

**MEETING OF THE LEGISLATIVE 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 & Rules Committee on March 21, 2024**

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 at 9:00 am.

Trustees Present: Jerry Pray (Chair), Tanya Anthony, Hal Dardick, Lakeisha Marvel, Kevin Ochalla, Tracy Reed

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

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

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 Reed and seconded by Trustee Ochalla pursuant to Section 7(a) of the Open Meetings Act, that the Committee allow trustees who are 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 November 16, 2023, Legislative Committee Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Trustee Reed and seconded by Trustee Ochalla that the presented minutes from the Legislative Committee meeting on November 16, 2023, be approved.

Vote Result: MOTION ADOPTED BY VOICE VOTE

2. Legislative Matters:

a. Legislative Update

Brent Lewandowski, Executive Director, stated that the Fund's legislative liaisons, John McCabe and Derek Blaida, were available to give an update on the matters before the Illinois General Assembly. Mr. McCabe gave a written summary of legislation that might affect the Fund, but stated that the likelihood of controversial legislation moving forward was very slim because this an election year. It was expected that the session would end on May 24, 2024, as scheduled, so long as the budget was approved by that time.

3. Election Matters;

a. Discussion of 2024 Trustee Election

The Executive Director gave a summary of how the elections of trustees have been conducted in the past. Prior to 2020, eligible voters could request a mail-in ballot or vote in person on election day. Beginning with the elections in 2020, voters were only allowed to vote by submitting a mail-in ballot. Generally, there was a higher voter participation rate among the annuitant members than for the active members. There might be a possibility to increase voter participation if some method of electronic voting were allowed.

b. Review and Possible Consideration of Election Vendors

The trustees discussed the possibility of using some method of electronic voting for the elections in 2024. They were concerned about who would have access to the voters' information if electronic voting were allowed and recognized that the electronic ballots must remain secret as required by the Section 9-186 of the Illinois Pension Code. They were also concerned that all members have access to electronic voting procedures whether they were annuitant or active employees. It was discussed that the Fund should follow a hybrid approach which would allow eligible voters to use either mail-in ballots or an electronic procedure. While the Fund has had success with the current election vendor using mail-in ballots, that entity does not have a method to conduct an election using electronic voting procedures. The Fund would need to consider a new vendor in order to conduct electronic voting.

The Committee asked that the Executive Director gather information about the procedures to be utilized for electronic voting and obtain quotes from possible vendors that should be presented at the next Legislative Committee meeting. The Committee also stated that the Fund should begin to draft revisions to the Election Rules to include electronic voting for the elections in 2024.

4. Review of Retirement Board Rules and Policies

a. Proposed Timeline for review of Policies and Procedures

The Executive Director stated that the Committee had been provided with a list of existing policies that affected Fund employees and the Board, which included a draft of proposed by-laws for the Board. The Fund had prepared a proposed timeline for the review of these policies. The trustees discussed the proposed by-laws which affected the operations of the

Board and other matters. They also discussed the proposed employee handbook. The Chairman stated that the Fund staff should move forward with internal policies that affected employees, but the by-laws would require a more detailed analysis by the Committee.

b. Review and Possible Consideration of Presented Board Policies

The Committee considered the policy used for public comment at the Board meetings. Fiduciary counsel had some comments about the policy and agreed to make revisions to be presented at the next Committee meeting. The trustees noted that some parts of the employee handbook did not need to be elevated to the Committee for consideration. They asked that the Fund identify those sections of the handbook that would require Board review. The Executive Director was asked to send a copy of the proposed by-laws to each of the trustees so that they could provide their proposed revisions. The revisions would be compiled by Fund counsel for presentation to the Committee. Fund staff was asked to provide revisions to the election rules that would reflect procedures for electronic voting in 2024.

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 Reed that the meeting be adjourned.

Vote Result: MOTION ADOPTED BY VOICE VOTE