

MINUTES | BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Public Employees' Retirement System of Mississippi

December 17, 2025 | PERS Board Room and Live Streamed via YouTube

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Board of Trustees Meeting Agenda Wednesday, December 17, 2025 1:00 P.M.

- I. Call to Order (*Mr. Bill Benson, Chair*)
 - A. Invocation
 - B. Pledge of Allegiance
 - C. Approval of Agenda
 - D. Approval of Minutes – *October 22, 2025*
 - E. Employee of the Quarter – *(January- March 2026)*
- II. Report of the Administrative Committee (*Dr. Jay Smith, Committee Chair*)
 - A. Actuarial Reports for PERS, MHSPRS, SLRP, and MRS
 - B. Other
- III. Report of the Audit Committee (*Mr. Chris Graham, Committee Chair*)
 - A. Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR)
 - B. External Audit Results
 - C. Other
- IV. Report of Claims Committee (*Mr. Terrance Yarbrough, Committee Chair*)
 - A. New Agency Agreements
- V. Report of the Defined Contribution Committee (*Dr. Brian Rutledge, Committee Chair*)
 - A. Hybrid Defined Contribution Plan Document
 - B. Other
- VI. Report of the Investment Committee (*Dr. Randy McCoy, Committee Chair*)
 - A. Approval of Value Add Real Estate Search Criteria
 - B. ACWI ex US Manager Presentation and Selection
 - C. Core Infrastructure Manager Presentations and Selections
 - D. Other
- VII. Disability Appeals Committee
- VIII. Staff Reports
 - A. Refiree Report
 - B. Investment Report
- IX. Adjourn

Board Members:

Mr. Bill Benson, *Board Chair*
Mr. George Dale, *Board Vice Chair*
Mr. Kelly Breland
Mr. Chris Graham
Ms. Kim Hanna

Dr. Randy McCoy
State Treasurer David McRae
Dr. Brian Rutledge
Dr. Jay Smith
Mr. Terrance Yarbrough

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The Public Employees' Retirement System of Mississippi (PERS) Board of Trustees met Wednesday, December 17, 2025, at 429 Mississippi Street, Jackson, MS 39201. This meeting was duly announced to the public Monday November 24, 2025, at 4:38 p.m., on the Public Meetings Notice website of the Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration, as well as was posted in the PERS lobby, on the PERS website, and on the PERS YouTube channel.

BOARD MEMBER ATTENDEES

In Person: Board Chair Mr. Bill Benson, Mr. George Dale, Mr. Chris Graham, Ms. Kimberly Hanna, Dr. Randy McCoy, Dr. Jay Smith, and Mr. Terrance Yarbrough.

Via Teleconference: None.

Absent: Mr. Kelly Breland, State Treasurer David McRae, and Dr. Brian Rutledge.

Current Board Vacancies: None.

LEGISLATIVE LIAISON ATTENDEES

In Person: Senator Daniel Sparks.

STAFF ATTENDEES

In Person: Executive Director Ray Higgins; Chief Investment Officer Charles Nielsen; Compliance Counsel and Director of Defined Contribution Plans Davetta Lee; Member and Employer Services Deputy Director Mason Frantom; Deputy Director Administrative Services Melanie Estridge; Jason Clark, David DeGuire, Ryan Holliday, and Clay Busby, Investments; Chief Technology Officer Mike Lowry; Billy Means and Loren Cameron, Information Technology; Benefit Payments Program Administrator Tiffany Jennings; Employer Reporting Program Administrator Alisa Evans; Member Account Support Program Administrator Chris Hudson; Comptroller Tracy Day; Christy Smith and Cindy Byars, Accounting; Brittany McWillie and Melissa Ward, Investment Accounting; Caleb Nicholson, Internal Audit; Mariam Clayton, Member and Employer Services; and Communications Director Shelley Powers.

GUEST ATTENDEES

In Person: Assistant Attorney General Kristen Jones; Assistant Attorney General Emily Sheppard; Ed Koebel, Wendy Ludbrock, and Darby Carraway, CavMac; Will Harper, Joint Legislative Committee on Performance Evaluation and Expenditure Review; Lee Pittman, Mississippi Legislative Budget Office; Brad Berls, Eide Bailly; Allan Cooper, Mississippi Department of Finance & Administration; and Mike Larsen, Mississippi Retired Public Employees' Association.

