

**MINUTES
SPECIAL PENSION BOARD MEETING
CITY OF HOLLYWOOD EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT FUND
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2017**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Shaw called the meeting to order at 3:11 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Board Members present: Chair Phyllis Shaw, Vice-Chair Jeffrey Greene, Christopher Cassidy, Charles Howell, George Keller, Mel Standley, and Robert Strauss.

Also present: Pension Coordinator Lisa Castronovo, Board Attorneys James Linn and Glenn Thomas (Lewis, Longman & Walker, via telephone), City Finance Director Cintya Ramos, City Assistant Human Resources Director Tami Thornton, and Justine Steele.

3. TRANSITION OF PENSION COORDINATOR RESPONSIBILITIES/DUTIES

Chair Shaw welcomed Cintya Ramos, the City's new Finance Director, Tami Thornton from the City's Human Resources department, and Justine Steele, a temporary employee brought to the Pension Office by Chair Shaw via the Human Resources department. Chair Shaw noted that Trustee Keller had tagged Ms. Ramos to help out with the transition of duties from Ms. Castronovo to City staff. Ms. Ramos and Ms. Castronovo updated the Board on the items they had discussed and addressed regarding the transition.

Chair Shaw noted that Ms. Castronovo wanted a hold harmless agreement drafted to cover her for any errors that might occur due to Ms. Steele being brought into her office between November 27, 2017 and November 29, 2017, her last day as Pension Coordinator. Chair Shaw stated she did not believe a hold harmless agreement was necessary. Trustee Keller agreed since the Board carried significant fiduciary liability insurance including errors and omissions on the entire Board and the Pension Coordinator that would cover Ms. Castronovo if something were to happen as a result of Ms. Steele being present.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the hiring of Ms. Steele. Trustee Cassidy and Trustee Strauss voiced their concern that they did not know of Ms. Steele's hiring until this meeting. Chair Shaw explained to the Board that the operations of the Pension Office would have to continue after Ms. Castronovo leaves and that the expenses for Ms. Steele would be covered by the Board unless the Board was open to closing the Pension Office during the transition. Trustee Cassidy stressed the importance of the Board being informed of what is happening and keeping the lines of communication open and his frustration with not knowing how the decisions are being made to cover the transition period. Trustee Keller noted that he is aware of the decision to bring Ms. Steele onto the board as a byproduct of offering to provide the assistance of the Department of Financial Services and Human Resources during the transition and the limitations of that assistance that would require resulting in the decision to bring on a temporary employee to cover the Pension Office.

MOTION made by Trustee Keller, seconded by Vice-Chair Greene, to authorize Chair Shaw to take all appropriate actions necessary to administer the Retirement Fund during

the transition period in consultation with the Board attorneys and the attorneys to provide updates to the Board.

Trustee Strauss said he would like to know "who is Justine Steele." Ms. Steele briefly described her background including the fact she worked as a temp for the City for a few months earlier in the year. Vice-Chair Greene suggested rather than taking up more time at the meeting, Ms. Steele email her resume to the trustees. Vice-Chair Greene supported Chair Shaw's decision to hire a temporary employee given the emergency situation the Board and Pension Office found itself in with Ms. Castronovo's abrupt departure. Trustee Keller clarified that this process is a transition of services not an emergency as such transitions happen all the time in City Hall so everyone should move calmly forward as Ms. Steele was chosen because she had general operational and finance experience and could assist during the transition.

Trustee Cassidy repeated that he felt he was not part of the loop in the decision making process of bringing Ms. Steele on as a temporary employee. Chair Shaw then explained the series of events leading up to her seeking the services of a temporary employee, and specifically Ms. Steele's qualifications. Chair Shaw also emphasized that even though the Director of Financial Services and the Assistant Director of Human Resources are available to provide support, they cannot provide support services on a full time basis due to their other work duties and as such, a temporary employee would be best fit to provide day to day operational support during the transition period.

Trustee Strauss asked why the temporary position was not offered to one of the Executive Director candidates when several of them lived locally. Trustee Keller responded that such an offer of employment, even on a temporary basis, would be highly inappropriate.

