

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors
Retired Employees of Alameda County
Monday, January 12, 2026, 9:30 A.M.
Zoom Video Conferencing Board Meeting**

Alicia Baptista, President of the Board, called the meeting to order at 9:31 AM

Roll Call: Alicia Baptista, Dawn Stevenson, Paul Reeves, Connie Land, Liz Koppenhaver, Kathy Foster, and Cynthia Baron were present. Mike Fara, ACERA Communications Manager, Pete Albert, ACRE President, and Charo Panesi-Guerra, REAC Member and Administrative Assistant were also present.

Minutes: The Minutes from the December 8, 2025, REAC Board meeting were reviewed. Connie Land moved that the December 8, 2025, REAC Board Minutes be approved as submitted. Cynthia Baron seconded the motion, and the motion was approved with one abstention.

Announcements & Communications: Alicia heard from a member who was getting married and he wanted to know how to proceed with getting information about adding his new spouse to the system, when does his spouse become eligible for benefits, what benefits will she receive, and host of other questions related to those issues. She referred him to ACERA.

Alicia received another message from a member who wanted to be able to contact retired co-workers that he has lost touch with. She informed him that this is not something we can do. She explained that REAC does not have access to that information and that ACERA does not share that information. Alicia suggested that he might want to attend one of our luncheons and he might meet people he worked with in the past.

Alicia also heard from another member who saw the name of a former coworker on the list of deceased members, and he wanted to know the cause of death. She informed him that it is not information that we receive.

The final message Alicia received was a message from a member who wanted to know if we could add information to the REAC News regarding those members who wanted to attend our luncheons but needed transportation. Unfortunately, Alicia was not able to contact the member to tell her that we are not able to do that.

Alicia provided a brief update on Creative Circle. Creative Circle is moving to a new accounting system and has run into some problems. The new system, WorkDay, was supposed to start the first of this year. However, as of today, January 12th, they are unable to get it to work properly. They have been approving timesheets on their own, and once they get WorkDay to work, they will then send us the documents we need for our records.

Alicia also mentioned that we have been assigned a new Creative Circle manager for our contracts. His name is Kevin Lee. He works out of San Francisco and Oakland. Alicia will be discussing all the issues we have been having when she meets with him later this week.

ACERA: Mike Fara, ACERA Communications Manager, provided his report. He mentioned that there was no Retirees Committee meeting this January, and we already talked about the December one at our December meeting. However he did have some new items to report. The IRS Form 1099-R have been mailed out to members. They should be receiving those by the end of the month, depending on the US mail service. Members can also get their electronic IRS Form 1099-R if they log into Member Direct. ACERA sent out an email about that last week.

Mike reported on the results of the ACERA Board election. Kathy Foster was elected to the Alternate Seat 8 on the Board. There was only one candidate for the Safety seats, Ross Clippinger. The Alternate Safety Seat 7, will remain vacant for the next three years. They did have a competitive race for the General Member Seat 3 to replace Trustee Wood. Scott Ford was elected to fill that seat.

Cynthia mentioned that Marsha asked her to bring up a question regarding changes to the fitness program through Kaiser. She was told, by her gym, that they've reduced the number of times you can go. She wanted to know why that was done and whether it was all gyms or just hers. Mike mentioned that he received an email this morning, from Trustee Basgal via Carlos Barrios, ACERA Assistant Chief Executive Officer, regarding a different gym. That gym reduced the number of classes offered, and the number of individuals who could use the facility by half. Mario, one of Mike's colleagues, will reach out to Kaiser for clarification. Did Kaiser make a change or just some of the gyms?

Pete asked if Mike knew when ACERA was going to make a decision on when the Retirees Committee will be held next? Mike mentioned that he had not yet heard of any definite date for the committee meeting. He thought it would be moved to the Board Meeting day. Pete also asked if Via Benefits would be on the agenda, and would it be an Action Item or an Information Item. Mike said there has been some discussion regarding the possibility of offering Via Benefits individual plans to early retirees but did not know if it would be on the next agenda. When it is on the agenda, it will probably be an Information Item. Mike also reported that the Board might consider increasing the Medicare Via Benefits Monthly Medical Allowance (MMA) to bring it up to the level of the rest of the MMAs to make the administration of that program much simpler.

Treasurer's Report: Liz presented REAC's December 2025 Treasurer's Reports. Starting with the December 2025 Treasurer's Report. The beginning Interest Privilege Account balance was \$37,336.35. Total receipts were \$7,930.88. There was no unusual income amounts received. Total disbursements were \$9,508.62. There were a few unusual disbursements. The first was the D&O Insurance, which was \$1,760.00, and there were two late Red Arrow invoices, one for October 2025 for \$1,732.48 and a second one for November 2025 for \$1,731.58. There are also new charges associated with website management which we did not have to pay for in the past.

