

*Jul 10 2023 4:28 pm***March 28, 2023 9:50 a.m. – COLA Meeting**

In accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 32, Section 103(i), the purpose of the meeting is to address the increase to the fiscal year 2024 cost-of-living allowance paid to those receiving retirement benefits from the Fitchburg Retirement System.

A public meeting of the Fitchburg Retirement Board was held in the North Meeting Room located on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of Fitchburg City Hall at 718 Main Street, Fitchburg, MA 01420.

Fitchburg Retirement Board members present: Calvin D. Brooks (Chair), John Brown, Mary Cringan, Thomas Dateo Jr., and Anna Farrell

Staff present: Tina Schneider, Retirement Administrator and Steffani Santiago, Administrator Assistant

The Board discussed the FY24 Cost-of-Living Adjustment to commence July 1, 2023 and their ability to grant the maximum COLA increase of three percent (3%) which would result in a maximum annual increase of four hundred twenty 0/100 dollars (\$420.00) for eligible retirees.

On a motion made by Thomas Dateo Jr., and seconded by Anna Farrell to grant a three percent (3%) COLA on the first fourteen thousand 0/100 dollars (\$14,000.00) of a retirement benefit, effective July 1, 2023. Voted unanimous (5-0).

On a motion made by Mary Cringan and seconded by John Brown to adjourn the COLA Meeting at 9:52 a.m. Voted unanimous (5-0).

**March 28, 2023 10:00 a.m. - Monthly Retirement Meeting**

A public meeting of the Fitchburg Retirement Board was held in the North Meeting Room located on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of Fitchburg City Hall at 718 Main Street, Fitchburg, MA 01420.

Fitchburg Retirement Board members present: Calvin D. Brooks (Chair), John Brown, Mary Cringan, Thomas Dateo Jr., and Anna Farrell

Staff present: Tina Schneider, Retirement Administrator and Steffani Santiago, Administrator Assistant

Attendees: Keith Bourne, Fitchburg Police Department Resource Officer and Union President

**Review and Approval of Warrant and Meeting Minutes:**

The Board reviewed the March 2023 Warrant, the meeting minutes of the February 14, 2023 Special Meeting and the meeting minutes of the February 28, 2023 Regular Monthly Meeting. On a motion made by Mary Cringan and seconded by Anna Farrell, to approve the March 2023 Warrant, the February 14, 2023 Special Meeting Minutes and the February 28, 2023 Meeting Minutes. Voted unanimous (5-0).

March 28, 2023 (cont'd)

**Review and Approval of Bank Statement and Accounting:**

The Board reviewed the January 2023 Bank Statements and the February 2023 Bank Statements. On a motion made by Thomas Dateo Jr., and seconded by Anna Farrell to approve and accept the January 2023 and February 2023 Bank Statements. Voted unanimous (5-0).

**Review and Approval of Retirement Applications and Calculations:**

Ms. Schneider advised the Board that there were not retirement applications for the month of March 2023.

**Notification of Member(s) Passing:**

- Francis L. Rousseau, Option C Beneficiary of Retiree, Lorraine T. Rousseau, DOD: 02.06.23. Lorraine Rousseau will become an Option C Pop-Up.
- Michael T. Lally Jr., Airport Lineperson, Retirement Date: 05/14/19, DOD: 02.19.23 (Deborah Silvar-Lally, Survivor)
- Laurie Casey, Option C Beneficiary of Retiree, William Casey, DOD: 03.11.23. William Casey will become an Option C Pop-Up.
- Lorraine E. Blake, Survivor of Arthur Blake (DPW), DOD: 03.18.23

**Review and Approval of New Members:**

NAME	DEPT.	POSITION	START DATE
Jaramillo, Lainey	School	Para	1/5/2023
Semenza, Emily	School	Para	1/17/2023
Morrissey, Laura	School	Para	2/6/2023
Larkin, Nina	School	Para	2/6/2023
Resnik, Devin	WWT	GIS Engineer	2/13/2023
Langtry, Christopher	School	Para	2/6/2023
Fougere, Diane	School	Para	2/13/2023
Celona, Philip	School	Para	2/13/2023
Swensen, Patrick	Fire	Firefighter	2/27/2023
Viles, Seth	Fire	Firefighter	2/27/2023
Plourde, Kurtis	WWT	Sr. Sanitary Engineering Aide	2/27/2023
Preville, Ryan	Fire	Firefighter	2/27/2023
Fleck, Chantell	ComDev	Planner	3/1/2023
Easler, Katelyn	School	Para	2/15/2023
Hoskins, Cody	School	Para	2/27/2023
Amanatidis, Kaliopi	School	Para	2/27/2023
Stockwell, Tyler	School	SBM	3/6/2023

On a motion made by Mary Cringan and seconded by Thomas Dateo Jr., to admit to membership the new members listed for March 2023. Voted unanimous (5-0).

