



## **FIREFIGHTERS' RETIREMENT SYSTEM**

3100 Brentwood Drive  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70809  
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### **MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES September 8, 2022**

A meeting of the Board of Trustees was held on September 8, 2022 at the Firefighters' Retirement System building in Baton Rouge. Chairman Perry Jeselink called the meeting to order at 8:30 am.

Mr. Jeselink gave the invocation and Mr. Romero led the pledge of allegiance.

Ms. Vicknair called the roll.

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Perry Jeselink  
Jerry Tarleton  
Stacy Birdwell  
Brian Fleming (designee of Commissioner Jay Dardenne)  
John Broussard (designee of State Treasurer John Schroder) \*arrived after roll call  
Louis Romero

#### **OTHERS PRESENT**

Steven Stockstill  
Layne McKinney  
Michael Becker  
Daniel Loper  
Ben Johnson  
Ashley Vicknair  
Caitlin Myers  
William Hall  
David Barnes  
Greg Curran  
Stephen Brouillette  
Robert Klausner  
Henry Olinde  
Joey David  
Kenneth Herbold  
Brennan LeBlanc  
Dennis Onderick  
Chris Kaufmann  
Dominick Bruno

## **MINUTES**

MOTION: Mr. Birdwell moved to approve the minutes of the board meeting held on August 11, 2022. Mr. Tarleton seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The discussion of this matter was concluded with no further action being needed or taken.

## **APPLICANTS**

- New Members

PROCEDURE: The FRS enrollment process, including the completion of the applicant forms, the physical examination, and the completion of any waivers of preexisting conditions, must be completed and all documents received by FRS within six months of the date of employment. If the FRS enrollment process is not completed within six months from the date of employment, the applicant will be a member eligible to begin vesting for regular benefits from the date of employment, but not eligible to begin vesting for disability benefits until the completion of the enrollment process. It is the statutory responsibility of the employer to insure that the enrollment process is timely completed or to provide FRS with notice of noncompliance by the applicant. If a member who has not completed the enrollment process becomes injured in the line of duty and applies for disability benefits, then the member must prove that the disabling condition was not preexisting. Each enrollment application is reviewed by staff to determine eligible job classification, date of hire, employer certification, and medical waiver information. Each application for membership was completed and submitted in accordance with all applicable state laws.

Ms. Myers presented the list of new member applicants for the month September 2022. (see attached Exhibit #1) She stated that all applications were in order.

MOTION: Mr. Tarleton moved to approve the new member applicants for the month of September 2022. Mr. Romero seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The discussion of this matter was concluded with no further action being needed or taken.

- Retirees

PROCEDURE: To retire, a member must furnish the retirement office with an application for retirement. When the application is received by the retirement office, the member's file is reviewed for proper documentation and to determine that the applicant meets the legal criteria necessary to receive payment in the form of a monthly retirement benefit. Calculations for retirement are performed by the benefit analyst and verified by the system's administrator. All retirement applications were submitted and benefits calculated in accordance with all applicable state laws.

Ms. Myers presented the list of new retirees for the month of September 2022. (see attached Exhibit #2) She added that there was a handout including two additional refunds to be added to the list. (see attached Exhibit #3) She stated that all applications were in order.

MOTION: Mr. Birdwell moved to approve the retiree applicants for the month of September 2022 including the additions. Mr. Romero seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The discussion of this matter was concluded with no further action being needed or taken.

- Survivor Applications

PROCEDURE: Survivors applying for benefits must furnish the retirement office with a notarized application for survivor benefits, a copy of the member's death certificate, a marriage licence (if beneficiary is a spouse), and the beneficiary's birth certificate. Once received, the deceased member's records are reviewed by staff to determine survivor benefit eligibility and to determine that the survivor's benefit calculation is completed per all applicable state laws and any merger agreements.

