



Seattle City Employees' Retirement System

Board of Administration Meeting
Pacific Building, 720 3rd Avenue, Suite 900, Seattle, WA
(206) 386-1293

Minutes, Thursday, January 11, 2024

Board Members Present: Sherri Crawford (Chair), Judith Blinder, Maria Coe, Sherri Crawford, Joseph Hoffman, Kimberly Loving, Jamie Carnell

SCERS Staff Present: Jeff Davis, Paige Alderete, Jason Malinowski, Nina Melencio, Mengfei Cao, Ronda Iriarte

Others Present: Mike Monaco (MMPL), Gary Smith (City Attorney's Office), Kevin Balaod (With Intelligence), Elizabeth Paschke (ARSCE), Edie Jorgensen (ARSCE), Tom Mikesell (LEG)

Call to Order

Sherri Crawford, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Administrative Consent Agenda

Provided in the Retirement Board Packet were the minutes from the December 14, 2023 Retirement Board regular meeting, ratification of Retired Payroll, Office Payroll, and other payments and withdrawals.

The following items represent normal expenses:	
Pension Payroll	\$23,738,762.32
Office Payroll	526,765.92*
Admin Expenses	362,320.92
Investment Expenses	1,804,705.16
Total Expenses – December 2023	\$26,432,554.32

**Includes estimated benefit costs and 12/21/2023-12/31/2023 payroll*

Retirements, Withdrawals, Other Payouts – December 2023			
	Count	Monthly Pension	Lump Sum Distribution
Retirements	25	\$67,868.77	\$604,963.51
Withdrawals	35	n/a	\$1,163,725.40

Motion: Upon motion by Maria Coe, seconded by Judith Blinder, the Board of Administration accepted and approved the Administrative Consent Agenda. The motion passed unanimously (6-0).

Deep Dive – Member Communications

Paige Alderete presented the SCERS Member Communications Deep Dive. The overview included SCERS’s mission, vision, and values; recap of 2023 working environment; member communication focus areas, results of the 2023 member satisfaction survey; and member communication goals for 2024. SCERS tracks progress over five key areas: 1) access to information, 2) clear and consistent communications, 3) pro-active and educational communications, 4) service request times, and 5) cross department and agency communications.

In 2023, SCERS continued its hybrid work environment with staff onsite at least two to three days per week. Members are being served both virtually and in-person. In July 2023, building management unlocked the front doors to the building for members to easily access SCERS during core business hours.

By the fall of 2023, most service request backlogs were reduced or eliminated. Because of the backlogs still being worked through most of last year, the turn-around times to complete service requests still were high in 2023. SCERS expects that the 2024 numbers will reflect faster service rates.

The use of the Member Self-Service Portal continues to be high. In 2023, total users were 8,829 and most of these users were active members. Website usage remains active with an accessibility rating of 92.6% and quality assurance rating of 98.2%. Both ratings are higher than the City’s average. There was a significant spike in website visits during the summer of 2023, most likely from threat actors. Staff monitor the portal weekly for failed log in attempts and IP addresses from other countries. We are also towards the end of the process of completing an external review of overall security.

During 2023, SCERS conducted 15 seminars serving 310 members and provided information to new City employees at the monthly new employee orientation conducted by Seattle Human Resources.

SCERS conducted the annual member satisfactory survey to proactively receive feedback and suggestions for improvement from both Active and Retired members. A larger pool of members was used for the 2023 survey with the idea that we may receive a higher response rate, but the opposite occurred. Normally the response rate is 20-25%. For the active members the response rate was 17% for 2023 and the retired member response rate was 21%.

For active members, the 2023 survey showed a significant improvement in satisfaction across the board (up from 2021). For retired members, the satisfaction results decreased slightly, although remained relatively high. Generally, in the past, retirees have been more satisfied since the retirement process tends to give a lot of hand-holding due to the complexity of the process. Active members and retired members are now parallel in their satisfaction rates. For both active and retired members, the biggest area of improvement continues to be the speed in addressing service requests. SCERS will continue to focus on speed and responsiveness in 2024.

SCERS’s member communication goals for 2024 include a focus on responsiveness, speed, and customer service; offering additional online resources and videos for members; coordinating with SDHR and other city departments to provide clarity on the citywide process for preparing for retirement; and continuing the Member Satisfaction Survey.

There was discussion on the Citywide coordination, managing the flow of paper, and the turnaround times for benefit estimates. The goal is to get the turnaround time for benefit estimates down to two to three weeks. Staff expect that will shift in the next few months as management work with staff to manage their queues more effectively.

Board members commended staff on the additional security testing and requested a report to the Board once it is completed.

Executive Director Update

Jeff Davis stated that the City begins 2024 with a new City Council. SCERS's previous board chair, Teresa Mosqueda, has left her council position to be on the King County Council. SCERS's chair will be CM Dan Strauss. We have reached out to his staff to schedule similar onboarding sessions that all board members go through.

Adjourn Meeting

Motion: Upon motion by Jamie Carnell, seconded by Maria Coe, the Board of Administration voted to adjourn the meeting at 10:39 am. The motion passed unanimously (6-0).