

**ESSEX REGIONAL RETIREMENT BOARD  
REGULAR SESSION  
October 30, 2023**

At a meeting of the Essex Regional Retirement Board held on Monday, October 30, 2023, at 491 Maple Street, Suite 201 at 8:30 a.m., the following Board members were present for all or some of the meeting: Tracy A. Blais, Katherine E. Carleton, Vincent R. Malgeri, Kevin A. Merz, and Susan J. Yaskell.

In attendance for all or some of the meeting were the following individuals:

Charles E. Kostro, ERRS Executive Director  
Lori O'Donnell, ERRS Executive Assistant  
Chris Collins, ERRS Counsel  
Brian Murphy, ERRS Member from Ipswich  
Casey Berkowitz, Counsel for Mr. Murphy

Ms. Yaskell called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

**Statement**

Ms. Yaskell stated that Massachusetts Open Meeting Law permits meetings to be recorded and states that the Chair shall inform attendees at the beginning of the meeting of any such recording. Therefore, I am informing everyone that Lori O'Donnell is recording this meeting. If anyone else is recording the meeting, please identify yourself at this time.

**Approval of Board Minutes**

Upon a motion by Vincent R. Malgeri, seconded by Kevin A. Merz, the Board voted 5-0; To approve the minutes of the regular and executive session of the meeting of September 25, 2023.

**Public Comment Period**

There were no public comments

**New Enrollments**

Upon a motion by Kevin A. Merz, seconded by Vincent R. Malgeri, the Board voted 5-0; That the following named employees be enrolled in the Essex Regional Retirement System, a list of sixty-nine names beginning with Gregory J. Allen and ending with Julia M. Warrenburg.

<b>Last Name</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Title/Position</b>	<b>Enrollment Date</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Allen	Gregory J.	Manchester Essex RSD	Paraprofessional	9/18/2023	1
Bacheller	Vanessa L.	Pentucket RSD	Paraprofessional	10/2/2023	1
Barrows	Molly M.	Masconomet RSD	Admin Assistant	10/10/2023	1
Bennett	Russell J.	Triton RSD	Custodian	9/25/2023	1
Bettinger	Amanda T.	Town of Georgetown	Instructional Paraprofessional	9/7/2023	1
Bourque	Kimberly A.	Town of Groveland	Assistant Treasurer / Collector	9/23/2023	1
Buttars	Kathleen	Triton Regional SD	Instructional Assistant	8/23/2023	1
Cappos Costa	Alison F.	Town of Georgetown	Instructional Paraprofessional	9/11/2023	1
Charoux	Remi A.	Town of Groveland	Maintenance Mechanic	8/28/2023	1
Chisholm	Hailey G.	Town of North Andover	Teaching Assistant	9/14/2023	1
Christian	Annette M.	Triton RSD	Cafeteria	8/23/2023	1
Christopher	Traci M.	Town of Georgetown	Instructional Para	9/19/2023	1
Churchill	Sarah P.	Town of Ipswich	Paraeducator	8/28/2023	1
Ciciotti	Marco	Town of Nahant	Laborer	9/15/2023	1
Coates	Tyanna	Pentucket RSD	Admin Assistant	10/19/2023	1
Cook	Linda A.	Town of Rowley	Assistant Town Accountant	9/26/2023	1
Cote	Carly R.	Masconomet RSD	Paraprofessional	10/2/2023	1
Cozzolino	Vicki A.	Manchester Essex RSD	Payroll / AP	10/2/2023	1
Cutler	Claudia K.	Town of North Andover	Teaching Assistant	8/28/2023	1
DePasquale	Derek R.	Town of Ipswich	Line Worker	10/23/2023	4
Deschenes	Roby A.	Town of Hamilton	Police Officer	10/1/2023	4
Duffy	Kelly M.	Triton RSD	Instructional Assistant	8/23/2023	1
Dziadyk	David R.	Town of Lynnfield	Maintenance Specialist	10/2/2023	1
Enos	Matthew V.	Town of Topsfield	Firefighter	9/11/2023	4
Enos	Rebeca	Town of Boxford	Aide	8/28/2023	1
Farinato	Rebecca T.	Town of Boxford	Paraprofessional	9/8/2023	1
Fitzsimmons	Kelsey E.	Town of North Andover	Patrol Officer	10/16/2023	4
Fortuna	Emma R.	Town of Georgetown	Instructional Paraprofessional	9/26/2023	1
Garcia	Caitlin I.	Triton RSD	Instructional Assistant	8/23/2023	1
Godfrey	Nolan	Town of Georgetown	Firefighter	10/9/2023	4
Going	Michael F.	Town of Manchester	Firefighter	9/10/2023	4
Goncalves	Ana Paula G.	Town of Topsfield	Special Ed Aide	10/10/2023	1
Gordon	Nicole L.	Pentucket RSD	Paraprofessional	10/17/2023	1
Hambley	Skylar	Town of Ipswich	ABA Provider	9/25/2023	1
Heritage	Adam	Manchester Essex RSD	Teaching Assistant	9/5/2023	1

