

**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**December 12, 2024**

A meeting of the Board of Trustees was held on December 12, 2024, at the Firefighters' Retirement System building in Baton Rouge. Chairman Perry Jeselink called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

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

Ms. Vicknair called the roll. A quorum was present.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Perry Jeselink  
Stacy Birdwell  
Brian Fleming (designee of Commissioner Taylor Barras)  
Mayor Darnell Waites  
Louis Romero  
Mayor Chad Monceaux  
Chief Clarence Reese

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Barbara Goodson	David Barnes
Marella Houghton	Henry Olinde
Layne McKinney	Tyler Brannan
Michael Becker	Diana Kodanov
Ashley Vicknair	Terry Stuard
Ben Johnson	Terry Castille
Caitlin Myers	Chris Kaufmann
Daniel Loper	Chad Duffaut
William Hall	Tiffani Dorsa
Tara Petit	Don McLean
Parker Hoshman	

**MINUTES**

MOTION: Mr. Birdwell moved to approve the minutes of the board meeting held on November 14, 2024. Mr. Romero 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 ensure 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.

Caitlin Myers presented the list of new member applicants for the month of December 2024. (see attached Exhibit #1) She stated that all applications were in order.

MOTION: Mr. Birdwell moved to approve the new member applicants for the month of December 2024. 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 December 2024. (see attached Exhibit #2). She stated that all applications were in order.

MOTION: Mr. Birdwell moved to approve the retiree applicants for the month of December 2024. Mr. Romero seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

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

- 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 ██████████ Ms. Myers stated that, based on the report by State Medical Disability Board doctor, the staff recommendation is for approval of the Application for a Non-Job-Related Disability Retirement. (see attached Exhibit #3)

██████████ Ms. Myers presented the disability application of ██████████ Ms. Myers stated that, based on the report by State Medical Disability Board doctor, the staff recommendation is for approval of the Application for a Non-Job-Related Disability Retirement. (see attached Exhibit #4)

MOTION: Mr. Birdwell moved to accept the staff recommendation for approval of the Application for a Non-Job-Related Disability Retirement for both disability applicants. Mr. Romero seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

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

- Administrative Member Items

Ms. Myers explained to the board that there was an error with a retiree applicant's date of birth. She added that this error caused a difference in the members DROP account and benefit. Ms. Myers informed the board that the date of birth had been corrected before any funds left the system. There was no action needed, and this was informational only.

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

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

MOTION: Mr. Birdwell moved to approve the refund of contributions requests for the three additional members discussed in executive session. Mr. Romero seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

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

### **FY 2023-24 FRS AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

Tiffani Dorsa and Don McLean, Partners with EisnerAmper, addressed the board. Ms. Dorsa presented the board with a presentation covering the Audited Annual Financial Statement, Schedule of Compensation, Benefits, and other payments to FRS Chief Executive Officer. The presentation also covered the FRS Employer Pension Report, Statewide Agreed Upon Procedures, and Agreed Upon Procedures related to FRS-LB, FRS-LB#1, and FRS-GA. (see attached Exhibit #5). Ms. Dorsa noted

that there was an unmodified opinion, no significant discrepancies were reported, and no instances of noncompliance of laws, regulations, or contracts were reported.

MOTION: Mr. Birdwell moved to accept the presentation of all reports presented by EisnerAmper regarding the 2023-24 Audit. Mr. Romero seconded. The motion passed.

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

#### **FY 2024-25 FRS OPERATING BUDGET**

Mr. Johnson drew the board's attention to the FY 2024-25 Budget Amendment Request (see attached Exhibit #6) Mr. Johnson explained that there are five main amendments to the budget. He explained the two amendments under professional services reflect an increase in medical exams for disability applicants and an increase in contract services. He added that the two amendments under office were for an increase in postage expenses and outside printing expenses. He lastly added that the amendment under travel for staff members is due to an increase in member presentations. He explained that these expenses are being reclassified to the operating budget.