CALL TO ORDER

Board Chair Benson called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

INVOCATION

Dale gave the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Dale led the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA

- **Motion:** To approve the meeting agenda along with an addendum to include joinder agreements and delinquencies brought before the Claims Committee.
 - **Made by:** Smith.
 - **Seconded by:** Yarbrough.
 - **Discussion:** None.
 - **Voting for:** Benson, Dale, Graham, Hanna, McCoy, Smith, and Yarbrough.
 - **Voting against:** None.
 - **Not Present:** Breland, McRae, and Rutledge.
 - **Duly Passed.**

MINUTES

- **Motion:** To approve the minutes of the October 22, 2025, PERS Board of Trustees' meeting.
 - **Made by:** Graham.
 - **Seconded by:** Smith.
 - **Discussion:** None.
 - **Voting for:** Benson, Dale, Graham, Hanna, McCoy, Smith, and Yarbrough.
 - **Voting against:** None.
 - **Not Present:** Breland, McRae, and Rutledge.
 - **Duly Passed.**

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EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER

Benson awarded Byars Employee of the Quarter for the third quarter of 2026 (January through March). Benson said Byars, accounting manager, being awarded Employee of the Quarter was very appropriate in light of the good audit report received by PERS. He thanked Byars and the rest of Accounting for the hard work that led to the audit and the publishing of the FY 2025 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report. He also congratulated Byars on her award.

REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

Committee Chair Smith reported that the Administrative Committee met the morning of December 17, 2025. He presented the following item to the Board for consideration:

FY 2025 Actuarial Reports

Smith presented the Board the fiscal year 2025 Actuarial Valuations for PERS, Mississippi Highway Safety Patrol Retirement System (MHSPRS), and the Municipal Retirement System (MRS).

- **Motion:** To acknowledge and accept the FY 2025 Actuarial Valuation Reports.
 - **Made by:** Smith.
 - **Seconded by:** Graham.
 - **Discussion:** None.
 - **Voting for:** Benson, Dale, Graham, Hanna, McCoy, Smith, and Yarbrough.
 - **Voting against:** None.
 - **Not Present:** Breland, McRae, and Rutledge.
 - **Duly Passed.**

(Addendum A – FY 2025 Actuarial Valuation Reports)

Smith said the Administrative Committee would revisit the 2025 Supplemental Legislative Retirement Plan (SLRP) Actuarial Valuation Report at the February board and committee meetings to allow time for a change in the funding policy, as recommended by the actuary.

REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

Committee Chair Graham reported that the Audit Committee met the morning of December 17, 2025, and heard an Internal Audit Update and Plan overview. No committee action was taken. He also presented the following items to the Board for consideration:

Annual Comprehensive Financial Report

Graham presented the Board with the FY 2025 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) for approval.

- **Motion:** To approve the FY 2025 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report.
 - **Made by:** Graham.
 - **Seconded by:** Smith.
 - **Discussion:** None.
 - **Voting for:** Benson, Dale, Graham, Hanna, McCoy, Smith, and Yarbrough.
 - **Voting against:** None.
 - **Not Present:** Breland, McRae, and Rutledge.
 - **Duly Passed.**

(Addendum B – FY 2025 ACFR)

External Audit Results

Graham presented the Board with the FY 2025 External Audit Report from Eide Bailey for approval. Graham reported that PERS received an unmodified opinion, which is a clean report with no adjusting entries nor findings noted on internal controls.

- **Motion:** To approve the FY 2025 External Audit Report.
 - **Made by:** Graham.
 - **Seconded by:** Yarbrough.
 - **Discussion:** None.
 - **Voting for:** Benson, Dale, Graham, Hanna, McCoy, Smith, and Yarbrough.
 - **Voting against:** None.
 - **Not Present:** Breland, McRae, and Rutledge.

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- **Duly Passed.**

(Addendum C – FY 2025 External Audit Report)

REPORT OF THE CLAIMS COMMITTEE

Committee Chair Yarbrough reported that the Claims Committee met the morning of December 17, 2025. He presented the following items to the Board for consideration:

New Joinder Agreements

Yarbrough presented the Board with a staff recommendation for four new joinder agreements. The first was for Shady Grove Utility District for Social Security and retirement coverages with effective dates of December 31, 2025, and January 1, 2026, respectively. The second was for the Town of Bolton for retirement coverage effective January 1, 2026. The third was for the Town of Scooba for retirement coverage with effective date of January 1, 2026. The fourth was Pearl & Leaf Rails to Trail Recreational District for Social Security and retirement coverage with effective dates of December 31, 2025, and January 1, 2026, respectively.