Hooley	Kyle J.	Town of North Andover	Patrol Officer	11/13/2023	4
Hurton	Cody J.	Triton RSD	Instructional Assistant	8/23/2023	1
Ingianni	Jennifer R.	Pentucket RSD	Paraprofessional	8/29/2023	1
Jensen	Michael H.	Masconomet RSD	MDFT	10/2/2023	1
Karimi	Heather L.	Town of Boxford	Aide	9/5/2023	1
Liu	Jia	Town of Boxford	ESP IA	9/18/2023	1
Lu	Hetian	Town of Rowley	Dispatcher	9/12/2023	1
Madison R.	Maynard	Manchester Essex RSD	Teaching Assistant	8/28/2023	1
McGrath Fritch	Kathryn A.	Town of Rockport	Cafeteria	8/28/2023	1
McMahon	John F.	Town of Boxford	Aide	8/28/2023	1
McPhail	Babette K.	Pentucket RSD	Paraprofessional	8/24/2023	1
Meaney	Patrick O.	Town of Ipswich	Paraeducator	9/18/2023	1
Melcher	Zachary J.	Town of North Andover	Staff Planner	9/11/2023	1
Mendoza	Carol R.	Town of Manchester	Assistant to Treasurer	8/28/2023	1
Merz	Kevin A.	Masconomet RSD	District Treasurer	9/25/2023	1
Micthell	Brian P.	Pentucket RSD	Custodian	8/28/2023	1
Millman	Aaron R.	Manchester Essex RSD	Administrative Assistant	9/18/2023	1
Mock	David C.	Town of Rockport	Laborer	10/16/2023	1
Morrill	Nathan	Town of Rockport	Civilian Dispatcher	10/16/2023	1
Nugent	Kimberley A.	Town of Rockport	Clerk	10/10/2023	1
Perez Herrera	Victor M.	Hamilton Wenham SD	Custodian	9/22/2023	1
O'Connor	Holly E.	Town of Rockport	Paraprofessional	10/2/2023	1
Panorelli	Gayle M.	Town of North Andover	Dispatcher	10/2/2023	1
Parsons	Rachael A.	Town of North Andover	Teaching Assistant	8/28/2023	1
Pridham	Jill A.	Town of Boxford	TBD	9/18/2023	1
Procurot	Lindsey E.	Town of Boxford	Aide	8/28/2023	1
Provencal	Andre S.	Pentucket RSD	Paraprofessional	10/2/2023	1
Roketenetz	Jennifer M.	Town of Salisbury	Parks Admin	9/4/2023	1
Scheetz	Amy S.	Manchester Essex RSD	Teaching Assistant	8/28/2023	1
Simon	William J.	Town of Ipswich	COTA	10/23/2023	1
Temple	Jonathan E.	Town of Newbury	IT Manger	9/5/2023	1
Verduga	Hunter A.	Town of Boxford	Tech Specialist	9/18/2023	1
Warnock	Ryley J.	Town of Topsfield	Firefighter	8/7/2023	4
Warrenburg	Julia M.	Hamilton-Wenham RSD	Teaching Assistant	8/28/2023	1

