

**MEETING OF THE RETIREMENT BOARD  
OF THE COUNTY EMPLOYEES' AND OFFICERS' ANNUITY AND BENEFIT FUND  
OF COOK COUNTY AND EX OFFICIO FOR THE FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT  
EMPLOYEES' ANNUITY AND BENEFIT FUND OF COOK COUNTY  
70 West Madison, Suite 1925  
Chicago, IL 60602**

**March 7, 2024 - 9:30 A.M.**

The County Employees' and Officers' Annuity and Benefit Fund of Cook County and the Forest Preserve District Employees' Annuity and Benefit Fund of Cook County are herein collectively referred to as the "Fund."

Call to Order and Roll Call

**Trustees Present:** Patrick McFadden, President; Hal Dardick, Secretary; Tanya Anthony, Lakeisha Marvel, Kevin Ochalla, Jerry Pray, Tracy Reed, Samuel Richardson, Jr.

**Staff Present:** Brent Lewandowski, Executive Director; Saron Tegegne, Deputy Executive Director; Margaret Fahrenbach, Legal Advisor; Gary LeDonne, Director, Benefits Administration; Francis Gonzalez-Crussi, Senior IT Manager; Mario Hollemans, Administrative Coordinator

**Others Present:** Mary Pat Burns, Burke Burns & Pinelli, Ltd; John McCabe, John McCabe & Associates; Derek Blaida, John McCabe & Associates, Martha Merrill, AFSCME

President McFadden stated that there was a quorum of the Board present at the meeting and that certain trustees had asked to participate remotely. It was moved by Trustee Anthony and seconded by Trustee Richardson, pursuant to Section 7(a) of the Open Meetings Act, that the Board allow trustees who are not able to be physically present at the meeting to participate remotely.

Vote Result: MOTION ADOPTED BY VOICE VOTE

President McFadden asked if anyone present wanted to address the Board, but no one requested to do so.

1. Review and Consideration of February 1, 2024, Open Board Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Trustee Pray and seconded by Trustee Richardson that the presented minutes of the open session of the Board meeting on February 1, 2024, be adopted.

Vote Result: MOTION ADOPTED BY VOICE VOTE

2. Review and Approval of:

a. Bills, Payroll Records

It was moved by Trustee Reed and seconded by Trustee Richardson, having received confirmation from Fund staff that the indicated payments were consistent with the 2023 and 2024 administrative budgets, that the Board ratify the action taken by Fund staff in February, 2024, in paying the presented bills for expenses incurred in 2023 and 2024 and that the Board approve the recommendations from Fund staff to remit payments for the presented bills for expenses incurred in 2024.

Roll Call Vote:

AYES: Anthony, Dardick, Marvel, Ochalla, Pray, Reed, Richardson,  
McFadden

NAYS: None

Vote Result: MOTION ADOPTED

b. Annuities, Spouse and Child Annuities and Refunds

It was moved by Trustee Richardson and seconded by Trustee Pray, after due consideration of the applications presented to the Board and having confirmed that the Fund staff followed the Fund's procedures in reviewing and processing the applications, that the recommendations from the Fund's staff for the presented annuities and refunds be approved.

Roll Call Vote:

AYES: Anthony, Dardick, Marvel, Ochalla, Pray, Reed, Richardson,  
McFadden

NAYS: None

Vote Result: MOTION ADOPTED

c. Ordinary and Duty Disabilities

It was moved by Trustee Richardson and seconded by Trustee Pray, after due consideration of the applications presented to the Board and having confirmed that the Fund staff followed the Fund's procedures in reviewing and processing the applications, that the recommendations from the Fund's staff for the presented disability applications be approved.

Roll Call Vote:

AYES: Anthony, Dardick, Marvel, Ochalla, Pray, Reed, Richardson,  
McFadden

NAYS: None

Vote Result: MOTION ADOPTED

3. Legislative Matters

a. Update from the Legislative Liaison

Brent Lewandowski, Executive Director, stated that the Fund did not intend to propose any legislation in the current session of the General Assembly. He added that the Fund's legislative liaisons, John McCabe and Derek Blaida, had prepared a memorandum for the Board about the status of certain legislation and were present to provide an overview of legislation that might affect the Fund.

The legislative liaisons noted that they do not expect any controversial legislation to pass before the primary or general elections. There is legislation pending that would address Tier 2 issues for pension funds, but that legislation is not likely to be heard until January, 2025. Because the Forest Fund does not have legislation to address Tier 2 issues, the Executive Director asked the legislative liaisons to inform the Fund of Tier 2 legislation that moves forward.

