

**MEETING OF THE LEGISLATIVE AND RULES COMMITTEE
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 W. Madison, Suite 1925
Chicago, IL 60602**

**Minutes from the Meeting of the
Legislative and Rules Committee on January 22, 2026**

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: Hal Dardick (Chair), Tanya Anthony, Lakeisha Marvel, Kevin Ochalla, Tracy Reed, Samuel Richardson, Jr.

Non-Member
Trustees Present: Siobhain Martin; Thomas Monahan; Tracy Reed

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

Other Present: Mary Pat Burns, Burke Burns & Pinelli, Ltd; Derek Blaida, Blaida & Associates, LLC

Chairman Dardick stated that there was a quorum of the Committee present at the meeting and that certain trustees had asked to participate remotely. It was moved by Trustee Richardson and seconded by Trustee Reed pursuant to Section 7(a) of the Open Meetings Act that the Committee allow trustees who were not able to be physically present at the meeting to participate remotely.

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

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

1. Review and Consideration of Approval of June 26, 2025, Legislative & Rules Committee Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Trustee Richardson and seconded by Trustee Ochalla that the presented minutes from the Committee meeting on June 26, 2025, be approved.

Vote Result: MOTION ADOPTED BY VOICE VOTE

2. Legislative Matters:

a. Legislative Update

Derek Blaida, the Fund's legislative liaison, said that the State of Illinois reached the midpoint of its current fiscal year. The revenue collection trends were positive through December 2025. The anticipated budget deficient for FY 2027 was \$2.3 billion but could increase if federal funding slowed or was frozen. It was not likely that the General Assembly would address safe harbor and Tier 2 revisions in this session. The trustees asked the legislative liaison about the proposed "DROP" bill that would allow members to retire but remain employed and continue their contributions to public pension funds. The impact of "DROP" legislation on public pension funds had not been fully vetted and was not likely to be considered. The legislative liaison expected that the General Assembly would focus on budget matters. He did not expect any formal discussion of pension issues before April.

3. Election Matters:

a. Discussion of 2026 Trustee Election

b. Review and Possible Recommendation of Election Rules

Chairman Dardick stated that he reviewed the election rules and proposed some changes that were not substantive. The Chairman's proposed revisions were provided to the trustees. Brent Lewandowski, the executive director, stated that the election of a County Employee Member of the Board was scheduled on October 28, 2026. He added that Merriman River Group would continue as the election services provider and that Matt Welch would serve as the retained attorney under their respective current contracts. The executive director described the services to be provided by Merriman and presented a proposed timeline for the election.

The trustees discussed whether it was necessary that the rules require candidates to personally pick-up their petitions from the Fund or whether the petitions could be sent by mail. When a candidate picks up the petitions personally, there is an opportunity to answer any questions the candidate might have and to discuss the election process. The trustees discussed that there was no need to change this process for the election in 2026.

It was moved by Trustee Anthony and seconded by Trustee Marvel that the Committee direct Fund staff to revise the Election Rules as discussed and that the Committee recommend that the Board adopt the Cook County Employee Member Trustee and Forest Preserve District Member Trustee Election Rules as revised.

Vote Result: With Trustee Ochalla having abstained,
MOTION ADOPTED BY VOICE VOTE

4. Review of Retirement Board Rules and Policies

a. Status of Fund Policies and Procedures

The executive director stated that Fund staff and fiduciary counsel continued to review the Fund's and Board's policies. He suggested that two trustees be included in the process so that their advice could be considered before the final drafts were prepared.

5. Old Business/New Business

The trustees noted that during the last election there was a phone number managed by the election services provider that could be used regarding the election process. Persons who used that number when calling about the Fund's election received a voicemail message related to a Teamsters election.

6. Adjournment

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

Vote Result: MOTION ADOPTED BY VOICE VOTE