

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

August 2, 2022

The Administrative Committee meeting convened, via WebEx conference call, beginning at 9:36 a.m.

The Committee Members present included:

Kenneth Haines, Chairman, Presiding	David Brinkley
Richard Norman, Vice Chairman	Jamaal Craddock
Linda Allen	Dereck Davis
Thomas Brandt	Robert Sandlass

Agency Staff members attending included: Martin Noven, Executive Director/Board Secretary

Robert Diehl	Megan Myers	David Rongione
Patricia Fitzhugh	Kim O'Keeffe	Karen Simpson
Anne Gawthrop	Andrew Palmer	Janet Sirkis
Michael Golden	Chandra Puranam	Toni Voglino
Angie Jenkins	Ken Reott	
Harris Kaplan	Ben Robb	

Assistant Attorneys General present included: Rachel Cohen and Emily Spiering

Other attendees included: Jonathan Martin (Treasurer's Office); Phillip Anthony and Michael Rubenstein

Call Meeting to Order	Mr. Haines, Chairman of the Administrative Committee, having established that there was a quorum present, called the meeting to order. He asked the Committee if there were any changes to the agenda. Having heard no requests for changes by the Committee, the agenda was adopted, as presented.
Minutes	On a motion made by Mr. Norman and seconded by Mr. Craddock, the Administrative Committee approved the June 7, 2022 open session meeting minutes.
Member Services Update	<p>Mr. Reott provided a Member Services update, reporting that for the month of June, while the unit continues to fall short of their performance goals, the average call abandonment rate decreased from 16.43% in FY21 to 15.36% in FY22. The average call wait time, however, increased slightly to 384 in FY22 compared to 369 seconds in FY21. He indicated that the unit received 129,980 calls year-to-date, a decrease of about 6,000 calls from last year, which he credits to the <i>mySRPS</i> portal. Mr. Reott also reported that the number of correspondences received in FY22 was 25,986, an increase over FY21 which offered 24,000 pieces of correspondence.</p> <p>Mr. Reott indicated that the report shows four vacant Retirement Benefits Specialist position, however, since the creation of the report, two new specialists have been hired with a start date of August 10 and the recruitment process for the other positions has begun.</p> <p>Mr. Reott reported that the number one issue that the team faces is staffing. He reported that for FY23 the unit's focus is to recruit and retain staff and mentoring existing staff for better productivity.</p> <p>Mr. Reott reported that staff has requested assistance from the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) to review salaries within the entire unit to determine if any changes are advisable to assist with retention efforts.</p>

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Mr. Sandlass asked whether the Agency provides a call-back feature for members and retirees.

Mr. Reott responded yes, the Agency offers a call-back feature and that page 2 of the member services report shows those statistics. The report indicates that the unit answered 36,914 outbound calls, which are the call-back feature calls.

Mr. Sandlass asked if staff in the call center were in the office or teleworking and if teleworking are there significant differences in performance.

Mr. Reott responded that at the height of the pandemic, staff was teleworking 100% of the time. That had a negative impact on performance due to technology issues. However, currently staff is working almost 100% in the office. Management is looking at ways to provide more teleworking options for recruitment and retention purposes.

Mr. Sandlass asked when staff is teleworking and the phone system uses the call-back feature, does it show up that the call is coming from the State Retirement Agency or the staff members personal phone.

Mr. Reott responded that he believes it indicates that the State Retirement Agency is calling but will confirm that and get back to the Committee with that information.

Mr. Brandt commented that he did not hear what date staff expects to meet the goals.

Mr. Reott responded that staff is doing their best to keep as many specialists on the phones as possible. Management does not allow for more than two specialists to have planned days off at the same time and has blackout dates, in which no one can request leave such as when COLAs are awarded, when PSBs are posted, and when 1099-Rs are mailed.

Mr. Brandt commented that management is not anticipating the staffing needs of the unit.

Mr. Reott responded that management is constrained by DBM and the number of PINs that are approved for the unit and is further constrained by a vacancy rate required by DBM in the budget that further limits the number of approved positions that can be filled.

Mr. Brandt asked what management can do to get around those constraints.

Ms. Allen commented that it is important to get the technology aspects together to allow those to telework productively, such as issuing hot spots to employees, so when their personal internet goes out, they still have internet capabilities.

Mr. Norman responded that the budget has always been an issue in the State, which is a reason why the Investment Division moved off budget.

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Ms. Allen asked if there was anything the Board of Trustees could do to help get more staff.

Mr. Norman responded yes, during the budget session which is coming up.

