

**HOWARD COUNTY POLICE AND FIRE EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT PLAN
HOWARD COUNTY RETIREMENT PLAN**

**JOINT MEETING OF THE RETIREMENT PLAN COMMITTEES
September 23, 2021**

A joint meeting of the Retirement Plan Committees for the Howard County Police and Fire Employees' Retirement Plan (the "Police and Fire Plan") and the Howard County Retirement Plan (the "Employees Plan") (jointly, the "Plans") was held on Thursday, September 23, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. via a WebEx conference.

Police and Fire Plan:

Members Present:

Human Resources Administrator: Anju Bennett
Chief Administrative Officer: Lonnie Robbins
Director of Finance: Rafiu Ighile
Budget Administrator: Holly Sun
Representative, Police Department Supervisory Employees:
 Jason Luckenbaugh (voting Member in Fiscal Year 2022)
Representative, Howard County Police Officers' Association, Lodge 21:
 Nicolas Holocker
Representative, Fire and Rescue Supervisory Employees:
 Vincent Baker (non-voting Member in Fiscal Year 2022)
Representative, International Association of Firefighters, Local 2000:
 Richard Ruehl

Member Absent

None.

Employees Plan:

Members Present:

Human Resources Administrator: Anju Bennett
Chief Administrative Officer Designee: John Peterson
Deputy Director of Finance: Angela Price
Budget Administrator Designee: Angela Cabellon
Representative, American Federation of State, County and Municipal
Employees Local 3085: Dale R. Chase
Employee Representative: Jeff Bronow

Member Absent

Representative, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 3080: Melanie Avery

Also present for all or a portion of the meeting were:

Scott Southern, Retirement Coordinator
Karen Gerald, Assistant Retirement Coordinator
Nike Yahaya, Retirement Assistant
Sima Taghavi, Department of Finance
Lori Buchman, Department of Finance
Margaret Belmondo, NEPC
Will Forde, NEPC
Francesca LoVerde, NEPC
Jamar Herry, Office of Law
Paul W. Madden, Whiteford, Taylor & Preston L.L.P.

Anju Bennett acted as Chair of the meeting and Paul Madden acted as secretary.

Lonnie Robbins introduced Anju Bennett and Angela Cabellon. Anju, as Human Resources Administrator, serves as the Chair and is a voting member of both Plans. Angela will be the Budget Director Designee and is a voting member of the Employees Plan.

The minutes of the July 22, 2021 meeting of the Joint Committees were approved by the members of each Committee.

Margaret Belmondo gave the performance report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021. The assets as of June 30, 2021 were \$1.42 billion. Gross performance for the 2nd quarter was 5.4%; gross performance for the fiscal year was 26.8%, slightly behind the median performance of 27.4% for public defined benefit plans with assets greater than \$1 billion. Over the trailing 3-year and 5-year periods, the fund had higher than median returns with lower than median risk with Sharp ratios of 1.22 (over 3 years) and 1.45 (over 5 years).

Will Forde presented the August 2021 Preliminary Performance Report. The total fund returned +1.4.9% for the month. The fiscal year to date return is +1.7%. The market value of the fund as of August 31 was \$1.45 billion.

Cliff Kalish, Greg Czarnecki and Matt Fleming made a presentation on behalf of William Blair. Wm Blair recently acquired Investment Counsellors of Maryland (ICM),

which has been the Plans small-cap value manager since 1998. As a result, Wm Blair now manages two separate portfolios: the Fund's small-cap value portfolio and the Fund's SMID growth portfolio.

Wm Blair acquired the whole ICM team and there has been no change in the small-cap value strategy. Under Wm Blair, the fees for the small-cap value strategy have been reduced from 94 to 89 basis points.

Matt Fleming suggested moving the SMID growth portfolio from the institutional (I) share class to the R6 share class which would result in a savings of 6 basis points. Will Forde will review and make a recommendation at the next meeting.

Matt also proposed a change to the investment guidelines for the SMID growth portfolio to allow Wm Blair to invest in "a diversified portfolio of growth-oriented companies with market capitalizations typically lower than that of the largest stock in the Russell Midcap Index." NEPC indicated approval for the change. After discussion and on motion made and seconded, the change to the guidelines was approved.

Anju asked for views on whether the next meeting should be in-person or virtual. Some members of the Committee spoke in favor of an in-person meeting. Scott will explore available meeting rooms.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Madden

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Secretary of the Meeting

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**EXHIBITS
TO
MINUTES OF HOWARD COUNTY POLICE AND FIRE EMPLOYEES'
RETIREMENT PLAN
AND HOWARD COUNTY RETIREMENT PLAN
JOINT MEETING OF THE RETIREMENT PLAN COMMITTEES
September 23, 2021**

1. NEPC Open Session Meeting Materials, September 23, 2021.
2. William Blair Presentation, September 23, 2021.

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