March 28, 2023 (cont'd)

**Amendment of October 25, 2022 Meeting Minutes:**

Administrator Assistant Steffani Santiago advised the Board that upon review of previous minutes, she noted the vote for the COLA Base Increase in the October 25, 2022 was inadvertently omitted and thus the minutes would need to be amended to reflect the vote that had been taken by the Board.

On a motion made by Anna Farrell and seconded by Mary Cringan to amend the October 25, 2023 meeting minutes to reflect the vote taken on the COLA Base Increase.

Voted unanimous (5-0).

**New Business - Keith Bourne's Request for Consideration to Buyback Military Service**

Board Chair Calvin Brooks noted the presence of member, Keith Bourne. Administrator Tina Schneider advised the Board that Mr. Bourne visited the Retirement Office and requested consideration to purchase his military time due to hardship. Ms. Schneider stated that Mr. Bourne had drafted a letter to the Board requesting the same and circulated said letter. Mr. Brooks stated that the matter would be taken under new business and would be taken out of order to allow Mr. Bourne to return to duty.

Thomas Dateo Jr., stated he was of the opinion that the discussion relative to purchase military service takes place too early in a member's career which results in confusion and a hardship as members may not be in a position financially to buyback service so early in their career. Mr. Dateo Jr., stated he would like to review the process and perhaps consider alternative methods for notification and consider what other systems do for military buyback.

Mary Cringan stated after reviewing Mr. Bourne's letter, she was in favor of granting his request to purchase eligible military service.

Anna Farrell acknowledge per Mr. Bourne's letter to the Board, that there was a hardship at the time the initial opportunity was presented and agreed the Board should grant Mr. Bourne's request to buyback his military service.

On a motion made by Thomas Dateo Jr., and seconded by John Brown to approve Mr. Bourne's request to purchase creditable service for his eligible military service. Voted unanimous (5-0).

Mr. Bourne thanked the Board for reviewing the matter so quickly and for allowing him the opportunity to buyback his military service. The Board thanked Mr. Bourne for his service.

**Continuation of discussions regarding implementation of Sec.147 of the Acts of 2022 (c.32, §106) ~ Vacation Buybacks:**

Mr. Brooks advised the Board that Attorney Gibson had revised the Vacation Buyback Guidelines and reviewed said revisions with the Board. Board reviewed the draft notification letter to members who owe the Retirement System contributions for vacation buybacks that occurred from January 1, 2018 – December 31, 2022. The Board discussed timelines relative to notification process to members who owe contributions, dates by which reimbursement must be received by and reimbursement methods that would be allowed. Board made revisions to the notification letter and revised the date in which members had to notify the Board of their reimbursement method in the notification letter and Guidelines [Section 6(b)] to June 30, 2023.

March 28, 2023 (cont'd)

On a motion made by Mary Cringan and seconded by John Brown to adopt the Vacation Buyback Guidelines as amended by the Board and Attorney Gibson. Voted unanimous (5-0).

**Discussion regarding Compensatory Time for Retirement Office Staff**

Thomas Dateo Jr., acknowledged the workload that had been placed on Retirement Office Staff as a result of the reinstated vacation buyback program in addition to their day-to-day responsibilities. Mr. Dateo Jr., went on to reiterate the Board's desire to have the Retirement Office process the recalculations for eligible retirees as soon as practicable as well as disseminate the notice of contributions due and owing to applicable members and track the collection of said funds. As a result of the work required, Mr. Dateo Jr., inquired as to whether the Board should consider overtime or compensatory time as Retirement Office Staff had already worked beyond their scheduled thirty-five hours per week schedule.

Mr. Brooks raised the question of FLSA classification for office staff.

Mr. Dateo Jr., stated the workload of the office had changed over the years and that he believed staff should be compensated for the work that has been done. Mr. Dateo Jr., inquired as to whether flex time should be an option and suggested the Board discuss a flex-time policy at their next regularly scheduled monthly meeting. The Board agreed to table the matter to next month.