## New Retirements

Upon a motion by Vincent R. Malgeri, seconded by Kevin A. Merz, the Board voted 5-0; That the following named members of the Essex Regional Retirement System be awarded retirement benefits calculated as presented below, a list of seven names, beginning with Mary E. Dagle and ending with John R. Wood;

1. Mary E. Dagle, Assistant, Police/Fire Department, Town of Essex, Group 1  
Effective Retirement Date: September 15, 2023  
Monthly Retirement Allowance: \$2,319.40  
Annual Retirement Allowance: \$27,832.80
2. Daniel P. Lanen, Police Lieutenant, Town of North Andover, Group 4  
Effective Retirement Date: September 15, 2023  
Monthly Retirement Allowance: \$6,917.43  
Annual Retirement Allowance: \$100,083.96
3. Thomas P. Mazzaferro, DPW Laborer, Town of Nahant, Group 1  
Effective Retirement Date: September 1, 2023  
Monthly Retirement Allowance: \$1,059.12  
Annual Retirement Allowance: \$12,709.44
4. Kenneth D. Rollins, Electric Lineman, Town of Middleton, Group 4  
Effective Retirement Date: July 28, 2023  
Monthly Retirement Allowance: \$9,527.95  
Annual Retirement Allowance: \$114,335.40
5. Elaine V. Tighe, Assistant Cook, Town of Georgetown, Group 1  
Effective Retirement Date: September 25, 2023  
Monthly Retirement Allowance: \$564.35  
Annual Retirement Allowance: \$6,772.20
6. Peggy Wiselogle, Water Treatment Plant Operator, Town of Rockport, Group 1  
Effective Retirement Date: September 28, 2023  
Monthly Retirement Allowance: \$2,857.60  
Annual Retirement Allowance: \$34,291.20
7. John R. Wood (Ashley J. Winter), Civilian Dispatcher, Town of North Andover, Group 1  
Option D  
Effective Retirement Date: August 2, 2023  
Monthly Retirement Allowance: \$849.06  
Annual Retirement Allowance: \$10,188.72

### **Creditable Service Awards**

Mr. Kostro reviewed the history of the creditable service award for Kristen Kent. Upon a motion by Tracy A. Blais, seconded by Vincent R. Malgeri, the Board voted 5-0; That the retirement system staff has verified that the required payment having been received, that the following member of the Essex Regional Retirement System be awarded creditable service as presented below;

1. Kristin Kent shall be awarded one year and four months of creditable service for the purchase of prior non-membership service rendered from January 18, 2014 to December 31, 2016 with the Town of Middleton.

### **Liability Requests**

Upon a motion by Katherine E. Carleton, seconded by Vincent R. Malgeri, the Board voted 5-0; To take the following action on requests for the acceptance of liability received by the retirement system;

1. To accept liability for two years and ten months of service as requested by the Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement System on behalf of Kimberly M. Brisbois for prior refunded service rendered from September 1, 2002 to June 30, 2005, with the Masconomet Regional School System.
2. To accept, upon proper payment and in accordance with the supplemental regulations of ERRS, five years of liability as requested by the Marblehead Retirement Board on behalf of Adam J. Hatfield, for prior call firefighter service rendered from January 1, 1992 to December 31, 1996, with the Nahant Fire Department, as this individual was a member of the retirement system subsequent to this service.