Mr. Craddock commented about the trickle-down effect when hiring new staff at higher salaries, which can cause morale and retention issues for current staff because they are being paid a lower salary.

Mr. Reott further responded that for that reasons he has asked the human resources unit of DBM to evaluate the salaries of staff.

Mr. Haines commented that at some point in the future the Committee should discuss why an agency that generates its own income is limited to what it can spend based on legislative restrictions. He asked why the Agency cannot negotiate with legislature instead of having its budget dictated.

Ms. Gawthrop responded that funding from the Agency comes from administrative fees paid by participating employers. The Investment Division budget is paid directly from the trust fund.

Secretary Brinkley commented that DBM requests that agencies put their request for additional position in priority order, during the budget hearing.

Deputy Treasurer Martin commented that it is a challenging work environment all over the State and the issues mentioned today are not unique to the State Retirement Agency.

Mr. Sandlass commented that it would be helpful to see a comparison among peers to see how they are structured and where the Agency stands in comparison.

Performance  
Evaluation of  
the Executive  
Director

Mr. Haines reported that staff brought to his attention, as Chairman of the Committee, the need to discuss the evaluation of the Executive Director and asked Rachel Cohen, Principal Counsel, to address the Committee.

Ms. Cohen reported that according to Board Policy the Administrative Committee shall facilitate an annual evaluation of the performance of the Executive Director. At the beginning of the calendar year, all trustees shall be provided copies of the performance criteria and objectives and the evaluation form pertaining to the evaluation of the Executive Director's performance in the prior year. The timing of the Executive Director's evaluation is offset from that of the Chief Investment Officer, which is conducted on a fiscal year basis.

Ms. Cohen reported that Mr. Noven's start date was July 1, 2021, and that he reached one year of service on July 1, 2022.

After presenting options to the Chairman of the Administrative Committee, it was his decision that the Committee continue with the policy timeframe for a calendar year evaluation described above, but cover the full 18-month period from July 1, 2021 - December 31, 2022 for the Executive Director's first performance evaluation. All

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future evaluations will be conducted on a calendar year basis as provided in the Board Policy.

Ms. Allen asked what the process is for the evaluation of the Executive Director.

Ms. Cohen responded that in December the Administrative Committee recommends to the Board performance criteria for the Executive Director's evaluation. In January, a copy of the approved evaluation form, as well as a copy of the Executive Director's self-evaluation, is sent to each Trustee. Cindy Kollner from the Department of Budget and Management compiles the results of the evaluation and presents a report to the Administrative Committee, in closed session, at its April meeting. The Chairman of the Committee, then presents the results to the full Board at its April meeting.

Mr. Haines reiterated that the only change made today is that the evaluation period would cover the initial 18-months of Mr. Noven's performance.

**CLOSED SESSION**

On a motion made by Mr. Norman and seconded by Mr. Brandt, the Administrative Committee voted to meet in a closed session, via WebEx conference call, beginning at 10:31 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.

The Committee Members present included:

Kenneth Haines, Chairman, Presiding	David Brinkley
Richard Norman, Vice Chairman	Jamaal Craddock
Linda Allen	Dereck Davis
Thomas Brandt	Robert Sandlass

Agency Staff members attending included: Martin Noven, Executive Director/Board Secretary

Robert Diehl	Megan Myers	Ken Reott
Patricia Fitzhugh	Kim O'Keeffe	David Rongione
Anne Gawthrop	Andrew Palmer	Janet Sirkis
Michael Golden	Chandra Puranam	Toni Voglino
Angie Jenkins		

Assistant Attorneys General present included: Rachel Cohen and Emily Spiering

Other attendees included: Jonathan Martin (Treasurer's Office)

On a motion made by Ms. Allen and seconded by Treasurer Davis, the Administrative Committee returned to open session, via WebEx conference call, beginning at 10:31 a.m.

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**OPEN SESSION**

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Linda Allen	Dereck Davis
Thomas Brandt	Robert Sandlass

Agency Staff members attending included: Martin Noven, Executive Director/Board Secretary

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Harris Kaplan	Ben Robb	

Assistant Attorneys General present included: Rachel Cohen and Emily Spiering

Other attendees included: Jonathan Martin (Treasurer's Office); Phillip Anthony and Michael Rubenstein

The Administrative Committee, during the closed session, discussed the matters identified in the motion to meet in closed session, and acted upon the following items:

Minutes	The Committee reviewed and approved the June 7, 2022 closed session Administrative Committee meeting minutes.
Adjournment	There being no further business before the Committee, on a motion made by Mr. Craddock and seconded by Mr. Norman, the meeting adjourned at 10:32 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Martin Noven,  
Secretary to the Board