4. Investment Matters

a. Review and Consideration of Recommendation Regarding Follow-on Investment in Artemis Real Estate Partners Income and Growth Fund II

President McFadden stated that the Investment Committee considered a follow-on investment in the Artemis Real Estate Partners Income and Growth Fund II at their meeting on February 27, 2024, and recommended that the Board approve the proposed investment.

It was moved by Trustee Reed and seconded by Trustee Richardson that the Board adopt the recommendation made by the Investment Committee at their meeting on February 27, 2024, based upon the recommendations from Callan, LLC and upon review of the disclosures required by the Illinois Pension Code, that the County Fund allocate a follow-on investment in Artemis Income and Growth Fund II in the amount of \$50M. It was further moved — subject to satisfactory review by fiduciary counsel — that the Executive Director be authorized to execute the subscription documents on behalf of the County Fund in order to effectuate the foregoing.

Roll Call Vote:

AYES: Anthony, Dardick, Marvel, Ochalla, Pray, Reed, Richardson,  
McFadden

NAYS: None

Vote Result: MOTION ADOPTED

b. Review and Consideration of Recommendation Regarding Revision to Forest Preserve District Investment Policy Statement

President McFadden stated that the Investment Committee had considered revisions to the Forest Preserve District Fund's Investment Policy Statement and recommended that the Board adopt the proposed revisions.

It was moved by Trustee Richardson and seconded by Trustee Marvel that the Board, as was consistent with the recommendations made by Callan, LLC, adopt the recommendation made by the Investment Committee at their meeting on February 27, 2024, that the presented revisions to the Forest Preserve District Fund's Investment Policy Statement be approved.

Vote Result: MOTION ADOPTED BY VOICE VOTE

c. Review and Consideration of Revision to Cook County and Forest Preserve District Investment Policy

President McFadden stated that the Fund's Investment Consultant, Callan, LLC had proposed revisions to the Cook County and Forest Preserve District Funds' Investment Policy Statements, which were presented to the Board.

It was moved by Trustee Reed and seconded by Trustee Richardson that the Board, as was consistent with the recommendations from Callan LLC and fiduciary counsel, approve the presented revisions to the Cook County Fund's and the Forest Preserve District Fund's Investment Policy Statements.

Vote Result: MOTION ADOPTED BY VOICE VOTE

5. Benefit Matters

a. Request Approval to Refer Matters Pursuant to 40 ILS 5/1-135

President McFadden stated that the Board was required under the Illinois Pension Code to report to the Cook County State's Attorney any apparent attempts to defraud the Fund. The Executive Director added that about two years ago, there were several emails sent to various investment managers in attempts to initiate fraudulent transfers of Fund assets. He stated that an investment manager had recently received an email that apparently sought to induce the manager to misdirect Fund assets. Although the investment manager did not take any action in response to the email and no Fund assets were affected, the matter should be referred to the Cook County State's Attorney as required by Section 1-135 of the Illinois Pension Code, he added.

It was moved by Trustee Richardson and seconded by Trustee Pray, as was consistent with recommendations from Fund staff, that the Board find that there were reasonable suspicions that the identified communication from a third party to a certain investment

manager appeared to contain false statements or falsified records within the meaning of Section 1-135 of the Illinois Pension Code, 40 ILCS 5/1-135. In accordance with 40 ILCS 5/1-135, the Fund was authorized to report the incident on behalf of the Board to the Cook County State's Attorney.

Vote Result: MOTION ADOPTED BY VOICE VOTE

b. Review and Consideration of Proposed Revisions to the Fund's Pension Verification Process

The Executive Director stated that the Fund had been conducting a benefit verification process for all annuitants over the past three years. In May, 2021, annuitants of the County Fund who were older than 80 years of age and all the annuitants of the Forest Preserve District Fund were mailed a Benefit Eligibility Form (BEF). The members were to complete the BEF to confirm their current addresses and to return the forms to the Fund. When BEFs was not returned, the Fund sent out second and third notices to the relevant members. If there was no response to the third mailing, the Fund asked the Board that the annuity payments due to the members be held at the Fund's offices until the verification process could be completed. A similar process was begun in May, 2022, for the County Fund annuitants who were under the age of 79. As of March 1, 2024, the Fund was holding the annuity benefits for 59 members.