[NOTE: Individuals who retired under another retirement system where FRS is a third party administering payments as a result of a merger, and where the individual becomes deceased after the merger, the beneficiary or survivor is still required to submit all necessary documents; however, payment is made as set forth in the merger agreement (contract) affecting beneficiaries and survivors.] (R.S. 11:2256 and R.S. 11:2259)

**Kathleen Belgard-** Ms. Myers presented the application of Kathleen Belgard, surviving spouse of James Ray Belgard. She stated that the application was in order.

MOTION: Mr. Birdwell moved to approve the application of Kathleen Belgard. Mr. Romero seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Marilyn Brignac-** Ms. Myers presented the application of Marilyn Brignac, surviving spouse of Fabian Brignac. She stated that the application was in order.

MOTION: Mr. Birdwell moved to approve the application of Marilyn Brignac. Mr. Romero seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Robert J. Guidry, Sr.-** Ms. Myers presented the application of Robert J. Guidry, Sr., surviving spouse of Roberta Borne Guidry. She stated that the application was in order.

MOTION: Mr. Birdwell moved to approve the application of Robert J. Guidry, Sr. Mr. Romero seconded. The motion passed unanimously.



**Marilyn Sanders-** Ms. Myers presented the application of Marilyn Sanders, DROP beneficiary of Carter Sanders. She stated that the application was in order.

MOTION: Mr. Birdwell moved to approve the application of Marilyn Sanders. Mr. Romero seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**The Estate of Willis L. West.-** Ms. Myers presented the application of The Estate of Willis L. West. She stated that the application was in order.

MOTION: Mr. Birdwell moved to approve the application of The Estate of Willis L. West. Mr. Romero seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Suzette Wilson-** Ms. Myers presented the application of Suzette Wilson, surviving spouse of Don Wilson. She stated that the application was in order.

MOTION: Mr. Birdwell moved to approve the application of Suzette Wilson. Mr. Romero seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- Disability Applicants

PROCEDURE: To obtain disability benefits, a member must furnish the retirement office with an application for disability retirement. For the following applicant(s), the application for disability retirement, current job duties, and all medical records pertaining to the injury or illness were received and reviewed by the retirement office staff. An appointment was scheduled with a State Medical Disability Board doctor specializing in the area of the claimed disability. The doctor submitted a detailed report in laymen's terms of his findings based on the examination performed and the medical records reviewed. Prior to the meeting, the board of trustees was provided with the disability application, job description, State Medical Disability Board doctor's report and all medical records related to each applicant, for their review. (R.S. 11:215, 216, 218, & 2258)

[NOTE: By giving advance notice on its duly posted agenda, the board of trustees reserved the right to enter executive session pursuant to R.S. 42:17(A)(1) for discussion of any privacy protected physical or mental health information related to the disability applicants.]

██████████ Ms. Myers presented the disability application of ██████████ Mr. Myers stated that, based on the report by State Medical Disability Board doctor, the staff recommendation is for denial of the Application for Disability Retirement (Job-Related). Ms. Myers explained to the board that there was an additional handout that she received from the independent medical evaluation on ██████████

MOTION: Mr. Birdwell moved to enter executive session. Mr. Romero seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Mr. Birdwell moved to resume public session. Mr. Jeselink seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Mr. Birdwell moved to accept the staff recommendation to approve a Non Job-Related disability pending the board's further review of a possible Job-Related disability. Mr. Romero seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Stockstill recommended a suspension of the appeal process in case the decision of a Non Job-Related disability is confirmed after further review from the board. He said that would preserve [REDACTED] ability to appeal.

AMENDED MOTION: Mr. Birdwell amended his motion to accept the staff recommendation to approve a Non Job-Related disability pending the board's further review of a possible Job-Related disability and to suspend the appeal process relative thereto. Mr. Jeselink seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The discussion of this matter was concluded with no further action being needed or taken.

**FRS ORGANIZATION (AGENDA AMENDMENT)**

Mr. Stockstill explained an exigent situation and asked the board to amend the agenda to include the matter discussed in more detail below.