### **Refund Warrant – September 2023**

Mr. Kostro noted that there was one individual whose refund was processed last month but who was not on the warrant voted by the Board and recorded in the minutes. This vote will correct that oversight. Upon a motion by Kevin A. Merz, seconded by Vincent R. Malgeri, the Board voted 5-0; To approve an additional refund warrant for September 2023, to refund, rollover, or transfer the accounts of the individual presented below, a list of one member beginning and ending with Traci Marie Christopher, in the total net amount of \$3,768.86.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Board or Institution</b>
Christopher, Traci Marie	Withdrawal	

## Refund Warrant – October 2023

Upon a motion by Kevin A. Merz, seconded by Tracy A. Blais, the Board voted 5-0; To approve the refund warrant for October 2023, to refund, rollover, or transfer the accounts of the individuals as presented below, a list of twenty-eight members beginning with Robert S. Adams and ending with Emily G. Yarrow, in the total net amount of \$612,171.62.

Name	Type	Board or Institution
Adams, Robert S.	Withdrawal	
Breen, Kristen M.	Transfer	Gloucester Retirement Board
Brisbois, Kimberly M.	Transfer	Massachusetts Teachers Retirement System
Bruno, Melissa D.	Transfer	Haverhill Retirement Board
Burt, Steven D.	Withdrawal	
Chan, Jocelyn	Transfer	Swampscott Retirement Board
Comeau, Alyse M.	Transfer	Massachusetts Teachers Retirement System
Cotting, Tiffany A.	Transfer	Gloucester Retirement Board
Cracknell, Nicholas J.	Transfer	Amesbury Retirement Board
Craig, Lillian S.	Transfer	Danvers Retirement Board
Criswell, Phyllis E.	Withdrawal	
Dauwer, Ellen E.	Withdrawal	
Friedman, Lisa C.	Withdrawal	
Halkey, James S.	Withdrawal	
Harrington, Sean P.	Transfer	Massachusetts Teachers Retirement System
Juliano, Michael C.	Transfer	Stoneham Retirement Board
Kenny, Wendy L.	Transfer	Salem Retirement Board
Mueller, Tricia	Transfer	Gloucester Retirement Board
Parsons, Ethan F.	Transfer	State Retirement Board
Prentice, Fiona M.	Transfer	Massachusetts Teachers Retirement System
Provensal, Scott L.	Transfer	Revere Retirement Board
Sheppard, Joseph E.	Withdrawal	
Sheppard, Joseph E.	Withdrawal	
Urban, Amy M.	Rollover	Ally Traditional IRA
Vavruska, Matthew C.	Transfer	Malden Retirement Board
Wendt, Kathryn A.	Transfer	Massachusetts Teachers Retirement System
Wilkinson, Jacqueline A.	Transfer	Massachusetts Teachers Retirement System
Yarrow, Emily G.	Transfer	Taunton Retirement Board

### **September Retirees Payroll**

Mr. Kostro noted for the Board that this vote is a combination of two parts of the retiree payroll for September. One member, who had not complied with PERAC's 91A filings was to have his benefit terminated in September. However, ERRS was notified that he complied on the day the payroll had already been submitted. Mr. Kostro noted that in the future, any member in a comparable situation will have their monthly payment restarted the following month. Attempting to accommodate one member in this situation creates difficulties for the entire payroll and Mr. Kostro does not think this is a practice that should be repeated. Upon a motion by Vincent R. Malgeri, seconded by Kevin A. Merz, the Board voted 5-0; To approve the retirement allowances for the month of September 2023, in the actual amount of \$5,097,695.68.

### **October Retirees Payroll**

Ms. Blais asked why this is an estimated payroll. Mr. Kostro responded that the actual payroll is being processed today. Upon a motion by Vincent R. Malgeri, seconded by Kevin A. Merz, the Board voted 5-0; To approve the retirement allowances for the month of October 2023, in the estimated amount of \$5,100,000.

### **ERRS Payroll**

Upon a motion by Vincent R. Malgeri, seconded by Kevin A. Merz, the Board voted 5-0; To approve the payment of the ERRS employee payroll for October 6, 2023, in the amount of \$15,252.45, and for October 20, 2023, in the amount of \$20,293.03.

### **Cash Disbursement Warrant CD2023.10**

Upon a motion by Kevin A. Merz, seconded by Vincent R. Malgeri, the Board voted 5-0; To approve the Cash Disbursement Warrant CD2023.10 for October 2023, in the total amount of \$100,272.57.