MOTION: Mr. Birdwell moved to accept the budget amendments as presented by Mr. Johnson. Mayor Waites seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

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

#### **ACTUARIAL VALUATION - FY 2023-24**

Tyler Brannan, Actuarial Analyst with Curran Actuarial, addressed the board. He drew the board's attention to a Summary of Changes in the FRS Annual Valuation for FY 2023-24. (see attached Exhibit #7) Mr. Brannan explained that there are no numerical changes in the valuation and that these were wording changes. He added that the wording changes were in the sections: Letter, General Comments, Comments on Actuarial Methods and Assumptions, Inflation Risk, Reinvestment Risk, and Funding Analysis and Recommendations.

MOTION: Mr. Birdwell moved to accept the Summary of Changes report regarding the Valuation report as presented by Mr. Brannan. Mr. Romero seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

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

#### **MONTHLY FLASH REPORT – NOVEMBER 2024**

Mr. Barnes, consultant with NEPC, presented the monthly flash report for the month of November 2024. (see attached Exhibit #8) The overall fund was up as follows: 2.6% for the month of November as compared to the allocation index of 2.5%, 15.9% for the calendar year to date as compared to the allocation index of 16.9%, 11.3% for the trailing 12 months as compared to the allocation index of 12.2%; and 4.5% for the trailing 3 years as compared to the allocation index of 4.1%.

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

**COMMITTEE REPORT - INVESTMENT COMMITTEE**

[NOTE: The Investment Committee met December 11, 2024, at the FRS office in Baton Rouge at 1:30 p.m. to discuss the following business set forth in its posted agenda- (i) FRS' monthly investment performance results for November 2024, (ii) FRS' global equity manager search update, (iii) Hightower Holding majority acquisition of NEPC update, (iv) Presentation by attorney Robert Klausner regarding overall fiduciary duty of trustees and duty to institutional investors relative to the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995, (v) Request for Qualifications (RFQ) – Securities Litigation Portfolio Monitoring Firm search recommendation, and all items related to the foregoing items. The minutes of that meeting are embedded herein. Committee members present were Mr. Birdwell stand in chairman; Mr. Romero, and Mr. Fleming. Also present were Mr Jeselink, Mayor Monceaux, Barbara Goodson, Marella Houghton, Michael Becker, Daniel Loper, Ashley Vicknair, William Hall, David Barnes, Robert Klausner, and Terry Castille.]

Mr. Birdwell provided the investment committee report. He explained that Mr. Barnes presented the committee with the flash report for November 2024, see above.

- FRS' Global Equity Manager Search Update

Mr. Birdwell explained that Mr. Barnes presented the committee with an update regarding the Global Equity Manager Search. (see attached Exhibit #9) He added that Mr. Barnes explained to the committee why he and the staff chose the 8 candidates and they will be meeting with each candidate next week and will bring a narrowed down list of candidates to the committee next month. There was no action needed.

- Hightower Holding majority acquisition of NEPC update

Mr. Birdwell explained that Mr. Becker updated the committee regarding the ownership change at NEPC. He added that the committee discussed this item and it resulting in multiple motions.

MOTION: Mr. Birdwell moved to accept the investment committee's recommendation to give the Executive Director the authority to sign the assignment of contract regarding the ownership change. Mr. Romero seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Mr. Birdwell moved to accept the investment committee's recommendation to give the Executive Director the authority to amend the current contract with NEPC to add disclosure language and extend the contract to December 31, 2025. Mr. Romero seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Mr. Birdwell moved to accept the investment committee's recommendation to begin the RFP process for a search for an investment consulting firm. Mr. Romero seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- Presentation by attorney Robert Klausner regarding overall fiduciary duty of Trustees and duty to institutional investors relative to the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995

Mr. Birdwell explained that attorney Robert Klausner educated the committee with a presentation regarding the overall fiduciary duty of trustees. (see attached Exhibit #10) There was no action needed.

- Request for Qualifications (RFQ) – Securities Litigation Portfolio Monitoring Firm search recommendation

Mr. Birdwell explained that Ms. Houghton and Mr. Loper presented to the committee a list of Securities Litigation Portfolio Monitoring Firms. (see attached Exhibit #11) She added that the firms are: Berntstein Litowitz Berger & Grossman, Cohen Milstein, Fishman Haygood/Kirby McInerney, Wolf Popper, and Kessler Topaz Meltzer & Check. Mr. Birdwell explained that the committee moved to recommend to the full board to accept the these firms.