The Executive Director presented a similar process to begin in March, 2024. Going forward, annuitants who reside in the United States would be contacted over a two-year period. Annuitants who reside outside the United States would be sent a BEF every calendar year. The trustees discussed the process and asked how members were paid once the BEFs were completed and returned to the Fund.

It was moved by Trustee Richardson and seconded by Trustee Anthony that the Board, as was consistent with the Illinois Pension Code, approve the procedures presented by Fund staff to continue with a second round of the benefit eligibility verification process for persons who were annuitants as of March 1, 2024.

Vote Result: MOTION ADOPTED BY VOICE VOTE

6. Administrative Matters

a. Request Approval to Execute Engagement Letters with RSM US LLP for the 2023 Audit

The Executive Director stated that the Fund entered Audit Arrangement Letters each year with RSM which described the scope of the annual audits and the fees. The Fund had received Audit Arrangement Letters for both the County Fund and the Forest Preserve District Fund for the 2023 audits which were presented to the Board. The letters had been signed on behalf of RSM and approved as to form by fiduciary counsel. The Executive Director requested authority to sign the letters on behalf of the Fund.

It was moved by Trustee Richardson and seconded by Trustee Anthony that the Board approve the proposed Audit Arrangement Letters from RSM to perform the 2023 audits for the County Fund and the Forest Preserve District Fund as signed on behalf of RSM and approved as to form by fiduciary counsel. It was further moved that the Executive Director be authorized to sign the presented Audit Arrangement Letters on behalf of the County Fund and the Forest Preserve District Fund.

Roll Call Vote:

AYES: Anthony, Dardick, Marvel, Ochalla, Pray, Reed, Richardson,  
McFadden

NAYS: None

Vote Result: MOTION ADOPTED

b. Request Approval to Execute Statement of Work for CDW-G Block Hours for 2024

The Executive Director stated that the Fund engages CDW-G to provide support to the IT Department. The support from CDW-G has been provided through a Block Hours Statement of Work (SOW) which was effective on April 27, 2022, and would expire in April, 2024. There were approximately 300 block hours remaining under the SOW. The Executive Director presented a Change Order to the SOW, signed on behalf of the vendor, which would allow the engagement to continue until the block hours have been used.

It was moved by Trustee Reed and seconded by Trustee Richardson that the Board authorize the Executive Director, on behalf of the Fund, to execute the presented Change Order with CDW-G to extend the current Statement of Work regarding Block Hours until such time as the remaining Block Hours have been used at a cost not to exceed \$62,400.

Roll Call Vote:

AYES: Anthony, Dardick, Marvel, Ochalla, Pray, Reed, Richardson,  
McFadden

NAYS: None

Vote Result: MOTION ADOPTED

c. Pension Administration System Review Update

The Executive Director presented a history of the pension administration system that is currently used at the Fund. The system, Pension Benefit Management System (PBMS), was designed and has been maintained by Novitas (f/k/a JCC Consulting). PBMS was initially launched in 2006 and had significant upgrades in subsequent years. It is the key component for all the Fund's benefit operations including calculations, benefit payments, eligibility for health benefits and tax reporting.

The trustees discussed whether PBMS could accommodate changes due to new legislation and whether the stored data was accurate. The Fund staff stated that PBMS meets current needs and has accurately stored the Fund's data, but there are concerns about ongoing support in the future. The Board asked that the Fund staff provide a report about contingency plans if the vendor was not able to provide the needed support.

d. Executive Director Report

The Executive Director reported that 59 annuity payments were held as of March 1, 2024, because the members did not return the Benefit Eligibility Forms to the Fund.

The 1095-R forms were sent to those annuitants who receive health benefits by D4 Solutions on February 16, 2024. The vendor has now completed the mailing of advices, 1099-R and 1095-R forms due in CY 2024.

In regard to personnel matters, the search for a Director of Investments was ongoing and interviews of prospective candidates were scheduled throughout March. It was reported that the Fund's Administrative Coordinator, Mario Hollemans, would leave the Fund effective March 8, 2024, for other opportunities.

A meeting of the Legislation and Rules Committee was scheduled for Thursday, March 21, 2024, at 9:00 am.

7. Old Business/New Business

There was no old business or new business discussed.

8. Adjournment

It was moved by Trustee Marvel and seconded by Trustee Richardson that the meeting be adjourned.

Vote Result: MOTION ADOPTED BY VOICE VOTE

The next Board meeting was scheduled for April 4, 2024, at 9:30 am.