<b>Vendor</b>	<b>Amount (\$)</b>
Access - 2023 -10	788.26
Comcast - Internet - 2023 -10	228.70
CivicPlus - Annual Web Hosting Fee	3,660.99
Comcast - Phone - 2023 -10	316.20
Danvers, Town of - Electric - Suite 201	131.67
Danvers, Town of - Electric - Suite 202	175.32

Group Insurance Commission - 7/1/2023-9/30/2023	24,950.94
H.C.O.P.T - Condo Fees - 2023.11	1,657.00
HIQ Computers - #138035 - Monthly Replication Services	90.00
HIQ Computers - #138000 - Email and Main Voicemail & Remote Services	385.00
Harper's Payroll Service - 2023.10.06	81.51
Harper's Payroll Service - 2023.10.20	91.56
Law Office of Michael Sacco - 2023.10	4,982.00
Massachusetts State Board of Retirement - 3(8)(c) - Balance Pending Letters	15,985.98
Powers & Sullivan, LLC - 2022 Financial Audit	40,000.00
Ricoh USA, Inc. - Ink Replacement	86.39
Ricoh USA, Inc. - Lease Contract 2023.10	283.29
S.J. Services, Inc. - Office Cleaning - 2023.09	283.00
The Segal Company - 2022 GASB 67 & 68 Report	6,000.00
TASC - Admin Fees	1.00
Travinski, Britt - Reimbursement US Postal Service EXP Postage	57.70
W.B. Mason - Office Supplies - USB Drives	36.06
Total	100,272.57

### **Thomas Colpitts – 2022 Earnings Limitations**

Mr. Kostro reviewed the history with Mr. Colpitts and the 91A earnings limitations process. He noted that ERRS relies on the earnings amount provided by the former employer. Mr. Colpitts is disputing the amount that ERRS received and provided to PERAC. In subsequent conversations through to this past Friday, Mr. Kostro believes there is an earnings total for 2022 for Mr. Colpitts which is agreed upon by all involved. That amount is in the Board's motion. Ms. Blais asked to whom the request for earnings information is typically sent to in the units, and Mr. Kostro replied that it is the payroll or human resource office that usually provides this information. Ms. Blais



noted her concern over the process involving Mr. Colpitts and questioned how the ERRS staff would be able to interpret a collective bargaining agreement. Mr. Kostro concurred with Ms. Blais' comment. Mr. Malgeri said that the volume of emails involved must have made this a very time-consuming process and noted that this same thing happened last year with this community and member. Upon a motion by Vincent R. Malgeri, seconded by Tracy A. Blais, the Board voted 5-0; To notify PERAC that the 2022 salary for the position from which Thomas Colpitts retired is \$106,699.17.

### **Military Service Purchases**

Mr. Kostro reviewed for the Board the information in their packets from ERRS Counsel. He noted that this information calls into question whether ERRS can still process military service purchases. Upon a motion by Katherine E. Carleton, seconded by Tracy A. Blais, the Board voted 5-0; To place a moratorium on the processing and approval of military service purchases where the member (veteran) has not yet vested with ten years of membership service, independent of any military service, pending clarification from PERAC on the decision of the Division of Administrative Law Appeals in the matter of Neal Gouch v. the State Board of Retirement.

### **Chapter 32, Section 4(2)(b) Regulation – Implementation Questions**

Mr. Kostro noted that the Board had approved and PERAC has authorized a new supplemental regulation governing call fire and reserve police service. Among other things, Mr. Kostro said, this regulation requires a town to adopt a local option provision to permit the purchase of service beyond the five full years available under this section of Chapter 32. Mr. Kostro advised that he is receiving questions from members who are planning on going to their town meetings to seek this local option approval. The question that finance committees and select boards are asking, he said, is if there is a cost associated with this local option. Mr. Kostro noted that the Board included a provision in the supplemental regulation assessing the cost for any purchase of service beyond five full years to the communities that adopt this local option. Mr. Kostro asked the Board if it is their understanding that the answer would be yes, there is a cost associated with approving this local option and it will be assessed directly to the community that approves it. Mr. Kostro suggested that a way this cost could be assessed was through the valuation process, much like past early retirement incentives, or the Essex Tech assessment. The consensus was that this is what the Board intended with the approval of this supplemental regulation.

