

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors  
Retired Employees of Alameda County  
Monday, March 9, 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, Liz Koppenhaver, Kathy Foster, Cynthia Baron, Linda Slater, and Marsha Rice were present. Mike Fara, ACERA Communications Manager, Charo Panesi-Guerra, REAC Member and Administrative Assistant, Nancy Reilly, member, Jon Orellana, REAC Director Emeritus, and Rosalie Masuda, former REAC Board Member, were also present.

**Minutes:** The Minutes from the February 9, 2026, REAC Board meeting were reviewed. Linda moved to approve the February 9, 2026, REAC Board Minutes as submitted. Marsha seconded the motion, and the motion was approved.

**Announcements & Communications:** Alicia provided an update on Creative Circle. Last month, Alicia reported that we were assigned a new Creative Circle Contract Manager, Kevin Lee. Unfortunately, Kevin contacted her to let her know that he decided to quit, and is no longer working for Creative Circle. He sent her a very nice message saying that if there's anything he can do for us in the future, just let him know. Alicia also received a message from Creative Circle, apologizing for the way the rollout of their new system has gone. Many invoices are coming in almost a month late and they have been experiencing other technical problems.

Alicia heard from a member who was concerned that our last newsletter listed our deceased retirees before listing the new members. She felt it would be more welcoming to members to list new members ahead of deceased retirees. Alicia thanked her for her suggestion and explained that the placement of those sections is a function of available space. She also explained that our new members are listed on page one of the newsletter. Our newsletter also lists all new retirees, and not all new retirees are REAC members.

**ACERA:** Mike Fara, ACERA Communications Manager, was able to provide his report via zoom. He was not able to physically attend today's Board meeting. The Retirees Committee meeting took place on February 19, 2026. There was one Action Item and several Information Items.

The Action item was a renewal of the Annual Supplemental Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA). ACERA staff recommended that the Retiree Committee recommend to the Board of Retirement that it adopt the Supplemental Cost of Living Adjustment increase for Tier I members who retired on or before April 1, 1981, and Tier 2 members who retired on or before April 1, 2012, effective with the April 1, 2026, monthly retirement allowance. This COLA is non-vested and is funded by the Supplemental Retiree Benefit Reserve (SRBR). The Annual Supplemental COLA provides a benefit that maintains retiree purchasing power at no less than 85% of the member's original benefit. Therefore, those retirees

who have an accumulated loss of purchasing power of 15% due to inflation are eligible to receive this benefit.

The first Information Item was the 2026 Cost of Living Adjustment. The annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) calculation resulted in a change of 3.04%. Effective April 1, 2026, Tier 1 and Tier 3 members, will receive a 3% COLA and Tier 2 and Tier 4 members will receive a 2% COLA. In accordance with Government Code Sections 31870, Tiers 2 and 4, can receive a maximum of 2.0% and Tiers 1 and 3, can receive a maximum COLA of 3.0%.

The second Information Item was the 2026 Annual Retirees Committee Work Plan Review. The work plan was essentially the same as last year's work plan, with two additional items. The first additional item was a discussion to possibly increase the Monthly Medical Allowance (MMA) for Medicare eligible retirees in individual VIA benefits plans. The second additional item was a discussion to possibly offer early retirees the ability to enroll in VIA benefits plans if they live in our group plan service areas. Both items will be Action Items at the April meeting.

The third Information Item was a discussion regarding ACERA's annual Health Care Planning meeting. ACERA staff hosts an annual Health Care Planning meeting with Trustees, ACRE and REAC Board Members, ACERA's Benefits Consultants, and the County's Benefits Management, team. The meeting will be held on March 18<sup>th</sup> and will be held virtually.

The fourth Information Item was an update on the 1099-R forms provided to all ACERA payees. The 1099-R is used by ACERA to report pension and distributions paid to retirees, beneficiaries, and terminated members receiving refunds. ACERA utilized a third party vendor to print and mail all 1099-Rs.

To enhance the security of member's data, Social Security Numbers were truncated on all 1099-Rs to display only the last 4 digits versus the entire number.

The fifth Information Item was a report on ACERA's 2025 Wellness Email Campaign performance and insights into their plans for 2026. ACERA's Wellness Email Campaign utilized the online marketing automation tool Mailchimp, to distribute timed wellness messages and content provided by our insurance carriers to approximately 7,600 retirees, representing 67% of our retiree population. Notably, ACERA's wellness campaign metrics surpassed 3 out of 4 peer benchmarks.