MOTION: Mr. Birdwell moved to amend the agenda to add the matter requested by the executive director. Mr. Tarleton seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Stockstill reminded the board that Phase I of the FRS reorganization was approved by the board in April of this year. He added that Phase I authorized a new executive director to be hired and a committee had been formed to search for a candidate. Mr. Stockstill said the committee had considered some candidates for referral to the board but none had currently been successfully recruited. In the alternative, he distributed a resume to the board of a possible candidate for the Assistant Director position. (see attached Exhibit #4) He further explained that this candidate had previously observed a couple FRS board meeting. He added that the candidate is familiar with the law of the system and state government. Mr. Stockstill then referenced the candidate's resume, highlighting that she is a CPA, currently employed with the Division of Administration, has been employed with the State Treasurer's office as well as the Department of Education and the Legislative Auditor's office. He continued explaining that she has an extensive background in state government interactivity. Mr. Stockstill explained that she makes an excellent fit for the Assistant Director position because of her knowledge and experience. He added that she met with the subcommittee yesterday to discuss the position and is very excited about the hiring opportunity. He then added that she will be able to join the FRS team in the middle of October this year, upon the



board's approval, if approved. He added that a motion would be necessary to authorize her hiring by FRS.

MOTION: Mr. Romero moved to authorize the committee to hire an Assistant Director at a salary to be negotiated by the committee, pursuant to the Phase I plan that was approved by the board in April of this year. Mr. Tarleton seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The discussion of this matter was concluded with no further action being needed or taken.

**FRS, ET AL v JOSEPH R. GRECO, ET AL**

*FRS, et al. v. Joseph R. Greco, et al.*, Suit No. 641387, 19<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court, East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana

[NOTE: By giving notice on its duly posted agenda, the board of trustees reserved its right to enter executive session pursuant to R.S. 42:17(A)(2) for discussion of strategy or negotiations with respect to actual litigation, and where an open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the litigation position of FRS in the judicial matter cited in Agenda Item II(2); all pertinent notifications had been provided.]

MOTION: Mr. Birdwell moved to enter executive session to discuss the item listed above. Mr. Romero seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Mr. Birdwell moved to resume public session. Mr. Tarleton seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The discussion of this matter was concluded with no further action being needed or taken.

**COMMITTEE REPORT - INVESTMENT COMMITTEE**

[NOTE: The Investment Committee met on September 7, 2022, at the FRS office in Baton Rouge at 1:00 p.m. discuss the following business set forth in its posted agenda- **(i)** The FRS monthly investment performance results for August 2022, **(ii)** Acadian Asset Management, **(iii)** FRS 2022 Asset Allocation Update and Review, and all items related to the foregoing items. The minutes of that meeting are embedded herein. Committee members present were Mr. Tarleton, chairman; Mr. Birdwell, Mr. Romero and Mr. Fleming. Also present were Perry Jeselink, Mayor David Amrhein, Steven Stockstill, Layne McKinney, Michael Becker, Daniel Loper, Ashley Vicknair, Ben Johnson, Caitlin Myers, William Hall, David Barnes, Brennan LeBlanc, Alana Perrin, Jim Klapman, Seth Weingram, and Rahm Thirukkonda.]

Mr. Tarleton gave the investment committee report. He explained that, since this month's meeting occurred unusually early in the month, the monthly Flash Report was not yet available, but Mr. Barnes gave a brief update regarding investment performance for the month.

- Acadian Asset Management

Mr. Tarleton explained to the board that the investment committee heard from Jim Klapman-Senior Vice President, Seth Weingram-Director, and Rahm Thirukkonda-Senior Investment Strategist, with Acadian Asset Management regarding Reflections on Emerging Markets. (see attached Exhibit #5) He explained that Mr. Weingram and Thirukkonda educated the committee regarding emerging market equities, where the market is now, and geopolitical risk. Mr. Tarleton explained that there was no action needed or taken following this educational item.

