

Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement

600 State Office Building

100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

St. Paul, MN 55155-1201

HOUSE MEMBERS

Representative Kaela Berg
Representative Ethan Cha
Representative Kaohly Her
Representative Danny Nadeau
Representative Michael Nelson
Representative Tim O'Driscoll
Representative Dan Wolgamott

SENATE MEMBERS

Senator Nick A. Frentz
Senator Jeff R. Howe
Senator Erin P. Murphy
Senator Carla J. Nelson
Senator Sandra L. Pappas
Senator Jordan Rasmusson
Senator Judy Seeberger

COMMISSION STAFF

Susan Lenczewski, Executive Director
Sean Kelly, Deputy Director
Lisa Diesslin, Commission Assistant
Phone: 651-296-2750
TDD: 651-296-9896
Email: lcpr@lcpr.mn.gov
Website: www.lcpr.mn.gov

October 30, 2023

Duluth Courthouse, County Board Room
100 N 5th Ave. W., Room 200
Duluth, Minnesota 55802

MINUTES

Call to order:

Chair Her called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.

Commission Members Present:

Representatives Her, Berg, Cha, and Nadeau
Senators Seeberger and Pappas

Agenda Items

Listening Session Opening Remarks

Chair Her provided opening remarks and stated that the goal of the meeting is to hear from members of the public on the topics of pension and retirement benefits for Minnesota's public employees and the work of the Commission. Chair Her referred members and the public to the [2023 Session Summary](#).

Representative Liz Olson (District 08A) and Senator Jennifer McEwen (District 8) were also present.

Testimony related to pension plans other than teacher plans

Tamara Lemke, a Program Facilitator at St. Louis County Jail, testified regarding retirement coverage and plan eligibility for employees of the Programs Department.

Seth Justice Loeffler-Kemp, St. Louis County 911 Dispatcher and Executive Board Member of AFSCME Local 66 (Arrowhead Region), testified regarding enhanced pension benefits and the retirement age for 911 telecommunicators.

Ryan Stauber, 911 Dispatcher, testified to encourage the Commission to consider the recommendations from the 911 Telecommunicator Pension Benefits Working Group Report from 2022.

Brian Rice, on behalf of the Minnesota Professional Fire Fighters (MPFF) and the Minnesota Police Fraternal Association (MPFA), testified regarding PERA Police and Fire Plan cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) improvements and provided a [handout](#).

Michael Nelson, Minnesota State Retirement System (MSRS) retiree and Vice-President of AFSCME MN Chapter 5 Retirees United, testified regarding COLA improvements.

Testimony related to the Teachers Retirement Association (TRA)

Denise Specht, Education Minnesota President, testified regarding the need for pensions and retirement security.

Bridget Peterson, Media Specialist at Esko Public Schools, testified regarding benefit increases for Tier II teachers and the current early retirement reduction factors.

Brian Cole, Orchestra Teacher at Moorhead Area Public Schools, testified regarding benefit increases for teacher pensions.

Caitlin Effa, Education Minnesota Aspiring Educators President and University of Minnesota Duluth education student, testified regarding the impact of pension benefits on teacher retention and on benefit increases for teacher pensions.

Kim Hannan, Academic Specialist at Osseo Area Schools, testified regarding benefit increases for teacher pensions.

Melissa Larson, University of Minnesota Duluth education student, testified regarding the teacher shortage in Minnesota and the impact of pensions on teacher recruitment.

Betty Greene, an MSRS and TRA retiree, testified regarding COLAs and pensions as a recruiting tool for teachers and provided a written copy of her [testimony](#).

Bob Laine, a 30-year teacher, testified regarding disparities between TRA Tier I and Tier II teachers.

Karl Kaufmann, teacher, testified regarding disparities between TRA Tier I and Tier II teachers.

Steve Clouse, representing TRA Tier II teachers, testified regarding current early retirement reduction factors and other pension reform.

Blaine Novak, New York Mills Public Schools Superintendent, and Michael Malmberg, Pillager Public Schools Superintendent, representing the Minnesota Association of School Administrators, testified regarding pension improvements for teacher recruitment and retention and provided a [handout](#).

Kristy Streveler, a member of the Esko Education Association, spoke on disparities between TRA Tier I and Tier II teachers and pension reform.

Angela Paulson, Vice President of the Esko Education Association, testified regarding disparities between TRA Tier I and Tier II teachers and the normal retirement age for teachers.

Jim Olson, a member of the Duluth Federation of Teachers, testified regarding legislative changes to TRA since 1981.

Lonnie Duberstein, representing Retired Educators Association of Minnesota (REAM), testified regarding actuarial determined contributions and COLAs and provided a [handout](#).

Joan Beaver, representing Education Minnesota Retired, testified regarding COLAs.

Maggie Temple, teacher, testified regarding disparities between TRA Tier I and Tier II teachers.

Katie Dickerson from Eden Prairie testified regarding pension reform.

Joseph Rocco, a 30-year teacher at Hibbing High School, testified regarding pension reform.

Additional Testimony

Jess Langhorst, Security Counselor at the Minnesota Sex Offender Program in Moose Lake, MN and Vice-President of AFSCME Local 1092, testified regarding retirement coverage and plan eligibility for the PERA Correctional Plan.

Aaron Salmela, educator, testified regarding the perception of pension benefits for student teachers and pension reform.

Mike LeDoux, Minnesota State Patrol Troopers Association, testified regarding the law enforcement shortage and the impact of pension benefits on recruitment.

Closing Comments

Chair Her introduced former Commission Chair and legislator, Mary Murphy. Rep. Murphy addressed the Commission.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.