

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors  
Retired Employees of Alameda County  
Monday August 8, 2022, 9:30 A.M.**

**Zoom Video Conferencing Board Meeting**

Alicia Baptista, President of the Board, called the meeting to order at 9:30 A.M.

**Roll Call:** Alicia Baptista, Renaye Johnson, Paul Reeves, Suman Sharma, Connie Land, Linda Slater, Liz Koppenhaver, and Dawn Stevenson were present. Mike Fara, ACERA Representative, Charo Panesi-Guerra, REAC Member and Administrative Assistant, Pete Albert, ACRE Board President, and Cynthia Baron, REAC Member, were also present.

**Minutes:** Minutes of the July 11, 2022 REAC Board meeting were reviewed. Connie moved that the July 11, 2022 REAC Board Minutes be approved as submitted. Linda seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

**Announcements & Communications:** Alicia reported that she received a letter from David Nelson, ACERA's Chief Executive Officer, asking REAC to include in the REAC Newsletter, information regarding the upcoming Board of Retirement elections which will take place from November 16, 2022 through December 21, 2022. Alicia will add that information in her President's Message portion of the Newsletter.

Alicia also reported that she spoke with Dave, from Red Arrow Printing, regarding the use of a more environmentally friendly paper for printing our REAC Newsletter. He still has a supply of the glossy paper, and once that supply is exhausted, he will begin using the domestic environmentally friendly paper. He anticipates beginning to use the new paper in November 2022.

Lastly, she also spoke with Dave regarding the delay in publishing the last Newsletter. Dave mentioned that they had some equipment failures which delayed their process. As long as we get our final approved copy to him by the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month, he should be able to send out the Newsletter timely.

Paul mentioned that he received three communications from REAC members, who were originally supportive of having a fall luncheon, but were now expressing concern because of the recent Monkeypox news. He explained the process REAC was using to decide whether or not to host a luncheon. He also explained that anyone who wanted to attend the REAC Fall Luncheon would have to inform REAC, no later than Friday, September 2, 2022, that they wished to attend, and they would have to include a check in the amount of \$10.00 per person made out to REAC.

Paul also reported that he received a message from Betty Tse, ACERA's Chief Investment Officer. Betty was planning on attending today's meeting, but unfortunately would not be able to attend. Either she, or a member of her staff, will attend our September 12, 2022 Board meeting.

Lastly, Paul reported that REAC received a request for a copy of the Video Recording which is made during each Board meeting. After some discussion, it was decided to not make that available since the Board Meeting Minutes are already included in each Newsletter.

Liz informed the Board that she is not going to seek re-election to the Eighth Member seat on the Board of Retirement. She also reported that Beth Rogers, who was previously on the Board of Retirement, will be running for her Eighth Member seat. She also mentioned that Cynthia Baron was going to run for Nancy Reilly's Alternate Eighth Member seat since Nancy has also decided to not seek re-election. She was very pleased that Cynthia was going to seek election to the Board of Retirement. She felt Cynthia would be excellent on the Board and that she supported Cynthia's decision to run.

Paul asked Liz if she was also going to step down from the REAC Board. Liz said that she is currently undecided. She has other obligations which can make continuing on the REAC Board full time somewhat difficult, but she will see how things move forward, and make a decision later.

Liz reported that she received an email from a member who wanted to know if the Board of Retirement was considering an increase to the benefits which Retirees receive in their dental plans. She was pleased to inform the member that it looks like the Board of Retirement will approve an increase in dental benefits for Plan Year 2023.

***Board of Retirement 2022 Election:*** Cynthia Baron requested some time to speak to the REAC Board of Directors regarding her decision to seek election to the Alternate Eighth Member seat on the Board of Retirement, and to ask for the Board's endorsement.

Cynthia began by giving the Board a short overview of her previous employment. She worked for Alameda County for almost 40 years, 20 years at Social Services, and almost 20 years at Personnel & Labor Relations. After she retired, she continued to work as a consultant for several Bay Area cities in their Human Resources and Labor Relations departments. As a retiree she thinks it is critical to protect our retirement benefits and to expand them when possible. She understands how much work is required to be on the Board of Retirement and she is committed to spending the time and doing whatever it takes to support retirees now and in the future.

Paul asked Cynthia what she thought would be the most difficult learning challenge she would face in taking the position on the Board. She felt that the most challenging aspect on the Board would be the financial aspects as they relate to the payment of benefits, and to payments for our health plans. She is aware of the Supplemental Retiree Benefits Reserve (SRBR) and what that pays for, but feels she will need a great deal more knowledge in order to make informed decisions. She also needs to be educated regarding the wide variety of investments ACERA makes, the logic behind them, and how they are managed.

Linda was very pleased that Cynthia has decided to run for election and also pleased that she took the time to attend our Board meeting and to also tell us a little about her history. She was also pleased that Cynthia was not taking the position lightly and that she recognized the amount of work required.

