

**HAMPDEN COUNTY REGIONAL
RETIREMENT BOARD**

**MINUTES OF MEETING
January 7, 2026**

The regular monthly meeting of the Hampden County Regional Retirement Board took place at the Agawam Corporate Center, 67 Hunt Street, Suite 202, Agawam, Massachusetts. The meeting was conducted in person at the Retirement Board office. The Chairman called the meeting to order at 10:10 A.M.

THOSE BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Karl J. Schmaelzle, Chairman/Treasurer present in office
Robert Taylor, Member – present in office
Patrick E. O’Neil, Member – present in office
Dawn M. Fonte, Member –present via zoom
Steven Castelli Member – present in office

BOARD STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

Atty. Edward Pikula -present in office
Karen Martin, Executive Director-present in office

1. ACCIDENTAL/ ORDINARY DISABILITY: Mr. O’Neil motioned to deny the moving forward of the accidental disability application. Mr. Taylor second the motion. After the board members reviewed the documents provided to them and asked Mr. Hitchborn, who was present via zoom the questions, they had the board voted on to proceed with the ordinary disability application moving forward to PERAC. Mr. Taylor motioned the approval to move forward, and Mr. Castelli seconded the motion, and the roll call vote was Ms. Fonte – Yes; Mr. Taylor – Yes; Mr. O’Neil – Yes; Mr. Castelli – Yes; and Chairman Schmaelzle – Yes. Motion approved 5-0.

2. ACCIDENTAL DISABILITY: Mr. Taylor motioned to move forward with sending the accidental disability for Mr. Martel to PERAC to initiate the start of the medical panel. Mr. O’Neil seconded the motion, and the roll call vote was Ms. Fonte – Yes; Mr. Taylor – Yes; Mr. O’Neil – Yes; Mr. Castelli – Yes; and Chairman Schmaelzle – Yes. Motion approved 5-0.

3. ACCIDENTAL DEATH: Mr. Castelli motioned the approval to move forward with sending the accidental death documentation for Mr. Moriarty to PERAC to get approval for the spouse to start receiving monthly funds. Mr. O’Neil seconded the motion, and the roll call vote was Ms. Fonte – Yes; Mr. Taylor – Yes; Mr. O’Neil – Yes; Mr. Castelli – Yes; and Chairman Schmaelzle – Yes. Motion approved 5-0.

4. ACCIDENTAL DEATH: Mr. Castelli motioned the approval to move forward with sending the accidental death documentation for Mr. Labrecque to PERAC to get approval for the spouse to start receiving monthly funds. Mr. Taylor seconded the motion, and the roll call vote was Ms. Fonte – Yes; Mr. Taylor – Yes; Mr. O’Neil – Yes; Mr. Castelli – Yes; and Chairman Schmaelzle – Yes. Motion approved 5-0.

5. WARRANTS: Mr. Taylor made a motion to reaffirm the warrants issued December 31, 2025. Mr. Castelli seconded the motion, and the roll call was Ms. Fonte – Yes; Mr. Taylor – Yes ;Mr. O’Neil – Yes; Mr. Castelli – Yes; and Chairman Schmaelzle – Yes. Motion approved 5-0.

#56 Salary 1-5	\$ 35,168.76
#57 Board Member's Compensation	\$ 2,833.33
#58 Refunds and Transfers to Other Systems	\$ 212,487.57
#59 Monthly Expenses	\$ 38,277.21
#60 A Monthly Retirement Allowances	\$ 4,996,988.25
#61 B 3(8)(c) Payments	\$ 22,877.53

6. BALANCES: The Board members reviewed copies of the checking & savings account statements from Peoples Bank and Berkshire Bank that were provided in their packets along with reconciled records for the checking account. The board was also notified by the director that the People Bank accounts have fully been closed out this month. Mr. O'Neil made a motion to approve the account balances for November 30, 2025. Mr. Taylor seconded the motion, and the roll call vote was Ms. Fonte - Yes; Mr. O'Neil – Yes; Mr. Castelli – Yes; Mr. Taylor – Yes and Chairman Schmaelzle - Yes. Motion approved 5-0.

BERKSHIRE BANK: Vote to accept the reconciled balances as of Nov 30, 2025

Money market ACH Account Bal as of Nov 30, 2025	\$ 803,965.15
Money market Account Bal as of Nov 30, 2025	\$ 4,635,649.35
Checking Account Bal as of Nov 30, 2025	\$ 1,570,323.71
PEOPLES BANK: Vote to accept the reconciled balances as of Nov 30, 2025	
Money market Account Bal as of Nov 30, 2025	\$ 54.11
Checking Account Bal as of Nov 30, 2025	\$ 0.01

7. TRANSFER: Mr. O'Neil made a motion to reaffirm the transfer amount for the warrants for, December 31, 2025. Mr. Castelli seconded the motion, and the roll call vote was Ms. Fonte - Yes; Mr. O'Neil – Yes; Mr. Castelli – Yes; Mr. Taylor – Yes and Chairman Schmaelzle - Yes. Motion approved 5-0.

