

**MINNESOTA TEACHERS RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
SEPTEMBER 23, 2020
MEETING HELD VIA WEBEX DUE TO COVID-19**

Board President Martha Lee Zins called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. During the meeting, Zins was in TRA room 444. Those attending in addition to Zins were:

Trustees: Denise Anderson, Melissa Lam Young, Luke Olson, Noel Raph, Jim Schowalter (briefly), Joel Stencel, and Mary Supple, all participating remotely via WebEx.

Absent: Will Baumann

TRA Staff: In attendance in TRA room 444 was Jay Stoffel. In attendance remotely via WebEx were David Anderson, Susan Barbieri, Rachel Barth, Chad Borsheim, Carol Diedrich, Julie Larson, Dominic Matern, Tim Maurer, Leslie Nagel, Sonja Parr, Mark Roemhild, Jane Suhr, and John Wicklund.

Legal Representative: Kathy Woodruff participated remotely via WebEx.

Others: attending remotely via WebEx. Chad Burkett, Paul Ehrhard and Louise Sundin.

1. Called to order at 9:30 a.m.

Zins called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Roll call was taken.

2.a. Approval of Minutes of Board Retreat on August 19, 2020

It was moved by Olson and seconded by Denise Anderson to approve the minutes of the August 19, 2020 retreat. A roll call vote was taken. The motion was passed unanimously.

4.a. Audit Committee Report, August 18, 2020 meeting

Stencel noted that the Audit Committee met on August 17, 2020. Stencel noted that one hundred percent of TRA staff completed the Code of Conduct/Code of Ethics certifications. We are looking into the possibility of having the Board of Trustees completing this in the future. Stencel noted that TRA has implemented an audit solution from Workiva – an automated platform to provide audit management and risk management solutions.

4.b. Retreat Evaluation Results

Stoffel reviewed the retreat evaluation responses. This information will be used for future retreat planning. Also discussed was the audio/video conferencing platform used to conduct Audit meetings and Board meetings.

4.c. Strategic Plan Update

Stoffel reviewed meeting materials related to the strategic plan. The plan is a 3-5 year plan and is working well. We are 1 ½ years into the plan and making progress. COVID has actually sped up some plans that were scheduled into the future such as WebEx counseling appointments. Stoffel answered questions from Board members.

Stoffel introduced Jim Schowalter, Commissioner of MMB, attending the meeting via WebEx. Commissioner Schowalter made some brief comments.

4.d. Executive Director Evaluation

Zins reviewed the TRA Executive Director evaluation form, noting some revisions. Also reviewed was the process for evaluating the performance of the Executive Director.

A paper copy of the evaluation form will be mailed to all Board members along with a return envelope addressed to President Zins. Trustees were asked to complete the document and return it to Zins by October 9, 2020. Zins will compile the information from the various evaluation forms that are returned to her. This information, along with performance feedback from the TRA executive team, will be presented to the executive director.

4.e. Board Self-Evaluation Process

Zins summarized the current evaluation process and noted how it differs with what was in place prior to development of the strategic plan. Zins reviewed the Board self-evaluation form that was included in the meeting materials.

A paper copy of the evaluation form will be mailed to all Board members along with a return envelope addressed to President Zins. Trustees were asked to complete the evaluation form and return it to Zins by October 9, 2020. Zins will compile the information from the self-evaluation forms that are returned.

4.f. Board Election Process – Overview

Wicklund provided an update on the 2021 Board election process. The Board election will fill two four-year active member positions, one two-year active member position, and one four-year retiree position. The deadline for candidates to apply is December 18, 2020. Candidates for the active positions must apply for either the two-year or a four-year seat. A request for proposal will be published in November 2020 to solicit bids from vendors to administer the election, mail ballots and tabulate votes from membership. Voting by membership will occur from mid-March to April 23, 2021. Election results will be certified by the election vendor on April 30, 2021.

It was moved by Supple and seconded by Olson to proceed with the RFP based on the schedule and outline of procedures. A roll call vote was taken. The motion was passed unanimously.

4.g. Selection of Delegates for Annual NCTR Meeting

Zins noted that the NCTR virtual conference is scheduled for October 12-14, 2020, and the business meeting on October 15. NCTR has requested that member systems designate delegates for the annual NCTR business meeting.

It was moved by Zins and seconded by Lam Young to designate Denise Anderson, Olson and Stoffel as delegates, and Zins as the alternate delegate for the annual NCTR business meeting. A roll call vote was taken. The motion was passed unanimously.

5. Legislative Update

Stoffel and Barth noted that there have been several special sessions with little to no attention on public pensions. Currently we are working with TRA staff to determine if we have a need to create an administrative bill.

6.a. Report from Executive Director

Stoffel reviewed meeting materials summarizing recent actions and activity by the Investment Advisory Council and the State Board of Investment.

Stoffel read a resolution prepared for former MMB Commissioner Myron Frans.

It was moved by Zins and seconded by Supple to approve the resolution for Myron Frans, that a copy be presented to him, and that the resolution be included in the official permanent minutes of the proceedings of the TRA Board of Trustees. A roll call vote was taken. The motion was passed unanimously.

Stoffel updated the Board on the status of the Deputy Executive Director position.

Stoffel updated the Board on the remodeling project. Currently the project is on hold indefinitely.

6.b. Report from President

Zins reminded Board members to return evaluation forms to her by October 9, 2020. Zins encouraged everyone to vote in the upcoming election.

6.c. Financial Update

Wicklund reviewed the fiscal year 2020 and the fiscal year 2021 investment return and inflation analysis report.

6.d. Operational Update

Maurer reviewed the August and September issues of Inside TRAck, which included information on the following: rolling out the new version of SharePoint; return to work training and other training for employees; separation from a joint HR function with the other retirement systems in the building and a decision to hire Stephanie Summerville as our in-house human resource director; decision to close our Detroit Lakes office location; development and implementation of a call-in health assessment/attestation process for employees who come into the office; a return to work survey sent to all TRA employees.

6.e. Assistant Attorney General Update

Woodruff noted that a member appeal was originally scheduled to be heard at the September meeting. The member has requested an extension for the appeal to be heard at either the November or January meeting of the TRA board. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the appeal will be heard in a virtual environment.

7. Public Comments

Louise Sundin (Minneapolis Committee of Thirteen)

Encouraged the Board to consider video conferencing for TRA virtual Board meeting. She also asked for a little creative thinking among all of us on how to help those of our membership that felt they were at such great risks in having to go back to classrooms in order to protect themselves and their families – they felt they had to make a choice to retire and retiring early. Many incurred great penalties as a result of that. She suggested that since this is a COVID one-time penalty, we should all think creatively about how we could mitigate some of that. She also noted that Minneapolis schools had double the normal number of retirees and many of those felt physically and emotionally at risk. We need to think hard about that issue.

Paul Ehrhard (Retired Educators Association of Minnesota)

Greeted the Trustees. REAM has been very active in the election process and running a “Get Out the Vote” campaign in all 40 plus units throughout the state. He encouraged all to vote. He noted that the REAM annual meeting will be held via Zoom on Tuesday, September 29, 2020.

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m. with a motion by Lam Young, seconded by Supple. A roll call vote was taken. The motion was passed unanimously by the Board.

Attest:

J. Michael Stoffel
Executive Director

Martha Lee Zins
President