

POLICE and FIRE RETIREMENT SYSTEM  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS  
MICHIGAN

MINUTES  
SPECIAL MEETING  
October 18, 2023 - 8:05 a.m.  
233 Fulton Street East

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Michael Hawkins. Other members present: Vice Chairman Justin Ewald, Mr. Philip Balkema, Ms. Donijo DeJonge, and Mr. William Fabiano. Absent: Mr. Phillip Mitchell and Mr. Nathaniel Moody.

Also present: Ms. Peggy Korzen, Executive Director of the Retirement System and Mr. Thomas Michaud, Legal Advisor to the Board.

Ms. DeJonge made the motion to excuse the absences of Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Moody. The motion was seconded by Mr. Balkema and carried.

There were no public comments regarding agenda items.

This special meeting was called to review disability retirement requests from Ms. Katie Hefner, Mr. Curtis Creighton, and Mr. Alex Hanes and to discuss the disability retiree re-examination for Mr. John Kurkowski.

The Executive Director presented requests for duty disability retirement from Police Officers Katie Hefner and Curtis Creighton. Chairman Hawkins stated his desire for Trustees to discuss and review the process of determining whether or not the injuries claimed have arisen out of and in the course of actual performance of duty as employees to ensure that Trustees have all facts regarding the cases to lead them to the right conclusion. He did not feel that could be accomplished at this meeting as he did not want to rush through this process. He asked Trustees to table the requests until the November 2023 Board meeting. Mr. Michaud agreed that Trustees need to take the proper time to review all of the facts surrounding the cases and make the decisions that are in the best interest of the plan and the members. Trustees agreed to table the requests until the November 2023 Board meeting.

The Executive Director presented a request for a non-duty disability retirement from Fire Lieutenant Alex Hanes. Mr. Fabiano made the motion to approve the non-duty disability retirement for Fire Lieutenant Alex Hanes, based on the medical findings and reports that were presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Balkema and carried.

Ms. Korzen noted that the system was in the process of having Mr. John Kurkowski re-examined through IME-PC. The first doctor completed a medical records review and stated his opinion that Mr. Kurkowski could go back to work. Ms. Korzen requested that the doctor see Mr. Kurkowski, but the doctor never responded. IME-PC scheduled an IME for Mr. Kurkowski with a different doctor, but due to a misunderstanding on Mr. Kurkowski's part, he did not attend the IME. Since the plan had already incurred the fee for the IME, Ms. Korzen had the doctor conduct a medical records review and the doctor stated his opinion that Mr. Kurkowski can go back to work. This report, however, was one of the reports that was held up by IME-PC all summer. Because the system is no longer working with IME-PC, Ms. Korzen contacted the doctor directly to explain our situation and ask if he would conduct an IME of Mr. Kurkowski; he responded that he would need to speak with IME-PC. IME-PC told him that they would like the IME to be run through them or for him not to perform the IME. She asked Trustees how they would like to proceed. Ms. Korzen stated that Mr. Kurkowski turns 54 next month and will reach minimum service

retirement age next year. Mr. Michaud stated that generally boards will decide if the process can be completed in a year, then to proceed with the re-examination. The process would include the re-examination, the Board review process, and any appeal process. Ms. Korzen stated that the process would begin with an IME conducted by one of the Board's physicians, if the Board's physician states Mr. Kurkowski can go back to work, then Mr. Kurkowski would need to see a physician of his choosing. If Mr. Kurkowski's physician states that he cannot go back to work, then a neutral physician would need to be consulted to obtain a majority opinion. Chairman Hawkins stated that if the plan is within one-year of Mr. Kurkowski turning age 55, then Trustees would be within their rights to not pursue this re-examination process due to the length of the process. Ms. DeJonge asked if this has ever happened before; Ms. Korzen said no; however, Trustees have waived retirees from the process in the past due to them being close to reaching their minimum service retirement age. Following Trustee discussion, Mr. Balkema made the motion to waive the re-examination process for Mr. John Kurkowski. The motion was seconded by Mr. Fabiano and carried. Ms. DeJonge voted no.

There were no public comments on items not on the agenda.

The meeting adjourned at 8:17 a.m.

Peggy Korzen  
Executive Director  
Police & Fire Retirement System