

**COUNTY REGIONAL
RETIREMENT BOARD**

**MINUTES OF MEETING
June 10, 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 10:02 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 in office
Steven Castelli Member – present in office

BOARD STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

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

Also, in attendance was:
Barry Syniec-in office

1. **ACCIDENTAL DISABILITY-** Anthony McGrath/ Town of Agawam. The board voted to approve the Accidental Disability Benefits submitted by Anthony McGrath after the review of all 3 medical panels. Mr. Castelli motioned to approve the accidental disability benefits and Ms. Fonte 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.
2. **RETIREMENT APPLICATION/FORFEITURE-** BARRY SYNIEC/Town of Agawam /Police, Board to Vote to consider the application for superannuation and forfeiture of pension rights. Mr. Syniec originally appeared at the meeting held May 6, 2026 in response to a notice that the Board would hold a hearing to consider the forfeiture of his retirement under Chapter 32, Section 15 based on the information received from the Town of Agawam on the employers responses to his application for retirement benefits.

In summary, the records provided by the Town of Agawam in response to a subpoena showed the Town of Agawam terminated Syniec for "conduct unbecoming a police officer" and "commission of criminal conduct," specifically citing the off-duty incident as the basis for termination.

The subpoena of the records was prompted by an email dated March 24, 2026 when the Town’s personnel director indicated he was “unable to check either yes or no” on the application form the Town was required to fill out as to whether the incidents involving his job performance was work related that showed up in a google search were work related because the Town could not locate his personnel file. The email indicated that he had access to Internal Affairs records which he said were public records and available on request showing criminal charges for off duty conduct.

In a follow up email dated April 1, 2026 in response to the subpoena records were produced showing that the Officer Syniec was subject to a number of hearings based on his behavior and that he was terminated for conduct unbecoming an officer.

According to the email the personnel director stated: As to question #6: "Has this employee been officially investigated for or charge with misappropriation of funds from his/her employer or convicted of any crime related to his/her office or position?"

Upon review of Mr. Syniec's Personnel File the Town responds that as to *part one*, "misappropriation of funds," **no**. As to the second prong of the question, was he convicted of any crime related to his/her office or position, the Town responds in the **affirmative**. This is based on his Superior Court convictions and a related Unemployment Appeal decision noting that he was terminated and convicted of criminal charges as well as Human Resources' internal documentation.

Our files indicate that he was terminated from the Agawam Police Department on June 20, 2006. He appealed through the grievance process pursuant to the governing CBA and c. 31, sec. 41. The termination was upheld on July 25,

2006. His Attorney, Alan Black, wrote a letter to the Town on May 23, 2007 noting that he was terminated. The termination was the result of an off-duty domestic incident where he was ultimately arrested and indicted in Hampden Superior Court (Docket No. 06910). He was found guilty of Assault and Battery, sentenced to 2 and one-half years, six months direct, with the balance suspended for 5 years (probation). Guilty of Malicious Damage Under \$250 (Probation 5 yrs.), and Threat to Commit a Crime (Probation 5 yrs.). All counts concurrent. The Notice of Decision to Terminate issued by former Mayor Cohen noted he was terminated for "Conduct Unbecoming a Police Officer" and "Commission of Criminal Conduct."

In summary, the factual basis stated in the records were that Barry Syniec was involved in an incident at the residence of Officer Danielle Petrangelo, with whom he had a relationship. Officers responded to a call of a female screaming for help at 26 Colonial Avenue. Officer Petrangelo reported that Barry Syniec, intoxicated, entered her house, threatened to kill her and himself, and engaged in a physical altercation, including throwing her across the porch and smashing her cell phone. Officers observed debris at the scene, and Officer Petrangelo provided evidence of ongoing threatening communications. Barry Syniec was arrested at the scene and charged with domestic assault and battery, stalking, threat to commit a crime, malicious destruction of personal property over \$250, and disorderly conduct. An emergency 209A order was issued, and an internal investigation was initiated.

At the May 6 meeting, Mr. Syniec appeared and indicated he would not testify about the incident, but he provided a binder containing records he wanted the Board to Review.

The records provided in the binder were voluminous and even more so when considered with the records provided by the Town in response to the subpoena. The Board voted on May 6 to continue the hearing to next month, to provide additional time to review the records and provide Mr. Syniec an opportunity to be heard as to the issue of forfeiture. At that time, Mr. Syniec agreed to the continuance and indicated that he researched case law that indicated, because the incident was off duty, not in uniform, and not involving police equipment, it was not job related. The Board requested a memorandum from its legal counsel in follow up to the legal memorandum originally provided on the issue and include consideration of the documents provided by Mr. Syniec in the binder. At the June 10 continued hearing Mr. Syniec indicated he did not want to go into Executive Session for the hearing so the Board remained in Open Session. The hearing included discussion of the Board's discretion to determine whether the evidence provided in the records supported a finding of the conviction being work related or not. The legal

mémorandums included provided to the Board and findings of fact to consider for a vote on whether the conviction was work related, as indicated in the April 1 email response from the Town Personnel Director, or not work related as stated by Mr. Syniec After discussion at the June 10 hearing, a motion was made to vote that the evidence did not support forfeiture by Mr. Taylor and seconded by Mr. Castelli a roll call vote was held and the votes were as follows: and the roll call vote was Ms. Fonte – No; Mr. O’Neil – Yes; Mr. Castelli – Yes; Mr. Taylor – No and Chairman Schmaelzle –No; Motion was denied 2-3.

