

**MEETING OF THE LEGISLATIVE AND RULES COMMITTEE  
OF THE RETIRMENT BOARD OF THE COUNTY EMPLOYEES' AND OFFICERS'  
ANNUITY AND BENEFIT FUND OF COOK COUNTY  
AND EX OFFICIO FOR THE  
FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT EMPLOYEE ANNUITY  
AND BENEFIT FUND OF COOK COUNTY**

**70 W. Madison, Suite 1925  
Chicago, IL 60602**

**Minutes from the Meeting of the  
Legislative and Rules Committee on January 23, 2025**

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." The Legislative and Rules Committee is referred to as the "Committee".

Call to Order and Roll Call at 9:30 am.

**Trustees Present:** Jerry Pray (Chair), Tanya Anthony, Hal Dardick, Lakeisha Marvel, Kevin Ochalla, Tracy Reed, Samuel Richardson, Jr.

**Staff Present:** Brent Lewandowski, Executive Director; Saron Tegegne, Deputy Executive Director; Gary LeDonne, Director Benefits Administration; Margaret Fahrenbach, Legal Advisor; Rosemary Ihejirika, Benefits Manager

**Others Present:** Mary Pat Burns, Burke Burns & Pinelli, Ltd.; Derek Blaida, Blaida & Associates, LLC

Chairman Pray asked if anyone present wanted to address the Committee, but no one requested to do so.

1. Review and Consideration of May 30, 2024, Legislative Committee Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Trustee Dardick and seconded by Trustee Richardson that the presented minutes from the Committee meeting on May 30, 2024, be approved.

**Vote Result: MOTION ADOPTED BY VOICE VOTE**

2. Legislative Matters:
  - a. Legislative Update

Derek Blaida, as the legislative liaison, reported that financial constraints in Illinois will impede the introduction of legislation that requires new spending. The focus in the General Assembly will be on passing a budget. There have been discussions about resolving Tier 2 issues, but it is unclear how they will proceed in this session because of budgetary concerns. He noted that SB130 placed restrictions on the investment of additional pension assets in fossil fuel entities, but this legislation would apply to the state and judges retirement systems and not to the Fund.

3. Election Matters:

a. Report on the 2024 Election

Brent Lewandowski, Executive Director, stated that there were three elections in 2024. The elections were conducted solely by the use of mail-in ballots. As in prior years, the Fund contracted with the Hensley Company to be the election services vendor and with Matthew Welch to serve as the retained attorney. The Fund's efforts to initiate an option for electronic voting were not realized because of contracting difficulties with the prospective vendor.

Two petitions were submitted from candidates for the election of a Cook County Employee Trustee and two petitions were submitted for the election of a Forest Preserve District Employee Trustee. There was a single petition submitted for the Cook County Annuitant Trustee position. The election services provider sent ballots to the Cook County and Forest Preserve District active employees. The election services provider picked up the ballots and provided a report to the Fund of the returned ballots on a daily basis. On the day of the election, the ballots were brought to the election tabulation location and tabulated in accordance with the rules adopted by the Board. The retained attorney supervised the tabulation process. The winners were declared and no challenges were made to the election of the candidates.

b. Consideration and Authorization to prepare a Request for Proposal for the 2025 Trustee Election Services Provider

Chairman Pray stated that in 2024, the Fund was not able to offer an option for electronic voting and that a RFP might be issued to identify a vendor who could provide these services and to address other issues. The executive director gave a summary of what could be addressed in the RFP for an election services provider. He also provided a timeline showing how the RFP would be conducted so that the process could be completed before the 2025 election. The trustees discussed whether they should offer an option to vote electronically and how that change would be made available to the members. They also discussed where mail-in ballots would be delivered and how they would be securely transferred to the tabulation site. They discussed that the Fund might transition from a hybrid voting system that included both mail-in ballots and electronic voting to solely an electronic method of voting over a several year period. They were interested in whether the introduction of an electronic method would increase voter participation, but they wanted to maintain the integrity of the election process.

It was moved by Trustee Reed and seconded by Trustee Richardson that the Committee recommend that the Board authorize the Fund to prepare an RFP for an Election Services Provider that would include the services as requested by the Committee.

Vote Result: MOTION ADOPTED BY VOICE VOTE

4. Review of Retirement Board Rules and Policies

a. Status of Fund Policies and Procedures

The executive director provided a summary of the policies that had been adopted by the Board. The summary included those policies that related to the functions of the Fund and those policies that related to Fund employees. He also identified policies that had not been adopted, but that should be considered by the Board. It was discussed that while some trustees should be involved, the review and the drafting of new policies should come through the Committee. It was planned that the reviews of some policies should be provided at the Committee meeting in June, with the goal that the process would be completed by October.

5. Old Business/New Business

There was no old business or new business discussed

6. Adjournment

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

Vote Result: MOTION ADOPTED BY VOICE VOTE