

Attachment A

Independent Citizens' Pension Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: October 3, 2024

Time: 10:30 am

Location: Sonoma County Administrator's Conference Room

Present: Members - Tony Withington, Bill Robotka, John Hadzess, Lilo Kangas, Peter Vranich
County Administrator's Office – Nick Klein, Joanna Lutman, Christina Rivera
Sonoma County Employees' Retirement Association – Julie Wyne, Cristina Hess

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 10:31 am by Chair Withington.

2. Chair Remarks

- None

3. Approval of Agenda

The October 3, 2024, agenda was reviewed and approved as presented. Vote: 5-0-0 (Pass)

4. Approval of June 6, 2024, Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve prior meeting minutes. Vote: 5-0-0 (Pass)

5. Public comment on matters not on the agenda

No members of the public were present for comments.

6. County Administrator's Office Updates

a) Annual Pension Report Status Update

- N. Klein and J. Wyne will present the joint report to the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, October 22.
- Due to delays preparing the report and internal board item deadlines, the report was not provided to the pension committee ad-hoc reviewers for feedback prior to publication. A few changes were made per earlier feedback provided by P. Vranich via email.
- The report will be agendized for review and input by the full committee at its upcoming December 5 meeting and future 2025 meetings, since it will become a public document after the anticipated October 16 publication date.

b) Violence Prevention Training

- County Counsel confirmed that all commission and committee members are required to take the annual violence prevention training.

7. Sonoma County Employees' Retirement Association (SCERA) Updates

- J. Wyne provided an update regarding SCERA's triennial experience study, which involves testing its actuarial assumptions against recent data and experience. SCERA's actuary, Segal, is not recommending any major changes to economic assumptions. Segal is recommending changes to non-economic mortality assumptions, which will have an impact on the normal cost for Safety plan members, with a smaller impact on General plan members.

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- Encouraged committee members to attend SCERA's educational forum on October 9-10.
- Provided an update regarding a potential retiree ad-hoc COLA. SCERA and County staff will start meeting annually (first meeting in late November) to review data and cost estimates and collaboratively discuss the feasibility of recommending a retiree COLA increase. These conversations do not guarantee a retiree COLA will be granted as an outcome.
- SCERA is focusing on employee retirement planning coaching and surveying members to evaluate quality of customer service and experience with the retirement system.
- SCERA administration is considering expanding staffing levels to handle communications, audit and cyber-security compliance issues. Will be considered for approval by the SCERA Board in December.

8. **Discussion with Christina Rivera, County Executive, regarding Committee's Purpose and Charter**

- C. Rivera provided historical background about the creation of this committee, starting with the 2015 Grand Jury report. She stressed the importance of pensions as a key operational cost for the County and reiterated the value of this committee's work efforts, which has helped improve transparency over the years.
- Provided a recap of the committee's bylaws and the main responsibilities outlined in the charter. Stepped through each of the four main responsibilities and provided her thoughts and perspectives on why they are important to the Board and public.
- This committee provides a neutral voice and perspective on the topic of pensions. Encouraged committee members to be present in-person for the annual pension reports to address the Board via public comment.
- B. Robotka asked about upcoming retiree COLA discussions and limited options to grant COLAs under existing statutes, and whether the County will be pursuing any legislative changes to allow for targeted COLAs.
 - J. Wyne clarified that PEPPRA complicates and restricts our ability to make certain changes, so it would require more research and work to ascertain feasibility. We are currently limited to across-the-board and purchasing power COLAs.

9. **Committee Open Session Discussion**

- Members B. Robotka, J. Hadzess, and P. Vranich have two-year terms expiring December 6 and will require a consent item on the Board of Supervisors' December 3 meeting agenda to extend appointments.
- Action Item: N. Klein to check on terms for all members, confirm with individual members that they intend to continue serving on the committee, and prepare December 3 board item.

10. **Proposed agenda topics for upcoming meeting**

- October 2024 Annual Pension Report Review and Discussion
- 2025 Preliminary Meeting Dates
- Committee Open Session Discussion

11. **Adjournment/Tentative Next Meeting**

- Committee adjourned at 11:46 am
- Next meeting scheduled for Thursday, December 5, 2024.