Mr. Linn confirmed to Trustee Cassidy that they were not involved in the request for a temporary employee. Trustee Cassidy asked the Mr. Linn if there were any legal issues with how the Board arrived to this situation. Mr. Linn responded that the Board has the ability to ratify a contract for the temporary employee and that it would resolve any questions regarding legality.

In a voice vote by the members present, all members voted in favor. **Motion** passed 7-0.

Mr. Linn explained to the Board that they could review the temporary employee contract going forward in order to address any concerns. Ms. Thornton was asked to describe the specifics of the contract under which Ms. Steele's services were acquired. Ms. Thornton excused herself to locate and make copies of the contract for the Board to review.

While Ms. Thornton was away, the Board discussed their availability to interview the ten individuals selected for interviews for the Executive Director position. After considerable discussion, the Board agreed to interview five candidates on Thursday, December 7, 2017 starting at 8:00 a.m. and the remaining five candidates on Thursday, December 14, 2017 after the regular Board meeting. The Board agreed to move the

regular Board meeting from a start time of 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. Chair Shaw stated that an evaluation matrix and questions for the candidates would be provided.

Chair Shaw asked the Board if someone from the Finance Department should have access to Wells Fargo Commercial Electronic Office. Ms. Castronovo explained why someone would need such access in order to meet member maintenance needs of the Pension Fund including processing pension payments and benefit calculations, updating benefit deductions, updating beneficiaries and changes of address. Trustee Keller stated that starting immediately, all duties previously performed by Finance Department's Ernesto Acosta, including benefit calculations, would now be performed by Finance Director Cintya Ramos in addition to the temporary support during the transition period.

Vice-Chair Greene inquired if Gabriel, Roeder, Smith and Company would be responsible for confirming benefit calculations to which Chair Shaw responded they would.

MOTION made by Vice-Chair Greene, seconded by Trustee Keller, to allow Ms. Cintya Ramos, Finance Director, access to Wells Fargo Commercial Electronic Office system. In a voice vote by the members present, all members voted in favor. **Motion** passed 7-0.

Chair Shaw asked if anyone had a status update for the Gabriel, Roeder, Smith and Company (GRS) new contract. Mr. Linn responded that the both the City and GRS agreed to the concept of reassign the contract and that he is drafting a contract for review by the Board at the December 14th Board meeting. Chair Shaw inquired about the status of an outstanding invoice for GRS. Mr. Linn advised that the City could make the payment versus holding payment until the contract is reassigned.

Ms. Thornton distributed a copy to the Trustees of a Purchase Order established by the City with Robert Half International, a staffing company specialized in placing accounting and finance personnel, which would have a line item added for the hiring of Ms. Steele via the Department of Human Resources. Ms. Thornton stated Robert Half agreed to its same terms and conditions for Ms. Steele as used for the other temporary employees used by the City even though Ms. Steele would be working for, and paid by, the Board rather than the City. Ms. Thornton stated the terms of the agreement were that Robert Half's hourly rate was \$37.40, Ms. Steele would work 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday – Friday with a one-hour lunch break for a 5-week term.

Trustee Keller requested that Ms. Steele provide to each trustee, Mr. Linn, Mr. Thomas, Ms. Ramos and Ms. Thornton, a status report on each Monday detailing any significant activity that happened in the Pension Office during the prior week.

MOTION made by Trustee Keller, seconded by Trustee Standley, to ratify a piggy-back on the City's Purchase Order for the procurement of administrative services during the transition period, not to exceed five (5) weeks at a time but with extensions of time available as needed. In a voice vote by the members present, all members voted in favor. **Motion** passed 7-0.

Trustee Keller requested that Ms. Castronovo not schedule the interviews if she was one of the candidates to be interviewed. Chair Shaw stated she would send Ms. Steele the list of applicants with the direction to schedule the interviews.

4. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION made by Trustee Standley, seconded by Trustee Howell, to adjourn the meeting. In a voice vote by the members present, **Motion** passed 7-0. Meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.



Phyllis Shaw, Chair

Date 8/28/18