MOTION: Mr. Birdwell moved to accept the investment committee's recommendation to select these Securities Litigation Portfolio Monitoring Firms. Mr. Romero seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

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

That concluded the Investment Committee report.

## COMMITTEE REPORT - POLICY, BYLAWS & PROCEDURE COMMITTEE

[NOTE: The Policy, Bylaws & Procedure Committee met on December 12, 2024, at the FRS office in Baton Rouge at 1:00 p.m. to discuss the following business set forth in its posted agenda- (I) Discussion and action regarding proposed Board Policy No. 12122024-A – FRS' Election Process for the Retiree Representative(s) on the Board of Trustees, (ii) Discussion and action regarding proposed Board Policy No. 12122024-B – Definition of Surviving Eligible Child, and all related matters. The minutes of that meeting are embedded herein. Committee members present were Mr. Romero, chairman; Mr. Birdwell, and Mayor Waites. Also present were Perry Jeselink, Brian Fleming, Mayor Monceaux, Barbara Goodson, Marella Houghton, Michael Becker, Ashley Vicknair, Caitlin Myers, Daniel Loper, William Hall and Terry Castille.]

Mr. Romero gave the FRS Policy, By-Laws & Procedure Committee report. He reported the following action items for consideration by the full board.

- Policy No. 12122024-A – FRS' Election Process for the Retiree Representative(s) on the Board of Trustees

FRS' Election Process for the Retiree Representative(s) on the Board of Trustees (see attached Exhibit #12) and Proposed Retiree Election Packet. (see attached Exhibit #13)

MOTION: The Policy, Bylaws & Procedure Committee voted to recommend that the FRS board adopt the Election Process for the Retiree Representative(s) on the Board of Trustees policy. Mr. Romero moved the committee's recommendation in the form of a motion. Mayor Waites seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Mr. Birdwell moved to approve the Proposed Retiree Election Packet. Mayor Monceaux seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- Policy No. 12122024-B – Definition of Surviving Eligible Child

Definition of Surviving Eligible Child. (see attached Exhibit #14)

MOTION: The Policy, Bylaws & Procedure Committee voted to recommend that the FRS board adopt the Definition of Surviving Eligible Child policy. Mr. Romero moved the committee's recommendation in the form of a motion. Mayor Waites seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

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

That concluded the Policy, By-Laws & Procedure Committee report.

#### **PTG ADMINISTRATION SOFTWARE UPDATE**

Caitlin Myers, FRS Benefits Manager, Ben Johnson, FRS accountant, and Ashley Vicknair, FRS Employer Liaison, provided the board with an update regarding the PTG software implementation progress. Ms. Myers explained to the board that the staff has continued to test the various processes in the new system and are on track to go live February 1, 2025. Ms. Vicknair added that for the go live to be able to take place, FRS will have to shut down the Employer Reporting Portal beginning December 17, 2024 – January 13, 2025, for all data to be transferred from the current system to the new PTG system. She further added that the employers will not be penalized, and we will notify the employers when the portal is available again.

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

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Chairman Jeselink explained that there may be an issue having a quorum for the January board meeting and suggested we change the date.

MOTION: Mayor Waites motioned to move the regular scheduled January 8-9, 2025, board meeting to January 15-16. Mayor Monceaux seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Houghton explained to the board that this meeting is FRS CFO, Layne McKinney's last board meeting. He will be retiring January 3, 2025. She stated that Mr. McKinney has been with FRS for the past 12 years and thanked him for his service.

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

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

**FUTURE MEETINGS**

**FRS Personnel Committee Meeting  
Wednesday, January 15, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.**

**FRS Policy, Bylaws & Procedure Committee Meeting  
Wednesday, January 15, 2025, at the later of 1:15 p.m.  
Or adjournment of the FRS Personnel Committee**

**FRS Investment Committee Meeting  
Wednesday, January 15, 2025, at the later of 1:30 p.m.  
or adjournment of the FRS Policy, Bylaws & Procedures Committee**

**Board of Trustees  
Thursday, January 16, 2025, at 8:30 a.m.**

**All meetings to be held at  
3100 Brentwood Dr. Baton Rouge, LA**

**SUBMITTED BY:**

**APPROVED BY:**

  
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Ashley Vicknair, FRS Board Secretary

  
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Perry Jeselink, FRS Chairman