

## MINUTES

**North Dakota Public Employees Retirement System  
VIA TELECONFERENCE  
Tuesday, November 10, 2020  
8:30 A.M.**

Members Via Phone: Chairperson Rindy  
Representative Jason Dockter  
Senator John Grabinger  
Ms. Casey Goodhouse  
Mr. Adam Miller  
Ms. Kim Wassim  
Mr. Dirk Wilke  
Ms. Yvonne Smith

Members Absent: Mr. Troy Seibel

Others Via Phone: Mr. Scott Miller, NDPERS  
Mr. Derrick Hohbein, NDPERS  
Ms. Rebecca Fricke, NDPERS  
Ms. MaryJo Anderson, NDPERS

Chairperson Mona Rindy called the meeting to order at 8:30 A.M. The meeting was held by teleconference. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was present.

Chairperson Rindy called for any questions or comments regarding the minutes of the September 30, October 15, and October 19 Special Meetings, and the October 27, 2020 Board Meeting.

**MS. WASSIM MOVED APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 30, OCTOBER 15, AND OCTOBER 19 SPECIAL MEETINGS, AND THE OCTOBER 27, 2020 BOARD MEETING MINUTES. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY REPRESENTATIVE DOCKTER AND CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE. THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED.**

### **PRESENTATIONS**

#### Voya Group Life Insurance Plan Update

Representatives from Voya Financial provided an update of the services provided in the group life insurance plan. Ms. Ruth Bahnemann, National Account Executive, opened the presentation by introducing Mr. Ted Holt, Senior Sales Consultant and Ms. Brittany Neilson, National Account Client Specialist. They reviewed corporate values and four pillars of corporate responsibility. Ms. Bahnemann shared the results of a Voya Employee Benefits Claims Center survey from 2018. Over 12,000 customers were surveyed showing a 97% positive experience with claims processing; more than 92,000 customers surveyed reported a 97% positive call center experience. During the 2019 reporting period, Voya received more than 485,000 calls. Ms. Bahnemann discussed the COVID-19 Resource Center and how Voya Employee Benefits is responding to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. To cite an example, the grace period for employers to submit premiums has been expanded to accommodate people working from home.

She provided an overview and timeline of Voya's relationship with NDPERS stemming back to 1989, information included enhancements to the group life insurance plan benefits and rate guarantees.

Mr. Holt and Ms. Neilson reviewed Group Life claim experience and claims by diagnosis data for both Active and Retirees. They also introduced new value-added services coming soon: Funeral Planning, Last Will and Testament preparation and Concierge Service and Travel Assistance.

## **RETIREMENT**

### 401(a) and 457 Recordkeeping Contract Amendment

Ms. Rebecca Fricke presented a contract drafted by legal staff for the renewal of the recordkeeping agreement for the 401(a) and 457 Companion Plan with TIAA, and an amendment to the Service Level Agreement (SLA). The change to the SLA is the reduction of the hours of service at the national contract center beginning November 1, 2020.

**MR. WILKE MOVED TO APPROVE THE 401(A) AND 457 COMPANION PLAN CONTRACT AMENDMENT AND RECORDKEEPING AGREEMENT AND AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO SIGN THE CONTRACTS. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY SENATOR GRABINGER.**

**Ayes:** Ms. Goodhouse, Representative Dockter, Ms. Wassim, Senator Grabinger, Mr. Wilke, Ms. Smith, and Chairperson Rindy

**Nays:** None

**Absent:** Mr. Adam Miller, Mr. Seibel

## **GROUP INSURANCE**

### Life Insurance Plan Contract Amendment

Ms. Rebecca Fricke presented a contract drafted by legal staff for the renewal of the NDPERS group life insurance plan with Voya Financial.

**MS. WASSIM MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONTRACT AMENDMENT FOR THE NDPERS GROUP LIFE INSURANCE PLAN FOR THE JULY 1, 2021 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2023 CONTRACT PERIOD. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MR. WILKE.**

**Ayes:** Ms. Goodhouse, Representative Dockter, Ms. Wassim, Senator Grabinger, Mr. Wilke, Ms. Smith, and Chairperson Rindy

**Nays:** None

**Absent:** Mr. Adam Miller, Mr. Seibel

### Health Plan Request for Proposal/Contract

Mr. Scott Miller reviewed a document shared at the October meeting which outlined fully insured medical and prescription drug premium rates for both Actives and Retirees, and he recapped past Board discussion regarding the rate table. The Board looked at options for utilizing the retention credit.

**MR. WILKE MOVED APPROVAL TO SPREAD THE 12 MILLION DOLLAR RETENTION CREDIT OVER BOTH THE ACTIVE AND THE RETIREE POPULATION BASED ON THE INFORMATION PRESENTED AND PREVIOUS BOARD DISCUSSION. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MS. SMITH.**

**Ayes:** Ms. Goodhouse, Representative Dockter, Ms. Wassim, Senator Grabinger, Mr. Wilke, Ms. Smith, and Chairperson Rindy

**Nays:** None

**Absent:** Mr. Adam Miller, Mr. Seibel

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### Topics for 2021 Presentations

The November Board Meeting was the final meeting for Senator Grabinger. He has served as a Legislative Management Appointee on the NDPERS Board since July 2019 and shared his surprise at the overwhelming task to serve on the Board. He expressed gratitude to fellow Board Members and to NDPERS staff for their dedication and hard work. The Senator shared thoughts on topics that may be beneficial moving forward.

The Board discussed several ideas as possible topics for presentations at the 2021 Board Meetings.

Based on input from the Board, staff will include the topics as meeting agendas are developed for the 2021 calendar year.

