

**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 June 26, 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; Francis Gonzalez-Crussi, Senior IT Manager

Other Present: Mary Pat Burns, Burke Burns & Pinelli, Ltd.; John McCabe, John McCabe & Associates; Derek Blaida, Blaida & Associates, LLC; Matt Fitch, Merriman River Associates ("Merriman"); Seth Marceau, Merriman; Kelly Rose Simmons, Merriman; Jody Clouse, Merriman

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

1. Review and Consideration of Approval of January 23, 2025, Legislative Committee Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Trustee Dardick and seconded by Trustee Richarson that the presented minutes from the Committee meeting on January 23, 2025, be approved.

Vote Result: MOTION ADOPTED BY VOICE VOTE

2. Legislative Matters:

a. Legislative Update

Derek Blaida, one of the Fund's legislative liaisons, stated that bills relating to transit funding, green education and the Chicago Public Schools, were referred to committees. He expected that this legislation would be discussed over the summer and reconsidered in the fall session. A budget of \$55 billion was approved, but that left a deficit of about \$700 million. Bills relating to amendments for Tier 2 benefits were passed in the last hours of the session, but it did not appear that any public pension funds provided comment regarding the legislation. The General Assembly passed HB 3193 which required pension funds to indemnify its trustees. The bill also made changes that affected the calculation for the purchase of military service credit by the Fund's membership.

3. Election Matters:

a. Discussion of 2025 Trustee Election

Brent Lewandowski, the executive director, stated that Merriman River Associates, LLC, would serve as the Fund's Election Services Provider. They would be able to administer mail-in ballots and electronic voting. The Fund would have elections for a County Employee Member, a County Annuitant Member and a Forest Preserve District Employee Member on October 29, 2025. The executive director gave a timeline for the election process.

b. Review and Possible Recommendation of Election Rules

The executive director said that the rules for the election of an Employee Member included the use of electronic voting, but that the rules for an Annuitant Member needed to be amended to allow for that process. The Committee directed Fund staff to modify the rules for the election of an Annuitant Member to include an option for electronic voting. The trustees discussed the process for electronic voting and how it would be coordinated if a member cast both a mail-in ballot and an electronic ballot. The Election Services Provider stated that a voter's credentials for electronic voting could be disabled when a mail-in ballot was received. The date that a mail-in ballot was received could be verified to determine if an electronic ballot had been previously cast. It was also discussed when electronic voting would end and how the Election Services Provider would be able to provide credentials to an eligible vote by telephone. The Committee discussed the information that needed to be included by the signer on a

candidate's petition. If the petition did not include the signer's home address, the Fund would not be able to verify that the signer was an eligible voter. The Committee considered that observers could view the tabulation of the electronic votes by implementing the use of a video conferencing system such as Zoom and instructed Fund staff to amend the rules to provide for that process. The following motions were made regarding Committee's recommendations to the Board about revisions to the Election Rules.

It was moved by Trustee Reed and seconded by Trustee Dardick that the Committee recommend to the Board that the language in the rules which prohibited an eligible voter from signing more than one candidate's petition be stricken and that the rules be amended to allow eligible voters to sign the petitions of more than one candidate.

Roll Call Vote:

AYES: Anthony, Dardick, Ocahlla, Pray, Reed,

ABSTAIN: Marvel

NAYS: Richardson

Vote Result: MOTION ADOPTED

It was moved by Trustee Dardick and seconded by Trustee Marvel that the Committee recommend to the Board that an eligible voter may provide their home address on the candidates' petitions and that the petitions should reflect that if a signer does not include a home address, the signature might not be accepted if the Fund cannot verify that the signer is an eligible voter.

Vote Result: MOTION ADOPTED BY VOICE VOTE

It was moved by Trustee Dardick and seconded by Trustee Richardson that the Committee recommend to the Board that if a voter cast both a mail-in ballot and an electronic ballot, then the ballot first logged by the Election Services Provider would be counted.

Vote Result: MOTION ADOPTED BY VOICE VOTE

It was moved by Trustee Richardson and seconded by Trustee Dardick that the Committee recommend to the Board that the Election Services Provider may provide an eligible voter over the telephone the credentials needed to cast an electronic ballot so long as eligible voter's identity was verified.

Vote Result: MOTION ADOPTED BY VOICE VOTE

It was moved by Trustee Dardick and seconded by Trustee Reed that the Committee recommend to the Board that all electronic votes be cast by 12:00 Noon on Election Day in order to be counted.

Vote Result: MOTION ADOPTED BY VOICE VOTE

It was moved by Trustee Dardick and seconded by Trustee Richardson that the Committee recommend to the Board that in the event the petitions were subject to a request for disclosure under the Illinois Freedom of Information Act or other procedures, that all personal identifying information be redacted before the petitions were disclosed.

Vote Result: MOTION ADOPTED BY VOICE VOTE

4. Review of Retirement Board Rules and Policies

a. Review and Consideration of Presented Board Policies

The executive director stated that revisions had been made to the Concealed Carry Policy, the Public Comment Policy and the Travel Expense Reimbursement Policy. He stated that the policies were reviewed to confirm that they were consistent with the applicable law and only required minor changes. The trustee discussed that the Public Comment Policy should better clarify that the trustees had discretion to expand the time allowed for a public comment and directed Fund staff to provide that clarification.

It was moved by Trustee Richardson and seconded by Trustee Marvel that the Committee recommend to the Board that it approve the changes to the identified policies as discussed and presented.

Vote Result: MOTION ADOPTED BY VOICE VOTE

b. Review and Possible Consideration of Board Bylaws

The executive director stated that the Committee had reviewed Bylaws for the Board in 2018, but they had not been considered for approval. There have been additional revisions to the Bylaws that were presented to the Committee. The Committee discussed the authority that the vice-president would have in the event that the president was absent. In the event of a long-term absence, the vice-president should have the same authority that the President had. The Committee concluded that if the president's absence was longer than three months, the vice-president should have the same authority allowed to the president until the president returned. The trustees also discussed there should be an odd number of members on any committee. The Committee also wanted the Bylaws to reflect that members could attend a meeting remotely. A quorum of the body needed to be physically present in the meeting room, but the members could vote to allow remote participation. Those members participating remotely could be considered part of the quorum in the event that some members left the meeting. The Committee thought that the section relating to fiduciary duties could be stricken because those duties were already included in the Illinois Pension Code and other applicable law. They also wanted to include that The Roberts Rules would govern if a procedure was not addressed in the Bylaws. The Committee directed Fund staff to

make the revisions to the Bylaws as discussed. The executive director stated that he would circulate the revisions of the Bylaws to the trustees.

It was moved by Trustee Reed and seconded by Trustee Richardson that the Committee recommend to the Board that it adopt the proposed Bylaws, as amended.

Vote Result: MOTION ADOPTED BY VOICE VOTE

5. Old Business/New Business

There was no old business or new business discussed

6. Adjournment

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

Vote Result: MOTION ADOPTED BY VOICE VOTE