### **Revised Administrative Budget**

Mr. Kostro stated that Board members approached him after the September meeting and suggested that ERRS bring back a Board Secretary to take the meeting minutes. Based on this suggestion, Mr. Kostro presented to the Advisory Council the 2024 administrative budget with a Board Secretary included, at the old rate of \$250 per meeting. Mr. Malgeri said he supports hiring an outside minute-taker who will be appointed as the ERRS secretary. Mr. Malgeri said he is aware of how time-consuming the minutes can be, and the difficulties trying to meet everyone's expectations. Mr. Kostro understands how difficult it can be preparing minutes while at a busy reception desk that greets members and directs all incoming calls. Ms. Blais said town counsel

advised her that having less details in the minutes is better. Ms. Blais asked Mr. Collins what his position was regarding meeting minutes. Mr. Collins feels that it is fine to note the main key points discussed during each meeting, but during an evidentiary hearing you may want as much detail as possible noted. Mr. Kostro said every meeting is recorded, so if anyone wanted or needed additional information, they could request a copy of the recording of the meeting. Mr. Malgeri said that PERAC gives us guidance on how the minutes should be taken. The minutes should reflect what transpired at the meeting. Mr. Collins said the executive session minutes are more focused in case counsel wants a copy of the minutes to ensure the facts were accurate. He said he has rarely had an issue with open session minutes. Upon a motion by Vincent R. Malgeri, seconded by Katherine E. Carleton, the Board voted 5-0; To approve the revised draft 2024 administrative budget in the amount of \$1,162,384.

### **Revised Meeting Posting Procedures**

Mr. Kostro noted this item and the next several items grew out of the discussion at the Advisory Council meeting. Members of the Advisory Council suggested that ERRS explore ways to streamline operations in order to remove unnecessary work from the employees so that they could focus on more important matters. Mr. Kostro said there are no motions for the Board as the items are for discussion and future follow-up if Board members felt any of these suggestions were worth pursuing. The first one, Mr. Kostro said, is changing the process by which the Board posts its meeting notices. Mr. Kostro said that ERRS long ago adopted an alternative method of posting and need only post notices and agendas on its website. He noted that the website has a subscription service where anyone can receive the meeting postings electronically if they sign up. Mr. Malgeri said that he was aware that ERRS is permitted to do a lot less. He said if it is less work, saving time and no one is bothered by it, he thinks it is a great idea. Ms. Blais feels that we always want to have a culture where we continually seek to improve our operation to become more efficient. Mr. Kostro says he will revise the posting policy and bring it back to the Board as a motion to be voted upon.

### **Revised Salary Survey Procedures**

Mr. Kostro said that at the Advisory Council meeting there was a lot of discussion of the salary survey process. He said the consensus was that using the actual salary amounts through 9/30 was just as accurate as estimating a fourth quarter amount, and a lot more efficient. Ms. Carleton asked how ERRS will convey this change to the units. Mr. Kostro noted that this current year would not change, but that this change would be effective a year from now. He thought that provided opportunities to bring this notice up at the Advisory Council meetings next year, through the newsletter, or other communications that could be sent over the course of the next year. Mr. Merz added that he thought the Advisory Council wanted to see this change because it is so time-consuming for every unit. He feels it is better for everyone. Ms. Blais asked if we should discuss this change with our auditors. Mr. Kostro thought that was a good idea.