- FRS 2022 Asset Allocation

Mr. Tarleton invited Mr. Barnes to finish his presentation regarding the FRS Asset Allocation Update and Review, since time ran out during the investment committee meeting. Mr. Barnes' drew the boards attention to the FRS Asset Allocation Update and Review. (see attached Exhibit #6) He presented the board with data illustrating the impact and forecast of portfolio performance, so the board would be in a position to select from one of three asset allocation models. Mr. Barnes explained that there is no recommendation from NEPC at this time. The board requested Mr. Barnes to provide a profile of different core satellite approaches next month. Chairman Jeselink invited Mr. Becker to provide his thoughts. Mr. Becker recommended that the board wait until at least next month before taking any action and hear the additional information Mr. Barnes will provide.

The discussion of this matter was concluded with no action being needed or taken.

That concluded the Investment Committee report.

### **COMMITTEE REPORT - HR136 COLA STUDY COMMITTEE**

[NOTE: The HR136 COLA Study Committee met on September 7, 2022, at the FRS office in Baton Rouge at 3:00 p.m. to discuss the following business set forth in its posted agenda- (i) Discussion and action regarding alternative methods of granting Cost-of-Living Adjustments, and all related matters. The minutes of that meeting are embedded herein. Committee members present were Mr. Jeselink, chairman; Mr. Herbold, Mr. Demoruelle, Mr. Gallagher, Mayor Amrhein, Mr. Birdwell, Mr. Fleming, Representative Firment, Mr. Romero, and Mr. Tarleton. Also present were, Steven Stockstill, Layne McKinney, Ashley Vicknair, Caitlin Myers, William Hall, Ben Johnson, Joey David, Robert Klausner, Alana Perrin, Brennen LeBlanc, Stephen Brouillette, Tyler Brannan, Paul Smith, Dennie Boyt, and Daniel Haydel.]

- Study of Alternative Methods of Granting Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLAs)



Chairman Jeselink gave the HR 135 COLA Study Committee report. In doing so, he recognized Mr. Klasuner who presented the committee with material, including a handout on statistics related to COLAs (see attached Exhibit #7) and a handout showing alternative methods of granting COLAs (see attached Exhibit #8). Chairman Jeselink invited Mr. Klausner to provide commentary. Mr. Klausner explained that the committee was educated regarding the actuarial summary from Curran and Co. and looked at two different funding deposit models. He added that one model was adopted by Municipal Police Employees' Retirement System (MPERS) in the last session of the legislature and the other model was adopted by Sheriffs' Pension Fund. Mr. Klausner added that the committee also looked at a flat dollar bonus option. He added that the committee collectively questioned if no recommendation should be made because every option has an associated monetary cost, but concluded that the committee should, at least, recommend a series of options. Mr. Klausner also added that the committee looked at a COLA that was based on actuarial-gain funding. He informed the board that the COLA committee instructed him by unanimous vote to develop a draft report describing the two funding deposit models and the flat dollar model, also explaining the actuarial gain model and include the cost associated with all the models. Mr. Klasuner recommended adoption of the COLA Committee's motion to the full board.

MOTION: Mr. Birdwell moved to adopt the COLA Committee's recommendation to have Mr. Klausner draft a report describing the COLA models and the costs associated therewith. Mr. Tarleton seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The discussion of this matter was concluded with no further action being needed or taken.

That concluded the HR 136 COLA Study Committee report.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION: Mr. Jeselink moved to adjourn. Mr. Birdwell seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **FUTURE MEETINGS**

**FRS Investment Committee  
3100 Brentwood Drive  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70809  
Wednesday, October 12, 2022, at 01:00 pm**


**FRS HR136 COLA Study Committee  
3100 Brentwood Drive  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70809  
Wednesday, October 12, 2022, at 03:00 pm**



**FRS Board of Trustees  
3100 Brentwood Drive  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70809  
Thursday, October 13, 2022, at 08:30 am**

SUBMITTED BY:

APPROVED BY:

  
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Ashley Vicknair, FRS Board Secretary

  
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Perry Jeselink, FRS Chairman