- **Motion:** To approve staff recommendations for new joinder agreements for Shady Grove Utility District, and Pearl & Leaf Rails to Trail Recreational District for Social Security and retirement coverage with effective dates of December 31, 2025, and January 1, 2026, respectively, and for the Town of Bolton and the Town of Scooba, for retirement coverage effective January 1, 2026.
 - **Made by:** Yarbrough.
 - **Seconded by:** Graham.
 - **Discussion:** None.
 - **Voting for:** Benson, Dale, Graham, Hanna, McCoy, Smith, and Yarbrough.
 - **Voting against:** None.
 - **Not Present:** Breland, McRae, and Rutledge.
 - **Duly Passed.**

Delinquencies

Yarbrough presented the Board with two delinquencies for certification: the Town of Goodman with \$4,958.31 in delinquencies for certification and the Town of Tchula with \$15,601.92 in delinquencies for certification.

- **Motion:** To certify \$4,958.31 in delinquencies for the Town of Goodman and \$15,601.92 in delinquencies for the Town of Tchula, and request that legal steps be taken to recover such amounts from state funds due the agencies from any department or agency of the State of Mississippi.
 - **Made by:** Yarbrough.
 - **Seconded by:** Smith.
 - **Discussion:** None.
 - **Voting for:** Benson, Dale, Graham, Hanna, McCoy, Smith, and Yarbrough.
 - **Voting against:** None.
 - **Not Present:** Breland, McRae, and Rutledge.
 - **Duly Passed.**

(Addendum D – New Joinder Agreements and Delinquencies)

REPORT OF THE DEFINED CONTRIBUTION COMMITTEE

Benson reported that the Defined Contribution Committee met the morning of December 16, 2025, and heard a Performance Review from Callan for Mississippi Deferred Compensation (MDC) and the Optional Retirement Plan (ORP). No committee action was taken. He also presented to the Board the following:

Hybrid Defined Contribution Plan Document

Benson presented the Board with the Hybrid Defined Contribution Plan Document for final adoption.

- **Motion:** To approve the Hybrid Defined Contribution Plan Document for final adoption.
 - **Made by:** Benson.
 - **Seconded by:** Graham.
 - **Discussion:** None.
 - **Voting for:** Benson, Dale, Graham, Hanna, McCoy, Smith, and Yarbrough.
 - **Voting against:** None.

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- **Not Present:** Breland, McRae, and Rutledge.
- **Duly Passed.**

(Addendum E – Hybrid Defined Contribution Plan Document)

REPORT OF THE INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

Committee Chair McCoy reported that the Investment Committee met December 16, 2025. He said the committee heard some miscellaneous updates, as well as a market update and performance review from Callan and updates from Fixed Income and Private Credit managers Sit Investments, GCM, and Blue Owl. He reported that, as of December 15, the unaudited year-to-date return was 7.34 percent. He noted that PERS is in the top 10 percent of its peer group in earnings thus far for the fiscal year. He also reported that PERS holds approximately \$38 billion in assets. Finally, he presented the following items for consideration:

Approval of Value-Add Real Estate Search Criteria

McCoy presented the Board with the search criteria for one or two value-add real estate managers with a close-end, comingled fund investment vehicle to manage an allocation of no more than \$200 million.

- **Motion:** To approve the search criteria for one to two value-add real estate managers to manage an allocation of no more than \$200 million, as recommended by staff.
 - **Made by:** McCoy.
 - **Seconded by:** Graham.
 - **Discussion:** None.
 - **Voting for:** Benson, Dale, Graham, Hanna, McCoy, Smith, and Yarbrough.
 - **Voting against:** None.
 - **Not Present:** Breland, McRae, and Rutledge.
 - **Duly Passed.**

(Addendum F – Value-Add Real Estate Search Criteria)

ACWI ex US Manager Presentation and Selection

McCoy presented the Board with the search results to replace Baillie Gifford as International Growth Equity Manager. After review of hundreds of available strategies, the field was narrowed to MFS International Growth Equity because of its emphasis on high-quality companies with above-average growth. The company has outperformed in 100 percent of rolling 10-year periods since 2001.