## **Revised Office Hours**

Mr. Kostro said the majority of the discussion at the Advisory Council meeting related to the lack of remote work options or flexible work schedules at ERRS, and that members thought this hindered the retention and recruitment of employees. Mr. Kostro said that he thought the issue of remote work was settled, but that in the past, ERRS employees had suggested an adjusted work schedule that would result in early release times on Fridays. Ms. Blais said she saw that Mr. Kostro reached out to the Collins Center and she wanted to know if he or the Board considered asking them for comparable data on other retirement boards for salaries, hours, benefits, etc. Ms. Blais feels that this information may be beneficial to the Board when issues arise, and also to keep ERRS competitive in the market. Mrs. Blais asked if Mr. Kostro does exit interviews when employees have left ERRS. Mr. Kostro said there are no formal exit interviews per se, but that he has discussions with employees when they are moving on about their tenure at ERRS and what their new position will provide. He noted that some employees were more forth-coming than others. Mr. Malgeri said that he thinks the Board should consider conducting exit interviews in the future. Mr. Malgeri said he is old school and does not support the proposed change in office hours. He said that the change in hours comes on the heels of significant salary increases that the Board just approved. Ms. Carleton said she is curious to see what other boards are doing. She wonders if it may provide us with more information as to why it is so hard to find candidates for the open positions. Ms. Carleton was surprised when members of the Advisory Council said they were also facing the same issues when trying to fill open positions.

## **Removing the Second Signature on Checks over \$10k**

Mr. Kostro said that this was one of those issues that seems like an effective control measure, and he noted that the auditors generally like it. Mr. Kostro said he did not think this was a major issue, but he noted that it is an extra step and, upon close inspection, really does not function as an effective control measure. He noted that ERRS takes other steps, such as the segregation of duties relative to financial transactions, which are more effective. Mr. Kostro referred to the Board to the check copies in the Board's packet where multiple ERRS units do not require a second signature on checks over \$10k. While he did not have a strong opinion on this issue, he felt it was a potential efficiency that the Board may consider. Ms. Yaskell said she has never had an issue with coming in to sign a check before, and she thinks the auditors would prefer the second signature, so she does not know how she feels about a change. Mr. Merz thinks it is an outdated security measure that banks used, but with positive pay you upload the checks. Mr. Merz said he could not manage having to secure two signatures on checks that are approved through the warrant process. Mr. Merz believes it is time wasted that does not provide any additional security. Mr. Malgeri said he is not a treasurer or an accountant, but he disagrees, he thinks it is good practice and good control. Mr. Merz asked if Andover requires two signatures on checks over \$10,000, and Mr. Malgeri said no. Mr. Kostro said that even if we moved in this direction, it would probably be a while before new checks were ordered so this can be revisited at that time.

## **Eliminate Notices of Deposit**

Mr. Kostro said providing paper notices of deposits through regular mail seems archaic and it is a major time-consuming project. He noted that retirees can find their withholding amounts and see any changes electronically via the employee/retiree portal. He thought that it may be time to move in this direction. Ms. Carleton said she is fully supportive, and she knows first-hand how burdensome the manual process is. Ms. Carleton suggested letting members know through the newsletter.

## **Request PERAC Opinion on Uncontested Elections**

Mr. Kostro said he did not see why ERRS needs to conduct an election when it is uncontested. It is not done with the elected members, and he thought it should be eliminated completely. Mr. Kostro noted that the Advisory Council agreed with this suggestion. He said the only question is who declares the seat filled under the ERRS governing statute, the Advisory Council, or the Board. Mr. Kostro said that ERRS could request PERAC's guidance in making this determination.

## **Hiring Process – Hiring Outside Consulting Service**

Mr. Kostro said he would combine the last items in order to save time. First, he said, some retirement boards use resources such as the Collins Center to support the hiring process. Ms. Blais said she usually does all the hiring in both Newbury and West Newbury, but when looking for a Fire Chief they contracted with an outside company, it streamlined the process, so much quicker and so much easier. They were able to conduct interviews and vetting.