The motion did not carry. The Board discussed whether PERAC would remand the matter back without approving the retirement based on forfeiture. A second motion was made by Mr. Taylor and Mr. Castelli seconded to vote in favor of forfeiting Barry Syniec’s pension benefit and refunding his contributions. The motion carried 3-2 with votes as follows: the roll call vote was Ms. Fonte – Yes; Mr. O’Neil – No; Mr. Castelli – No ; Mr. Taylor – Yes and Chairman Schmaelzle – Yes; Motion approved. The hearing was concluded and the binder supplied by Mr. Syniec was returned to him.

3. MINUTES: Mr. O’Neil motioned and Mr. Castelli seconded the motion to approve the minutes from the April 1, 2026, Board Meeting, 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.

4. WARRANTS: Mr. O’Neil made a motion to reaffirm the warrants issued May 29, 2026. 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.

#21 Salary 1-4		\$34,141.50
#22 Board Member's Compensation		\$2,833.33
#23 Refunds and Transfers to Other Systems		\$161,098.82
#24 Monthly Expenses		\$ 30,661.18
#25 A Monthly Retirement Allowances		\$ 4,988,148.04
#25 B 3(8)(c) Payments		\$1,523,449.62

5. BALANCES: The Board members reviewed copies of the checking & savings account statements from Beacon Bank that were provided in their packets. Mr. Castelli made a motion to approve the account balances for May 31, 2026. Ms. Fonte 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.

Money market ACH Account Bal as of May 31, 2026	\$ 1,577,806.90
Money market Account Bal as of May 31, 2026	\$ 1,928,772.55
Checking Account Bal as of May 31, 2026	\$ 1,807,404.61

6. TRANSFER: Mr. O’Neil made a motion to reaffirm the transfer amount for the warrants for May 31, 2026. 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.

A.	Needed for warrants:	\$ 6,740,332.49
B.	Transfer for warrants:	\$ 6,300,000.00
	From Beacon M.M. to Beacon Ckg	

7. NEW ALLOWANCES: Mr. Castelli made a motion to reaffirm the new retirement Allowances paid on 05/31/2026. Ms. Fonte 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.

<u>NAME</u>	<u>TOWN</u>	<u>DATE OF RETIREMENT</u>
Cheney, Jane	Longmeadow	3/19/2026
Sedelow, Tricia E.	Southwick	4/3/2026

8. APPLICATIONS FOR RETIREMENT: Mr. Taylor made a motion to approve the new retirement applications. 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.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Date of Retirement</u>	<u>Group</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Service</u>
McCandlish, Sheila	East Long	6/30/2026	1	67-11	20-11
Budrow, Maureen L.	Hamp/Wilb	7/10/2026	1	62-07	34-06
Hummel, Lauren M.	Hamp/Wilb	6/30/2026	1	65-03	20-05
Jones, Bonnie L.	STRSD	6/30/2026	1	67-11	23-00
Penland, Apryl L.	STRSD	6/30/2026	1	55-02	20-00
St. Martin, Bernard J.	Blandford	6/1/2026	1	74-05	23-11
Mayou, Jerome D.	Ludlow	6/30/2026	4	58-10	34-01
Brown, Sylvie T.	Agawam	7/28/2026	1	64-00	22-00
Whitney, Michael P.	Ludlow	7/7/2026	4	55-03	29-02
Lynch, Pamela J.	Agawam	8/31/2026	1	65-01	32-00
Messenger, Sharon A.	STRSD	8/6/2026	1	62-00	15-07
Roy, Cindy E.	Ludlow	8/13/2026	1	60-00	16-07
Mahoney, Debra A.	Agawam	6/24/2026	1	63-03	21-00

9. 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.

10. PRIT FUND TRANSFER: This month there was a transfer of \$4,000,000.00 . Mr. Taylor made a motion to approve the transfer amount for the warrants for May 31, 2026. 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.

11. NOTICES OF INJURY: Mr. O’Neil made a motion to approve the Notices of Injury reports. 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.