Cynthia asked if we usually have a deficit? Liz reported that there are months when we do have a deficit. Liz also mentioned that, prior to our planning for the CRCEA Fall Conference we hosted, we were planning to create a budget subcommittee to review our expenses. Cynthia also asked if the D&O payment was an annual payment? Liz said it was an annual payment. Alicia reported that the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has increased the mileage reimbursement rate for 2026. The rate has increased to .72 and a half cents.

The ending Interest Privilege Account balance was \$35,758.61. Liz also reported that the Free Checking account we used for the CRCEA Conference we hosted, was closed and the funds, \$16,608.98, were moved to a new 3-year CD at 3.50% interest. Cynthia asked if we were going to move the funds from the CD which is maturing in February 2026, to a new CD. Liz said that was the current thinking. Alicia thought it might be more effective if we had a CD maturing at evenly spaced time frames. We could, for example, create two CDs using the funds from the one maturing next month, to create one longer CD with a higher interest rate, and one shorter CD with a lower interest rate, to have funds available for emergencies. Cynthia thought that if you had an emergency, and needed funds quickly, the penalty for cashing out a CD early, might be less than the interest you would lose for cashing it out early. She suggested that we should probably check with 1st United Credit Union to see what their penalty is for cashing out a CD early. The discussion will be carried over to the February Board meeting. Connie moved that the December 2025 Treasurer's Report be approved as submitted. Kathy seconded the motion, and the motion was approved.

Alicia reported that there is ongoing confusion with Creative Circle having the correct invoices paid and paid on time. Gina is always \$362.50 monthly. Beth's invoices change up and down. Now that they have two different people making payments, it can get really confusing. Until those issues are resolved, every time Liz pays an invoice to Creative Circle, she is also going to send a message or copy someone at Creative Circle informing them that we have just made a payment for this person in this amount for this invoice.

Liz presented REAC's 4th Quarter - October to December Quarterly Treasurer's Report. The 4th Quarter report also included the Year-to-Date totals. Total receipts for the 4th Quarter were \$26,510.51 and total Year-to-Date receipts for 2025 were \$102,617.07. Total Year-to-Date receipts from membership were \$89,213.55, and total Year-to-Date receipts from the 1st United Credit Union advertisement were \$6,000.00 The Year-to-Date total from the Spring Luncheon/Annual Membership was \$3,690.00 and the Year-to-Date total for both luncheons were \$6,395.00. The \$1,000.00 line item labeled "Other Income", is a reimbursement into our regular checking account from the Free Checking conference account. The down payment to the Conference Hotel had to be made before we created the free checking account.

Disbursements for the 4th Quarter were \$25,244.99, which included \$3,464.06 for Red Arrow Printing, \$1,816.80 for Newsletter postage, \$7,094.72 for the Fall Luncheon, \$1,760.00 for D&O Insurance, \$2,550.00 for D&O Stipends, and \$2,550.00 for Membership and Clerical Support-Select Staffing. Year-to-Date disbursements for 2025 totaled \$94,377.78, which included \$22,049.79 for Red Arrow Printing, \$7,120.06 for Newsletter postage, \$8,811.35 for the Spring Luncheon/Membership meeting, \$7,719.72 for the Fall Luncheon, \$16,290.64 for Membership and Clerical Support Select Staffing, \$1,760.00 for

D&O Insurance, and \$10,200.00 for D&O Stipends. Liz explained that she did not pay for our 2025 Audit and Legal Services until this month. It was due in December and was \$2,625.00. Connie moved that the 4th Quarter Quarterly Report be approved as submitted. Kathy seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

Liz presented the 2026 Proposed Budget. The total proposed 2026 income is \$102,884.00, which included \$90,000.00 from membership, \$6,000.00 from 1st United Credit Union advertisement, \$3,750.00 from the Spring Luncheon/Membership meeting, and \$3,125.00 from the Fall Luncheon. Total proposed expenses were \$111,765.00 and included \$27,000.00 for Red Arrow Printing for the Newsletter, \$7,500.00 postage for the Newsletter, \$5,000.00 for Newsletter layout (Creative Circle), \$5,000.00 for Web Hosting (Creative Circle - Beth Hansel), \$8,900.00 for the Spring Luncheon/Membership meeting, \$7,800.00 for the Fall Luncheon, \$10,200.00 for D&O Stipends, \$20,000.00 for Membership and Clerical Support Select Staffing, and \$3,000.00 Audit and Legal Services.