Renaye was also very pleased that Cynthia was running for election. Renaye explained that she had worked with Cynthia for a number of years in Social Services, and found her to be an excellent manager; a person you could count on, a person who researched information and always did her homework. She highly recommended Cynthia.

Pete reminded Cynthia that both ACRE and REAC work together when positions need to be taken by the ACERA Board relating to retiree benefits and that both ACRE and REAC have related their positions to the Board through both Liz and Nancy.

Liz added that Cynthia is known throughout the County for the quality of work, for the great decisions she makes and for deciding to run for office. Cynthia is already reaching out to other Board of Retirement Members, to both ACRE and REAC, and is clearly demonstrating the work ethic needed for someone who sits on the Board.

Connie also mentioned how pleased she was that Cynthia was running for office. Cynthia has worked with the Board of Supervisors, the heads of many county departments and agencies, and would therefore represent retirees well.

Pete mentioned that the nominating process starts in late August and that the filing deadline was at the end of September. Applicants will need the signatures of 25 retirees on a petition who support their decision to run. Cynthia mentioned that the county recommended that applicants get more than the 25; probably 30 to 35 signatures would be sufficient.

With a lot of Retirees being remote, and with COVID-19 issues, getting actual signatures does present a problem. Cynthia mentioned that once applicants get their packets, they will know what ACERA will require and what they will accept for signatures.

Cynthia thanked the Board for giving her an opportunity to speak with the Board and she hoped the Board would consider endorsing her.

**Treasurer's Report:** Suman presented the July 2022 Treasurer's Report. Receipts included \$7,712.00 from membership dues, \$500.00 from the 1<sup>st</sup> United Credit Union advertisement, and \$2.23 in checking account interest for a total of \$8,214.23. Disbursements totaled \$5,047.33. Stipends were \$850.00 and the Red Arrow Newsletter printing costs were \$1,790.80. Red Arrow is still behind in invoicing for June and July 2022. Suman has sent them additional reminders. The ending checkbook balance was \$92,892.75 and total assets were \$223,422.92. Linda moved that the Treasurer's Report for July 2022 be approved as submitted. Connie seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

Suman also mentioned that our regular accountant, because of ill health, will no longer be able to perform our Annual Financial reviews. Suman will now be working with an accountant named Mark Strosberg and he will begin next week.

**ACERA:** Mike reported on the August 3, 2022 Retirees Committee Meeting. There were 4 Action Items and 1 Information Item. The first Action Item was a discussion and possible motion to recommend that the Board of Retirement approve enhancements to the PPO dental plan for Plan Year 2023. Staff recommended that the Retirees Committee recommend to the Board of Retirement a motion to approve including the diagnostic and preventive services waiver, so that it does not count against the annual maximum, saving retirees approximately \$350 which can then be used for other dental services. Staff also recommended increasing the annual benefit maximum from \$1,000 to \$1,300 for the Premier and Non-Contracted providers. The Retirees Committee voted to approve the ACERA staff recommendations.

The second Action Item was a discussion and possible motion to recommend that the Board of Retirement continue dental plan contributions for Plan Year 2023. ACERA currently provides a contribution to cover the single retiree premium for retirees with ten or more years of ACERA service, service connected disability recipients, or grandfathered as of January 31, 2014 non-service connected disability recipients.

Staff recommended that the Retirees Committee recommend to the Board of Retirement a motion to continue the dental plan contributions for Plan Year 2023, which provides a monthly subsidy equal to the single-party dental plan coverage premium of \$51.24, an increase of 16.1% over the current rate for the PPO plan and \$22.18 for the DeltaCare USA plan for retirees who are receiving ACERA allowances with ten or more years of ACERA service, are service connected disability retirees, or are non-service connected disability retirees as of January 31, 2014. This is a non-vested benefit funded by contributions from the ACERA employers to the 401(h) account. After contributions are made in accordance with the County Employees Retirement Law, ACERA treats an equal amount of Supplemental Retiree Benefit Reserve (SRBR) assets as employer contributions for pensions. The Retirees Committee voted to approve the ACERA staff recommendation.

The third Action Item was a discussion and possible motion to recommend that the Board of Retirement approve enhancements to the vision plans for Plan Year 2023. Staff recommended that the Retirees Committee recommend to the Board of Retirement a motion to approve adding UV coating and polycarbonate lenses and increasing the frame allowance. Those enhancements will result in a 16.6% premium increase over the current rate. The Retirees Committee voted to approve the ACERA staff recommendation.

The fourth Action Item was a discussion and possible motion to recommend that the Board of Retirement continue vision plan contributions for Plan Year 2023. ACERA currently provides a contribution to cover the single retiree premium for retirees with ten or more years of ACERA service, service connected disability recipients, or grandfathered as of January 31, 2014 non-service connected disability recipients.