**Home Rule Petition for Personal Time Buybacks**

The Board discussed the Home Rule Petition that had been filed with the Fitchburg City Clerk's Office to be placed on the City Council's April 4, 2023 agenda for review and consideration. Anna Farrell and Thomas Dateo Jr., advised the Board that they had drafted a letter to be included in the Petition to the City Council, explaining the evolution of personal time buybacks, the recent legislative changes with respect to vacation buybacks and the Board's intention to institute parity between personal time buybacks and what is now allowed for vacation backs. Mr. Dateo Jr., thanked Ms. Farrell for her efforts and assistance with this matter and drafting the letter to City Council. The Board strategized as to talking points that should be made and who would speak on the Board's behalf to answer any questions Councilors may have.

On a motion made by Thomas Dateo Jr., and seconded by Mary Cringan to confirm the letter to City Council to request their support for a Home Rule Petition to allow Personal Time Buybacks to be recognized as Vacation Buybacks are pursuant to Section 147 of the Acts of 2022 (c.32, §106). Voted unanimous (5-0).

On a motion made by John Brown and seconded by Anna Farrell to adjourn the March 28, 2023 meeting of the Fitchburg Contributory Retirement Board. Voted unanimous (5-0).

The next public meeting of the Fitchburg Contributory Retirement Board is scheduled for April 25, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

Meeting Adjourned 11:20 a.m.

March 28, 2023 (cont'd)

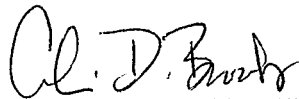
The following payment was approved for the March 2023 warrant:	\$1,905,634.18
Applications for withdrawal of accumulated deductions were:	\$71,323.50
Transfers to other systems were:	\$57,888.76
Management fees for March 2023 were: PRIT Core Fund	\$129,016.27

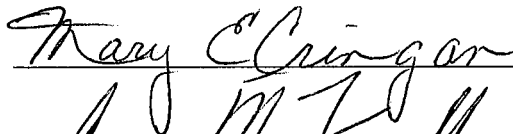
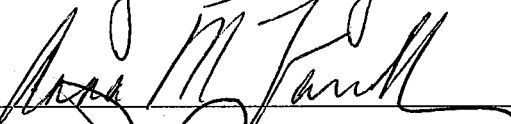
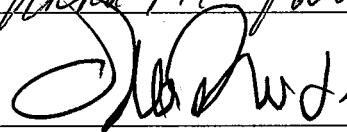
Respectfully submitted,



Tina M. Schneider  
Board Administrator

The Retirement Board attest to the accuracy of the minutes.



**April 25, 2023 10:00 a.m.**

A public meeting of the Fitchburg Retirement Board was held in the North Meeting Room located on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of Fitchburg City Hall at 718 Main Street, Fitchburg, MA 01420.

Fitchburg Retirement Board members present: Calvin D. Brooks (Chair), John Brown, Mary Cringan, Anna Farrell and Thomas Dateo Jr., remote via telephone.

Staff present: Tina Schneider, Retirement Administrator

Attendees: Jacquelyn Cronin, Deputy Auditor

**Review and Approval of Warrant and Meeting Minutes:**

Retirement Administrator Tina Schneider provided the April 2023 Warrant to the Board for review and advised that the meeting minutes for the March 28, 2023 meeting were not yet completed. The Board reviewed and discussed the April 2023 Warrant. On a motion made by Anna Farrell and seconded by Mary Cringan, to approve the May 2023 Warrant. Voted roll call: John Brown, YES; Anna Farrell, YES; Mary Cringan YES, Thomas Dateo Jr., YES; Calvin Brooks, YES. Voted unanimous (5-0).

**Review and Approval of Bank Statement and Accounting:**

Ms. Schneider advised the Board that the March 2023 Bank Statements and Accounting would need to be deferred to the May 23, 2023 meeting.

**Review and Approval of Retirement Applications and Calculations:**

Ms. Schneider advised the Board that there were no retirement applications for the month of April 2023.

**Notification of Member(s) Passing:**

- Jane Archambault, Section 101 Survivor of Donald Archambault, DOD: 03.07.23
- Nora Peterson, School Department, Option B, Retirement: 09/04/92, DOD: 04.06.23
- Christine Jeanne Bellabarba, School Nutrition Services, Option B, Retirement: 08/04/00, DOD: 04.08.23

**Review and Approval of New Members:**

Ms. Schneider advised the Board that the list of new members for April 2023 would need to be deferred to the May 23, 2023 meeting.

**Annual Reviews of Retirement Office Staff:**

Chair Calvin Brooks informed the Board that Administrator Assistant Steffani Santiago had gone out on Family Medical Leave and would be out of the office for a period of time.

Mr. Brooks advised the Board that he would like to begin the review process for both the Administrator and Administrator Assistant so the matter could be placed on the May 23, 2023 agenda for discussion. Mr. Brooks circulated copies of the applicable review forms and advised