- **Motion:** To approve MFS International Growth Equity to replace Baillie Gifford as International Growth Equity Manager.
 - **Made by:** McCoy.
 - **Seconded by:** Hanna.
 - **Discussion:** None.
 - **Voting for:** Benson, Dale, Graham, Hanna, McCoy, Smith, and Yarbrough.
 - **Voting against:** None.
 - **Not Present:** Breland, McRae, and Rutledge.
 - **Duly Passed.**

(Addendum G – ACWI ex US Manager Presentation and Selection)

Core Infrastructure Manager Presentation

McCoy presented the Board with the search results to find four managers to manage \$150 million commitments each, which anchors approximately 80 percent of the target allocation in long-duration core assets benchmarked to a peer comparison benchmark. The four finalists presented for approval were Blackstone, Brookfield, EQT, and J.P. Morgan.

- **Motion:** To approve Blackstone, Brookfield, EQT, and J.P. Morgan as the four finalists to serve as core infrastructure managers with a \$150 million commitment each, as recommended by staff.
 - **Made by:** McCoy.
 - **Seconded by:** Yarbrough.
 - **Discussion:** None.
 - **Voting for:** Benson, Dale, Graham, Hanna, McCoy, Smith, and Yarbrough.
 - **Voting against:** None.
 - **Not Present:** Breland, McRae, and Rutledge.
 - **Duly Passed.**

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(Addendum H – Core Infrastructure Manager Presentation)

REPORT OF THE DISABILITY APPEALS COMMITTEE

Higgins presented the recommendations to the Board of the Disability Appeals Committee (DAC).

The DAC heard sworn testimony, received evidence, and gave due consideration to the applicable laws and regulations for the following case:

PERS No. 25-04 – This matter came on for hearing before the DAC April 14, 2025. The DAC submits to the Board of Trustees its Proposed Statement of Facts, Conclusions of Law, and Recommendation that the Claimant's request for duty-related disability benefits be denied and, the January 30, 2025, decision of the PERS Medical Board granting Claimant's request for non-duty-related disability benefits be affirmed.

PERS No. 25-05 – This matter came on for hearing before the DAC May 5, 2025. The DAC submits to the Board of Trustees its Proposed Statement of Facts, Conclusions of Law, and Recommendation that the Claimant's request for non-duty-related disability benefits be denied.

PERS No. 25-08 – This matter came on for hearing before the DAC July 28, 2025. The DAC submits to the Board of Trustees its Proposed Statement of Facts, Conclusions of Law, and Recommendation that the Claimant's request for non-duty-related disability benefits be granted.

- **Motion:** To accept the findings of the DAC and approve the DAC recommendation.
 - **Made by:** McCoy.
 - **Seconded by:** Smith.
 - **Discussion:** None.
 - **Voting for:** Benson, Dale, Graham, Hanna, McCoy, Smith, and Yarbrough.
 - **Voting against:** None.
 - **Not Present:** Breland, McRae, and Rutledge.
 - **Duly Passed.**

(Addendum I – Report of the Disability Appeals Committee)

RETIREE REPORT

Higgins presented the Retiree Report for the Board's approval. Higgins highlighted \$933 million for the annual Cost-of-Living Adjustment December payment.

- **Motion:** To approve the Retiree Report.
 - **Made by:** Hanna.
 - **Seconded by:** Smith.
 - **Discussion:** None.
 - **Voting for:** Benson, Dale, Graham, Hanna, McCoy, Smith, and Yarbrough.
 - **Voting against:** None.
 - **Not Present:** Breland, McRae, and Rutledge.
 - **Duly Passed.**

(Addendum J - Retiree Report)

INVESTMENT REPORT

Higgins presented the Investment Report. He requested board approval of this report, as well as of all trades and transactions performed by the PERS Investments division since the October 22, 2025, board meeting.

- **Motion:** To approve the Investment Report, as well as all trades and transactions performed by the PERS Investments division since the October 22, 2025, board meeting.
 - **Made by:** Graham.
 - **Seconded by:** Hanna.
 - **Discussion:** None.
 - **Voting for:** Benson, Dale, Graham, Hanna, McCoy, Smith, and Yarbrough.
 - **Voting against:** None.

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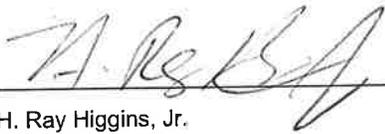
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- **Not Present:** Breland, McRae, and Rutledge.
- **Duly Passed.**

(Addendum K - Investment Report)

Benson wished everyone a Merry Christmas and called the meeting adjourned at 1:17 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



H. Ray Higgins, Jr.
Executive Director
Public Employees' Retirement System



Mr. Bill Benson
Chair
PERS Board of Trustees

HRH