Alicia asked if the line item, Postage Other, was the amount we spent on returned Newsletters. Connie reported that we did indeed spend \$736.79 on returned Newsletters and other postage in 2025. The \$800.00 budget amount in the Proposed Budget is a slight increase over the amount spent in 2025. When a Newsletter cannot be delivered, for a wide variety of reasons, we have to pay the Post Office for returning that Newsletter to us. Charo explained that there were a number of issues which caused the Newsletter to be returned, and there were several options we might use to reduce the number of returns or the number we have to pay for. Liz volunteered to chair a Budget Committee which will look at ways to reduce costs, increase income, improve both the returned Newsletter and returned mail process, and consider a process for moving funds, when necessary, to supplement budget item short falls, and look at ways to be more efficient. Members of the Budget Committee include Liz, Cynthia, and Connie.

Cynthia moved that the 2026 REAC Budget be approved, with the caveat that the new budget committee will be looking at ways to reduce expenses. Dawn seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

CRCEA: Connie provided her CRCEA report. The December 17, 2025, Executive Meeting was cancelled. The next monthly meeting is scheduled for January 21, 2026. The remaining conference scheduled under the existing structure is: Spring 2026: Santa Barbara County – April 19-22, 2026, Marriott-Buellton, Ca. She is expecting to receive registration information soon. Connie is planning to attend.

SACRS (State Association of County Retirement Systems): Cynthia reported that she will be attending a SACRS Planning Committee meeting this afternoon and she will be reporting on that meeting at our February Board meeting. The SACRS Spring Conference is scheduled for May 12th to May 15th at the Everline Resort & Spa in Olympic Valley, Lake Tahoe. Cynthia plans on attending.

Retirement Board: There was no new information to report.

Investment Committee: Kathy provided a brief report on the January 7, 2026, Investment Committee. She reported that the Committee did take action on a New Public Equity Structure. The Committee looked at three different options, and selected Option 2, which introduces a single active global equity

allocation (Core) which decreases passive management and increases active management/. The simplified structure has a higher expected return than the current structure. It will be sent to the Retirement Board for approval at their Thursday meeting.

Health Care (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention): Alicia reported that there has been a huge increase in the number of flu cases. It's been reported that the increase is the largest increase in 20 years. Everyone should consider getting their shots if they have not done so already.

Activities: Alicia reminded the Board that our Spring Luncheon and Annual Membership Meeting is less than two months away. It will take place on March 9, 2026. Alicia also mentioned that Kathy will be joining the Luncheon Committee. They will be meeting after today's meeting. They have a few issues to discuss, and we still need to identify and invite a Keynote speaker.

Membership and Recruitment: Charo reported that as of December 31, 2025, we welcomed 24 new members. The membership now stands at 3,733 members, which is a nice increase from the previous month. Kathy suggested that we ask Mike Fara, ACERA Communications Manager, what ACERA may be doing for recruitment. Alicia mentioned that there is still a concern regarding what or how new retirees are given information about joining REAC. Kathy will talk with both Mike Fara and Carlos Barrios, ACERA Assistant Chief Executive Officer, about our concerns. Alicia mentioned that we will create a new Membership and Recruitment Committee next month.

Administrative Staff: There was no new information to report.

REAC Website: Alicia reported that she and Charo met with Beth Hansel, our REAC Website Manager, to discuss a few issues. The first item was a concern over an Unsubscribe button. If you use it by mistake, not only do you not get a paper copy, you also do not get an electronic copy. We asked her to add one additional step to that process. If they use the unsubscribe button, there will be another question, which asks Do you really want to unsubscribe? Beth will look into adding that for us.

We also asked her to look at ways to make it easier for members who have unsubscribed accidentally to resubscribe. Lastly, there is another button on the website, which asks you if you want to register for a Newsletter, just click here. Unfortunately, that button does not go anywhere, and we receive no notice the someone clicked that button. We asked her to look at making that button work just like the Contact Us button.

Beth mentioned that she has limited time, so she is not available for meetings during the week. Alicia also asked her about pictures which were to be added to the website. A number of pictures we thought were on the website were not. Also, a number of pictures which were on the website were cropped in such a way that the full picture was not readily available. However, if you clicked on the picture, the full picture was available. Beth will look into the issues for us. Dawn will monitor the website periodically and report any findings for updates.

REAC News: The REAC News will include a short article, My Penny Earned, in the REAC News. It will also include information on the March 9, 2026, REAC's Annual Membership Meeting and Spring luncheon, and the election of Board members.

Other Reports: There was no additional information to report.

Old Business: Paul reported on the REAC 2026 Goals and Objectives. The 2026 Goals and Objectives included conducting a budget review and analysis, looking at improving the release timing of both the electronic and the paper copy of the Newsletter, conducting a membership and recruitment drive, review of the website processes, and revising the reimbursement form.

Good of the Order: There was no additional information to report.

Meeting adjourned at 10:56 AM.

Respectfully submitted by Paul Reeves, Board Secretary

Next Board Meeting: Monday, February 9, 2026, 9:30 am
Zoom Video Conferencing Board Meeting