### 2021 Board Meeting Schedule

The Board conducted a final review of proposed dates for regular board meetings for the 2021 calendar year. Staff will post the schedule on the NDPERS website and post public meeting notices on the Secretary of State website, in addition to setting up meetings on Outlook calendars.

### Operating Guidelines

Mr. Miller reported that staff has completed a review of the NDPERS Operating Guidelines. The document helps to clarify Board versus Executive Director/staff responsibilities. The Board reviewed items under the General, Finance and Personnel categories. Discussion followed.

**MS. WASSIM MOVED TO APPROVE THE OPERATING GUIDELINES AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MS. SMITH.**

**Ayes:** Ms. Goodhouse, Representative Dockter, Ms. Wassim, Mr. Adam Miller, Senator Grabinger, Mr. Wilke, Ms. Smith, and Chairperson Rindy

**Nays:** None

**Absent:** Mr. Seibel

#### Contract Procurement Policy

Mr. Miller shared an internal policy that staff follows when procuring services. Internal Audit completed an audit of the contracting process, and staff revised the policy based on audit recommendations. Discussion followed.

**MS. SMITH MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONTRACT PROCUREMENT POLICY AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY REPRESENTATIVE DOCKTER.**

**Ayes:** Ms. Goodhouse, Representative Dockter, Ms. Wassim, Mr. Adam Miller, Senator Grabinger, Mr. Wilke, Ms. Smith, and Chairperson Rindy

**Nays:** None

**Absent:** Mr. Seibel

**THE BOARD TOOK A BRIEF BREAK FROM 10:04 A.M. TO 10:15 A.M.**

**The Meeting resumed at 10:15 A.M., a quorum was present.**

#### Operations Update

Mr. Derrick Hohbein presented an operational update of work done and progress made on projects since last reporting eight months ago. He discussed tools such as e-fax, e-signature, web-based phone access, and Adobe software, the use of virtual meeting platforms, a timely transition to electronic communications, the collaborative effort among staff to quickly develop and implement a plan to keep the mail and other operational tasks moving. Collectively, this contributed to the success of staff working from home due to the pandemic and little member disruption.

He reported on the success of individual counseling sessions and group retirement seminars that became virtual meetings since the pandemic began. The Pre-Retirement Educational Program (PREP) and the Financial Essential Workshop (FEW) attendance far exceeded past in-person attendance for a single event, and the feedback received from members was very positive.

Staff are continually exploring opportunities and innovative ways to improve efficiency and functionality of daily work. He talked about progress made with several comprehensive projects the accounting division is working on including an extensive Debit ACH conversion and centralized payroll processing with OMB, which will result in more accurate payroll records from agencies. He touched on several planned enhancements to the PERSLink Business System that the IT Division and other staff are working on. Some updates have been implemented while others will be ready for production after January 1<sup>st</sup>. It was noted that many of the smaller upgrades can be done at no additional cost.

These accomplishments were able to be achieved while working diligently on the Group Health Plan Request for Proposal process.

Mr. Hohbein concluded his presentation by sharing goals and initiatives staff have identified and will be working towards over the next several months. Discussion followed.

#### Office Space Consideration

Mr. Miller explained that conducting an assessment of the current office space is always part of the budgeting process, and with agencies shifting their focus to office space in state-owned buildings, staff became aware of alternate office space that may suit our needs and offer lower rent. Mr. Miller asked for the Board's guidance on how to proceed. Discussion followed.

**AUTHORITY TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE ANALYSIS OF OFFICE SPACE WAS DELEGATED TO STAFF; STAFF WILL REPORT BACK TO THE BOARD.**

#### Legislation

Mr. Miller gave an update of action taken on draft legislation by the Employee Benefits Programs Committee. Of the nine bills NDPERS proposed to the Committee, two bills received no recommendation and seven bills received a favorable recommendation. Copies of the bills were included in the board materials. The Board discussed which bills to pre-file for consideration by the Legislative Assembly.

**MS. WASSIM MOVED TO APPROVE THE SUBMISSION OF THE FOLLOWING BILLS TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION: 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94 AND 95. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MS SMITH.**

**Ayes:** Ms. Goodhouse, Representative Dockter, Ms. Wassim, Mr. Adam Miller, Senator Grabinger, Mr. Wilke, Ms. Smith, and Chairperson Rindy

**Nays:** None

**Absent:** Mr. Seibel

#### **MEMBER**

#### Hardship Withdrawal Case #647

This agenda item was noticed for Executive Session.

**MS. WASSIM MOVED TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO N.D.C.C §44-04-19.2 AND §44-04-19.2 (1) AND/OR §54-52-26 TO DISCUSS CONFIDENTIAL RECORDS OR CONFIDENTIAL MEMBER INFORMATION. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY SENATOR GRABINGER.**

**Ayes:** Ms. Goodhouse, Representative Dockter, Ms. Wassim, Senator Grabinger, Mr. Adam Miller, Mr. Wilke, Ms. Smith, and Chairperson Rindy

**Nays:** None

**Absent:** Mr. Seibel

**MOTION PASSED**

All members named above, attorney Dean DePountis, NDPERS staff members Scott Miller, Rebecca Fricke, Derrick Hohbein, MaryJo Anderson and Jan Lund were in attendance for the Executive Session (closed meeting, electronically recorded) which began at 11:08 A.M.

The Closed Session ended at 11:38 A.M.

The item was tabled until the December 2020 meeting.

Chairperson Rindy called for any other business or comments. Hearing none the meeting was adjourned at 11:40 A.M.

Prepared by,

Jan Lund  
Assistant to the Board