**Treasurer's Report:** Liz presented REAC's February 2026 Treasurer's Report. The beginning Interest Privilege Account balance was \$31,219.68. Total receipts were \$9,994.71. No unusual income amounts were received. Total disbursements were \$6,079.74. There were no Newsletter Layout charges in January or February 2026. There was a question regarding the See's Candies line item. Alicia explained that Line Item is a benefit the Board of Directors authorized every year, which allows REAC members to purchase See's candies at a 10% discount. The Board has to purchase 20 See's gift cards, and the \$425.00, reflected on the See's Candies line item, is the amount REAC has to pay in order for our members to be able to purchase discounted See's Candies. Surplus/Deficit for the month February 2026 was \$3,914.97. The ending balance of the Privilege Account was \$35,134.65.

Kathy moved to approve the February 2026 Treasurer's report. Linda seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

**CRCEA:** Marsha provided the CRCEA report. The February 2026, CRCEA Executive meeting, was held on February 18, 2026. CRCEA provided a letter of support for AB 601, which addresses Sonoma County Association of Retired Employees' efforts to be allowed to create a COLA system. Sonoma County retirees do not receive a COLA. As a result, their spending power has diminished over the years, making life more difficult for those retirees. They have been working on this issue for several years, and hopefully the bill will be approved.

Marsha provided CRCEA's Technology Committee report. Currently there have two websites, the CRCEA website, which is CRCEA.org, and the conference registration website, which is called <https://crcea.wildapricot.org>. A review is currently underway to identify the steps needed to facilitate a merger of the two websites.

The conference website launched, for online registration for the conference and for the hotel registration, on February 15, 2026. The payment is by debit or credit card. Two key dates to remember are the March 19<sup>th</sup> deadline for Marriott Hotel registration for reduced group rate of \$189.00 plus tax, and April 10<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for conference registration, registration via the CRCEA website. The conference registration fee is \$125.00. Connie will be attending the conference.

**SACRS (State Association of County Retirement Systems):** Cynthia gave a brief SACRS update. SACRS is still providing training for board members, as well as for other nonprofits. Their 2026 Spring Conference will be held from May 12 – 15, 2026, at the Everline Resort & Spa, Lake Tahoe, Olympic Valley, CA. The committee met last week. They are still securing their speakers and those individuals will be announced soon. Cynthia will attend the conference,

**Retirement Board:** No new information to report.

**Investment Committee:** No new information to report.

**Health Care (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention):** Linda provided her Health care report. One of the big issues in California is the rise in measles. It not an epidemic yet, but they believe it's headed that way. The highest measles concentration is in the northern California counties, and the CDC attributes that increase to more and more people not getting their vaccinations.

A member asked about changes to our 2026 health care coverage. She mentioned that dental care is part of health care, and she wanted to know if the changes in Delta Dental coverage took that into consideration. She was told that no changes have been made yet, and that Alicia will be one of the individuals attending the Annual Health Care Planning Meeting where those items will be discussed.

Several members expressed concern that many of their long time dentists are leaving the network because of low reimbursement levels. While that is certainly one of the reasons dentists leave the network but that is not the only reason. Alicia will be asking Delta Dental to attend our next luncheon so that we can discuss our issues of concern.

**Activities:** Alicia reported that close to 100 individuals will be coming to today's luncheon. During the lunch, there will be a guest speaker from United Seniors of Oakland and Alameda County.

**Membership and Recruitment:** Charo reported that as of February 28, 2026, the membership stands at 3,719 which is a slight decrease from the previous month.

**Administrative Staff:** There was no new information to report.

**REAC Website:** Alicia reported that the pictures from our last luncheon have now been added to our website. She encouraged everyone to visit the website and take a look.

**REAC News:** The Newsletter will include information about the COLAs as well as the Annual Health Care Planning Meeting.

**Other Reports:** There was no additional information to report.

**Old Business:** There was no additional information to report.

**New Business:** Budget Committee. While it appears that REAC is doing very well financially, the reality is that we are spending more each month than we take in, and that is not sustainable. If you look at REAC's 2026 budget, we are projecting a short fall of around \$8,000.00. With that in mind, the Board created a budget committee to look at both our expenses and our income to identify areas which might be changed or eliminated to reduce our operating costs. Liz volunteered to be the Chair of the Budget Committee, and both Cynthia and Connie volunteered to work with her on the Budget Committee.

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

Meeting adjourned at 10:51 AM.

Respectfully submitted by Paul Reeves, REAC Board Secretary

**Next Board Meeting: Monday, April 13, 2026, 9:30 am**  
**Zoom Video Conferencing**