Staff recommended that the Retirees Committee recommend to the Board of Retirement a motion to continue the vision plan contributions for Plan Year 2023, which provides a monthly subsidy equal to the single-party vision plan coverage premium of \$4.63, an increase of 16.6% over the current rate, for retirees who are receiving ACERA allowances with ten or more years of ACERA service, are service connected disability retirees, or are non-service connected disability retirees as of January 31, 2014. This is a non-vested benefit funded by contribution from the ACERA employers to the 401(h) account. After contributions are made in accordance with the County Employees Retirement Law, ACERA treats an equal amount of Supplemental Retiree Benefit Reserve assets as employer contributions for pensions. The Retirees Committee voted to approve the ACERA staff recommendation.

The Information Item was a discussion concerning new Deferred Compensation administrator, Empower. Empower mailed forms to people asking them to update their beneficiaries. Unfortunately, people who received those forms knew nothing about them, so they assumed it was a scam. They contacted ACERA, who also knew nothing about the forms. ACERA told those who called that it was probably a scam, and to not complete the documents. Deferred Comp has since been told that they may have to send out the forms again, since many of the people who received the forms, probably tossed them out.

Mike reported that there was no discussion on increasing the Monthly Medical Allowance (MMA). He thinks that discussion will take place during the September Committee meeting. He also mentioned that Open Enrollment is coming up and will be held in the month of November. He also reported that ACERA will host their annual Health Fair on Thursday, October 27, 2022. It will be a virtual Health Fair and it will start at 10:00 am.

**CRCEA (California Retired County Employees Association):** Connie began by reporting that there was no new information regarding the CRCEA Fall Conference. The Conference will be held October 9, 2022 thru October 12, 2022 in Sacramento. The Conference will be held at the Embassy Suites Sacramento-Riverfront Promenade. There is no information regarding registration, agenda, outside activities, or speakers. The conference will be held live. The deadline for hotel reservations is September 1, 2022.

Connie reported that the CalPERS Lawsuit website, <https://calpersclassactionlawsuit.com>, was updated on July 18, 2022. Unfortunately, it was updated with the same information she reported at our last month's Board meeting, so there is really no new information to report.

**SACRS (State Association of County Retirement Systems):** There was no new information to report.

**Retirement Board:** There was no additional information to report.

**Investment Committee:** There was no additional information to report.

**Health Care (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention):** Renaye reported that COVID-19 levels remain high in Contra Costa County and in Alameda County. As she reported last month, the CDC developed COVID-19 Community Levels as a new tool to help communities decide what prevention steps to take based on the latest data. Levels can be low, medium or high. Since Alameda County's level is high, they recommend that people continue to wear masks indoors in public, stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines, and to get tested if they have any symptoms.

According to the CDC, Monkeypox is transmitted by close or intimate contact. There is a vaccine, but the supply of the vaccine is limited. They recommend that people who have symptoms or who are at high risk, avoid close contact with others, stay home if they can, and don't share anything you use with others. (Linens, clothing, cups, dishes, etc.) If anyone is interested in learning more about Monkeypox and its symptoms, they can view that information at <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/>.

Renaye encouraged all Kaiser Members to take advantage of the Silver&Fit program, while we still have it. She also reminded the Board that people did not have to exercise in the facility. Instead, each facility on the Silver&Fit program, can provide light exercise equipment which can be used in the home.

**Activities:** Charo reported that she has already received a check from a member who wants to attend the REAC Fall luncheon. The Board discussed various ways of handling any checks we receive until the final decision is made regarding the luncheon. The Board decided to hold the check until the final decision is made, and to send the member a short note indicating we received his or her check. If 30 or more members sign up and send in their \$10 check, REAC will host a luncheon. If fewer than 30 members sign up and send in their checks, REAC will return their checks uncashed.

**Membership and Recruitment:** Charo reported that as of July 31, 2022, membership stood at 3,878 members, which was a slight increase over the June 2022 numbers. Charo also reported that we currently have 377 members who receive their REAC Newsletter electronically.

**REAC Website Redesign:** Connie reported that their subcommittee has met and they are in the process of scheduling a meeting with ACERA to go over the more technical aspects of sharing information between the two systems. We need a very clear understanding about how that interface would work, what sort of issues we might encounter, and what sort of time frames are we talking about. They feel that they are now far enough along to share what we want to accomplish with a web designer. They could share the slide presentation they developed with the web designer and get useful feedback.

Paul agreed to contact Lori to let her know what we are considering in the redesign of our website, and let her know that Connie will be the lead.

**REAC News:** The REAC Newsletter will have information concerning the Board of Retirement Elections, an update on the luncheon, a brief explanation on the Dental and Vision Plan enhancements, and a sentence or two informing our members that the firm Empower, has taken over from Prudential, and is now handling the County's Deferred Comp program.

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

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

**New Business:** There was no information to report.

**For the Good of the Order:** There was nothing new to report.

Meeting adjourned at 11:08am

Respectfully submitted by Paul Reeves, Board Secretary

**Next Board Meeting: Monday, September 12, 2022, 9:30 am**  
**Zoom Video Conferencing Board Meeting**