the meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.
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Respectfully submitted,



R. Dean Kenderdine,
Secretary to the Board