Nichole O'Donnell	Wilbraham	Fire	5/19/2026
Lionel Duquette	Wilbraham	Highway Dept	5/27/2026

12. NEW MEMBERS: Mr. Castelli 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.

Unit/Name	Group	Start Date
<u>AGAWAM</u>		
Christina Decoteau	1	1/5/2026
Dominic Byron	1	1/5/2026
Cole Buffum	1	1/5/2026
Danielle Sullivan	1	1/5/2026
Ashley Roman	1	1/5/2026
Ryan Markham	1	1/5/2026
Derek Vargas	1	1/1/2026
Janiza Silva	1	4/13/2026
<u>CHESTER</u>		
Kimberly Fox	1	3/1/2026
<u>EAST LONGMEADOW</u>		
Daniel Gerani	1	1/5/2026
Chloe Prerez	1	1/1/2026
Kelly Maurice	1	3/11/2026
John Vittori	1	3/23/2026
Max Langford	1	4/6/2026
Joel Maldonado	1	4/27/2026
Sam Cangemi	1	4/6/2026
Vincent Guiel	1	4/8/2026
Sydney Pettazzono	1	4/8/2026
Marguis Walker	1	4/13/2026
Symone Green	1	4/14/2026
Katherine Adams	1	4/15/2026

GRANVILLE

Ian Brown	4	4/1/2026
James Signorelli	1	5/11/2026

HAMPDEN/WILBRAHAM

Monica Tronsky	1	1/1/2026
Peyton Borbone	1	3/23/2026

HOLLAND

Shawn Kelley	1	1/1/2026
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LONGMEADOW

Matthew Gregoire	1	4/7/2026
Emma Landry	1	2/24/2026
Sarap Daysal	1	3/18/2026
Dachanel Bennett	1	1/31/2026
Sarah Morgan	1	1/31/2026
Emma Landry	1	2/28/2026

LUDLOW

Frank Kulig	1	3/16/2026
Megan Charter	1	1/26/2026
Michelle Hill	1	3/30/2026
Glynis Lofton	1	3/16/2026
Taylor Deprey-Willis	1	3/2/2026
Steffanie Accorsi	1	4/22/2026
Larry Brace	1	1/21/2026
Thomas Godek	1	3/23/2026

MONSON

Jagger Forkey	1	3/23/2026
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MONTGOMERY

Alexander Touchette	1	1/2/2026
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PALMER

Eric Rock	1	1/31/2026
Micheal Spera	1	1/31/2026
Colin McDiarmid	1	3/31/2026
Laurie Gaudet	1	3/31/2026
Brendan Jenkins	1	3/16/2026
Bethany English	4	4/21/2026
Harshikaben Patel	1	4/27/2026
Jeffrey Lussier	1	4/27/2026

PATHFINDER REGIONAL

Angela Gula	1	3/5/2026
Jasmine Chumack Courchesne	1	4/6/2026
Erica Aloisio	1	4/13/2026
Katrina Minott	1	5/11/2026

SOUTHWICK

Carlos Ribiero	1	2/23/2026
Antonio Soares	1	4/9/2026
Ethan Thompson	1	4/9/2026

TOLLAND

Steven Leonard	1	4/1/2026
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SOUTHWICK- TOLLAND

Amanda Barnes	1	1/16/2026
Brandon North	1	3/11/2026
Audrey Herbert	1	3/26/2026
Lynnise Stephen	1	4/7/2026
Morgan Levangie	1	3/20/2026

WALES

Jordan Hamer Maurial	1	1/1/2026
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WESTCOMM

Chase Hunsaker	1	3/23/2026
Jessica Cabral	1	4/16/2026
Tyler Afton	1	4/6/2026
Julia Maldonado	1	4/30/2026
Shania Mateo	1	4/6/2026
Christopher Patrone	1	4/6/2026

WILBRAHAM

Micheal Adams	1	3/26/2026
Melissa Reyes	1	3/22/2026
Emily Brochu	1	3/23/2026
Nicholas Cervizzi	4	2/25/2026
Shawn Cruzado	4	3/23/2026
John Monty	4	3/23/2026

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

14. **DIRECTORS REPORT** – The items reviewed by Ms. Martin for the month of June were: That Mr. Hayden is no longer employed with the Hampden County Retirement board. We will be starting the hiring process again to fulfill his position. In the meantime Mrs. Seymour will be completing anything that Mr. Hayden was supposed to complete. The staff all did attend the spring MACRS. Lastly we are still waiting on SEGAL to finish the GASBY.

15. **TRIAL BALANCE** – Mr. O'Neil made a motion to table to May 2026 trial balance until the July 8, 2026 board meeting. 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.

16. **WORKERS COMP INSURANCE**- Mr. Taylor made a motion to approve the new rates for MIIA worker's comp and liability insurance. Mr. Castelli second 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 memo #16, #17 and #18.

18. **HAMPDEN COUNTY RETIREMENT BOARD COMMENTS** – Mr. Schmaelzle would like to let everyone know that MACRS is working on learning how to use their website since the president has stepped down. Once they learn how to use their website they will upload the materials from MACRS on the website for us all to access.

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

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

21. **LEGAL UPDATE** – Attorney Pikula would like to thank Karen for completing the appeal on Landis and Stienhart.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Taylor a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:00 A.M. Ms. Fonte 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.

Karl Schmaelzle
Mr. Taylor
Ms. Fonte
Mr. Castelli