A.	Needed for warrants:	\$ 5,308,632.65
B.	Transfer for warrants:	\$ 5,500,000.00
	From Berkshire M.M. to Berkshire Ckg	

8. NEW ALLOWANCES: Mr. O'Neil made a motion to reaffirm the new retirement Allowances paid on 12/31/2025. Mr. Castelli seconded the motion, and the roll call vote was Ms. Fonte – Yes; Mr. O'Neil – Yes; Mr. Castelli – Yes; Mr. Taylor – Yes and Chairman Schmaelzle – Yes; Motion approved 5-0.

NAME	TOWN	DATE OF RETIREMENT
Gates, Debora M.	Ludlow	10/3/2025
Pappas, Lenise A.	Russell	9/12/2025
Filiault, Tammy	Longmeadow	9/29/2025
Yacovone, Danell A.	East Longmeadow	10/17/2025
Herron, Gregory E.	HWRSD	10/10/2025
Santaniello, Michael B.	HWRSD	10/1/2025

9. APPLICATIONS FOR RETIREMENT: Mr. Castelli made a motion to approve the new retirement applications. Mr. O'Neil seconded the motion, and the roll call vote was Ms. Fonte – Yes; Mr. O'Neil – Yes; Mr. Castelli – Yes; Mr. Taylor – Yes and Chairman Schmaelzle – Yes; Motion approved 5-0.

Name	Unit	Date of Retirement	Group	Age	Service
Hill, Michael J.	East Longmeadow	1/9/2026	1	67-04	19-00
Salerno, Michele P.	Monson	1/5/2026	1	61-02	15-02
Daley, Timothy F.	East Longmeadow	12/20/2025	4	56-00	29-05
Braga, Tina M.	Ludlow	12/31/2025	1	60-06	23-11

10. **INVESTMENT TRANSACTIONS:** The board reviewed statements provided by the PRIT fund cash account and general allocation account as provided in the monthly packet each board member received prior to this meeting.

11. **PRIT FUND TRANSFER:** No transfer done.

12. **NOTICES OF INJURY:** Mr. Taylor made a motion to approve the Notices of Injury reports. Mr. O'Neil seconded the motion, and the roll call vote was Ms. Fonte – Yes; Mr. O'Neil – Yes; Mr. Castelli – Yes; Mr. Taylor – Yes and Chairman Schmaelzle – Yes; Motion approved 5-0.

Name	Unit	Department	Injury Date
Whitney, Michael	Ludlow	Police	12/22/2025
Goodchild, Timothy	Ludlow	Police	12/22/2025
Ryan, Daniel	Wilbraham	Police	12/5/2025
Stokowski, Jacob	Ludlow	Police	11/29/2025

13. **NEW MEMBERS:** Mr. Taylor made a motion to approve and file the new members. Mr. O'Neil seconded the motion, and the roll call vote was Ms. Fonte – Yes; Mr. O'Neil- Yes; Mr. Castelli – Yes; Mr. Taylor – Yes and Chairman Schmaelzle – Yes; Motion approved 5-0.

AGAWAM

Sana Bowen	1	12/1/2025
Yaddys Ruiz	1	11/17/2025
Kayla Mooney	1	12/8/2025
Yuliia Chokval	1	11/20/2025

BLANDFORD

Jordana Gonzalez Mora	1	11/17/2025
Clayton Lapointe	1	9/8/2025

EAST LONGMEADOW

Emily Constantino	1	12/1/2025
Lauren Makara	1	9/22/2025
William Fonsisca	1	11/7/2025
Dylan Hegarty	1	12/1/2025

