



TOWN OF SUFFIELD

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES RETIREMENT COMMISSION FEBRUARY 13, 2025 – 5:00 pm

TOWN CLERK
SUFFIELD, CT

2025 FEB 28 AM 8:27

REC'D BY: *Amu*

Location: Hybrid Meeting
Call-In Number: 1 646 876 9923
Meeting ID: 813 3569 6408
Password: 803393

Retirement Commission Members Present:

Ryan Burrell
Kacy Colston, Chairperson
Glenn Gazdik
David Innes
David Mercik
Mark Englander
Colin Moll, First Selectman

Retirement Commission Members Absent:

Dan Sheriden

Also Present:

Amanda Moore, Finance Director
Michael Lepore, Focus Partners Institutional
Claire McDonald, Focus Partners Institutional

1. Chair Colston called the Regular Meeting of the Retirement Commission to order for Thursday, February 13, 2025 at 5:07 p.m. There was no Public Input. The minutes from the Regular Meeting held November 14, 2024 were reviewed. **Selectman Moll made a motion to amend the minutes. #5 – the fifth sentence should read: “There was discussion about adding NASDAQ Index Fund as an investment option.” Mr. Mercik seconded the motion to amend the minutes. All in favor; motion passed.**
2. Public Input – none
Note: GYL Financial Synergies will now be referred to as Focus Partners | Institutional. The Town of Suffield will continue to be supported by Mr. Lepore, Ms. McDonald and their team.
3. **Review Investments** - Michael Lepore from Focus Partners Institutional – There was discussion on the current economic climate, highlighting the high cost of interest on debt and the potential for inflation. Mr. Lepore also touched on the performance of large-cap stocks, noting that small-cap stocks have historically outperformed but have not done so recently. The Commission emphasized the importance of focusing on what can be controlled and managing risk exposure. Ms. McDonald then reviewed the performance of the pension plan, noting that it has outperformed the benchmark across most time frames. She also discussed the underperformance of certain funds, including T. Rowe Price Growth Stock and AMG Times Square, and announced the results of a search for a replacement for the Oppenheimer International Growth fund.

These minutes are not official until accepted at a subsequent meeting.

Ms. McDonald presented the performance of the pension plan's investment portfolio, highlighting the strong returns over the past year and the minor underperformance in the fourth quarter due to the rise in interest rates. She also discussed the portfolio's yield and duration. Suffield questioned the decision to hold a longer duration portfolio, given the recent interest rate increases. Glenn suggested that the pension plan's assets and liabilities should be matched more closely, and that the pension plan should not be overly reliant on the guaranteed fund. Chair Colston asked if there was a need to change the investment strategy, but no consensus was reached.

The Commission discussed the upcoming change in the fixed income portfolio due to the sale of Mesirow's fixed income business to MetLife. The team agreed to continue monitoring the situation and adjust the portfolio as necessary. Ms. McDonald will follow up with Empower about potentially lowering their fees for the 457 plan.

Mr. Mercik made a motion to transfer all funds from Oppenheimer International Growth Fund to the Capital Group International Equity Fund. Mr. Englander seconded. All in favor; motion passed.

4. **Review/discussion/vote on proposed investment policy** – The meeting focused on the proposed investment policy and its implications. Chair Colston explained that the policy had been rewritten to make it more readable and to clarify the roles of the Retirement Commission and consulting firms.
 - Some concerns were raised about the document, particularly regarding the voting of proxy proposals and the modification of the investment policy for participants who fail to provide investment directions.
 - The Commission also discussed the need for education on the investment policy and the involvement of HR and finance in the decision-making process. Ms. Moore noted requested changes and the updating of the format of the document.
 - There was discussion on the importance of town employees being involved in decision-making processes, particularly in relation to the plan design.
 - Chair Colston will schedule a special meeting for an ERISA discussion.

Mr. Innes made a motion to approve the Investment Policy with the requested changes and formatting of the document. Mr. Englander seconded. All in favor; motion passed.

5. **Old Business** – The Commission would like an actuary to project cashflows.
6. **New Business** – The Commission reviewed and accepted a short submission on the commissions accomplishments for inclusion in the town's Annual Statement for FY 2023/24.
7. **Mr. Mercik a motion to adjourn. Mr. Englander seconded. All in favor and the meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Connie Irwin
Recording Secretary