## **Defining Employee Introductory Period**

Mr. Kostro said that the ERRS Employee Handbook has an introductory period for new employees but is very vague as to what that actually means. Mr. Kostro would like to discuss this with Counsel to find out what the intent is of this provision and what could be done to properly define it.

## **Office Protocols**

Mr. Kostro said that he would like to work with the Board on developing protocols for staff on how to manage difficult situations when they arise.

## **PRIM Vintage Year Fund**

Mr. Merz noted that the Board's packet contained information on the vintage year fund as a possible investment vehicle through PRIM. He felt that ERRS should explore this and that a representative from PRIM should attend the November meeting. Mr. Kostro indicated that he would contact PRIM.

## **Executive Session**

Upon a motion by Kevin A. Merz, seconded by Katherine E. Carleton, the Board voted by roll call as follows; Ms. Blais, Yes; Ms. Carleton, Yes; Mr. Malgeri, Yes; Mr. Merz, Yes; Ms. Yaskell, Yes; To move to executive session to conduct negotiations relative to increasing the salary of the Executive Director and to remain in executive session under purpose number five, and to act on the disability applications of Kim D'Orio-McGonnell and Brian Murphy.

## **Statement of the Chair**

Ms. Yaskell stated that the Board will be returning to open session upon the conclusion of the executive session only for the purpose of adjourning the meeting.

*The Board was in executive session from 10:08 a.m. to 11:26 a.m.*

*Kevin A. Merz left the meeting at 10:08 a.m.*

*Kevin A. Merz returned to the meeting at 10:29 a.m.*

*The following votes were taken while the Board was in executive session.*

## **ADR Application – Brian Murphy**

Upon a motion by Vincent R. Malgeri, seconded by Tracy A. Blais, the Board voted by roll call as follows; Ms. Blais, Yes; Ms. Carleton, Yes; Mr. Malgeri, Yes; Ms. Yaskell, Yes; To approve the accidental disability application of Brian Murphy, and to record this vote in the open session minutes of the meeting.


## **ADR Application – Kim DiOrio-McGonnell**

Upon a motion by Vincent R. Malgeri, seconded by Tracy A. Blais, the Board voted by roll call as follows; Ms. Blais, Yes; Ms. Carleton, Yes; Mr. Malgeri, Yes; Mr. Merz, Yes; Ms. Yaskell, Yes; To authorize ERRS Counsel to notify Kim DiOrio-McGonnell that she must pay any and all fees necessary to obtain the medical records requested in the Subpoena Duces Tecum dated August 7, 2023, and that no further action on her application for an accidental disability retirement benefit will proceed until such records are in the possession of the Essex Regional Retirement Board, and to record this vote in the open session minutes of the meeting.

## **Motion to Adjourn**

Upon a motion by Vincent R. Malgeri, seconded by Kevin A. Merz, the Board voted 5-0; To adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:26 a.m.

  
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Tracy A. Blais

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Katherine E. Carleton

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Vincent R. Malgeri

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kevin A. Merz

\_\_\_\_\_  
Susan J. Yaskell

The following materials were provided to the Board for items acted upon at the meeting:

Meeting Minutes  
New Enrollments  
Retirement Benefit Calculations  
Documents in Support of Service Purchases  
Documents Pertaining to Liability Requests  
Refund, Retiree Payroll, Employee Payroll and Cash Disbursement Warrants

In addition to the materials provided to the Board for items acted upon at the meeting, the following documents were also provided:

91A Termination & Appeal Letter – David Ford  
Agenda Posting Checklist  
Comcast Service Renewal Agreement  
Draft Advisory Council Minutes.10112023  
ERRS 2023 Salary Survey - Signed  
Executive Director's Schedule  
Financial Reports – PRIT Performance Summary - September 2023  
Financial Reports – PRIT Performance Update - Essex – September 2023  
PERAC Memo #21-2023 – Upcoming Hearings  
PERAC Retirement Board Comparative Analysis – 2022  
PRIM – ESG Committee Agenda and Appendices  
PRIM – Private Equity Vintage Year 2024 Notice to Systems