Allison Merrick	1	11/20/2025
Alexis Thomas	1	11/25/2025

Adam Holbrook	1	11/17/2025
<u>GRANVILLE</u>		
Chad Marshall	1	12/8/2025
<u>HAMPDEN/WILBRAHAM</u>		
<u>Alexandria Harrington</u>	1	12/4/2025
Carolyn McClendon	1	11/18/2025
Carson Jumpe	1	9/8/2025
Cynthia Normandin	1	12/8/2025
Garrett Musa	1	12/8/2025
Amanda Edgar	1	12/16/2025
Gluseppe Degulietono	1	12/1/2025
Janessa Flechsig	1	12/1/2025
Sharon Williamson	1	12/11/2025
Juan Huertas	1	11/18/2025
<u>LONGMEADOW</u>		
Natalie Loranger	1	11/18/2025
Mishaal Ashraf	1	12/8/2025
Zachary Zarcone	4	12/8/2025
<u>LUDLOW</u>		
Nuno Costa	1	11/1/2025
Kyle Yang	1	12/15/2025
<u>Palmer</u>		
Micheal Mancini	1	12/15/2025
Brooke Senechal	1	12/1/2025
<u>PATHFINDER</u>		
Amanda Hebert	1	10/20/2025
Helena Richardson	1	11/7/2025
<u>SOUTHWICK/TOLLAND</u>		
Megan Yvon	1	12/22/2025
<u>WEST COMM</u>		
Nichole Martinelli	1	11/12/2025

14. **EXPENSE BREAKDOWN** – The Board reviewed and filed the expense breakdown.

15. **DIRECTORS REPORT** – The items reviewed by Ms. Martin for the month of December were: We have a new assistant executive director Mrs. Seymour. Along with that we are looking for someone to fill the First Assistant Administration position and have 8 interviews for that position this week. The office is working hard on the year ending. At this time, we are still missing a few affidavits that we are trying to obtain, we have reached out to the members that we had numbers on file for. Until we receive those affidavits we are holding their checks. Mrs. Seymour sent out all the retiree end-of-year statements last month. All towns should have received their appropriation letters.

16. **TRIAL BALANCE** – Mr. Castelli made a motion to approve the trial balance for October 31, 2025. Mr. O’Neil seconded the motion, and the roll call vote was Ms. Fonte – Yes; Mr. O’Neil- Yes; Mr. Castelli – Yes; Mr. Taylor – Yes and Chairman Schmaelzle – Yes. Motion approved 5-0.

17. **PERAC MEMOS** – The board reviewed the PERAC memos #29,30,31 and 32.

18. **THOMAS,MARY** – Town of Agawam/School. Board reviewing members request for one (1) free month of service credit for an approved unpaid leave of absence for period Sept 23, 2019- Dec 13, 2019 under provisions of M.G.L. c. 32 §4 (1)C. Mr. O’ Neil motioned to approve the request and Mr. Castelli seconded the motion, , and the roll call vote was Ms. Fonte – Yes; Mr. O’Neil- Yes; Mr. Castelli – Yes; Mr. Taylor – Yes and Chairman Schmaelzle – Yes. Motion approved 5-0.

19. **GALLANT, DIANE** - Town of East Long/School. Board to review members request for one (1) free month of service credit for an approved unpaid leave of absence for period Aug 29, 2022- Nov 3, 2022under provisions of M.G.L. c. 32 §4 (1)(c). Mr. O’ Neil motioned to approve the request and Mr. Castelli seconded the motion, , and the roll call vote was Ms. Fonte – Yes; Mr. O’Neil- Yes; Mr. Castelli – Yes; Mr. Taylor – Yes and Chairman Schmaelzle – Yes. Motion approved 5-0.

20. **HAMPDEN COUNTY RETIREMENT BOARD COMMENTS** – No new comments

21. **OLD BUSINESS** – No old business was discussed.

22 **NEW BUSINESS** – No new business was discussed.

23. **LEGAL UPDATE** – Attorney Pikula would like to add, application for disability retirement from J. Hichborn considered. Mr. Hichborn appeared by Zoom. On behalf of the Board, Mr. Hichborn was questioned by legal counsel and responded to members about the application, after being tabled the month before due to the absence of the employee. Counsel recommended there was insufficient information as to causation to show disability meets the legal standard for disability retirement under ADR, but causation is not a requirement for ODR. Further, the disability appears to result from bona fide personnel action and therefore may not be grounds for ADR benefits. The Board voted unanimously to deny the ADR application for retirement but allowed the process to continue as to the Ordinary Disability Retirement (ODR) . Legal counsel will prepare a memorandum with findings. The matter will be sent to PERAC for a regional medical panel consisting of three physicians to the member and certify that the incapacity is permanent and prevents the member from performing their job duties.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Taylor made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11: 07 A.M. Mr. O'Neil second the motion, and the roll call vote was Ms. Fonte – Yes; Mr. O'Neil – Yes; Mr. Castelli – Yes; Mr. Taylor - Yes; Chairman Schmaelzle – Yes. Motion approved 5-0.

Mr. E. Neil

Fonte

Mr. O'Neil

Mr. Castelli