



# CITY of EL PASO

EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT TRUST

## BOARD MINUTES FOR THE REGULAR MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2025, AT 8:30 A.M. RETIREMENT TRUST ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 1039 CHELSEA

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### **Members in Attendance:**

Robert Studer, Chairman  
Karl C. Rimkus, Vice Chairman, in at 8:35 AM  
Isaura Valdez, in at 8:38 AM  
Karina Bragalla  
Matt Kerr, out at 9:11 AM  
Deborah G. Hamlyn  
Rep. Chris Canales  
Rep. Art Fierro, out at 9:03 AM

### **Members Absent:**

Rene Peña

### **Others in Attendance:**

Robert Ash, Executive Director / Legal Advisor  
Adrian Sanchez, Deputy Executive Director  
Karina Chavez, Administrative Assistant  
David Garcia, Benefits Supervisor  
Eduardo Miranda, Legal Counsel  
Margarita Marin, Office of the Comptroller  
Alex Browning, Callan LLC  
Alex Ford, Callan LLC  
Jose Espino, Office of the Comptroller

- Item 1. Benefits Supervisor David Garcia called the meeting to order at 8:34 AM. Garcia noted that a quorum was met.

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Retirement Trust Board recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC**

Benefits Supervisor David Garcia read the Notice to the Public.

All matters listed under the CONSENT AGENDA will be considered by the Retirement Trust Board to be routine and will be enacted by one motion in the form listed below. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless members of the Retirement Trust Board or persons in the audience request specific items be removed from the CONSENT AGENDA to

the REGULAR AGENDA for discussion prior to the time the Retirement Trust Board votes on the motion to adopt the CONSENT AGENDA.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Item 2. Approve the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of September 17, 2025.

Item 3. Consideration and action on the following retirements:

	Name	Department	Service Time (estimated)
A.	Age & Service Retirement:		
1.	Camposano, Gaspar	Streets and Maintenance	30 years 07 months
2.	Hankins, Ricardo	Environmental Services	18 years 05 months
3.	Kellogg, Dean L	El Paso Water	17 years 00 months
4.	Rael, Beatrice Duran	Fire	30 years 02 months
5.	Vera, Elizabeth	Fire	19 years 09 months
6.	Vera, Louis	Sun Metro	08 years 10 months
B.	Age & Service – Proportionate Retirement Program:		
1.	Duran Jr., John	Fire	15 years 04 months
C.	Deferred Retirement:		
1.	Arroyo, David Aaron	Airport	11 years 10 months
2.	Paredes Jr., Gilbert L.	Sun Metro	08 years 00 months

Item 4. Consideration and action on survivor benefit applications for:

- A. Guevara, Ramona L., survivor of Ramon Guevara, retiree.
- B. Moreno, Leticia Parra, survivor of Arturo Moreno, employee.

Item 5. Consideration and action regarding the receipt of the death verification analysis.

Item 6. Consideration and action on the following Committee reports/appointments:

- A. Administrative Services Committee
- B. Executive Committee
- C. Facility and Maintenance Committee
- D. Financial Oversight Committee
- E. Investment Committee

**Motion made by Matt Kerr to approve the Consent Agenda; seconded by Deborah Hamlyn. The motion required polling:**

<b>Karina Brasgalla</b>	<b>aye</b>
<b>Matt Kerr</b>	<b>aye</b>
<b>Deborah Hamlyn</b>	<b>aye</b>
<b>Rep. Chris Canales</b>	<b>aye</b>
<b>Rep. Art Fierro</b>	<b>aye</b>

**Motion carried.**



## REGULAR AGENDA

- Item 7. Discussion and action regarding the Treasurer's Report for the month ended September 30, 2025.

Deputy Chief Financial Officer/Comptroller Margarita Marin presented; the Board received and reviewed the Treasurer's Report for the month ended September 30, 2025.

The Treasurer's Report is prepared monthly by the Office of the Comptroller based on information received from the Trust's custodian.

The report consists of two statements ("Statement of Net Assets Available for Benefits" and the "Statement of Changes in Net Assets Available for Benefits"), three schedules ("Quarterly Statements of Changes in Net Assets Available for Benefits", "Investment Income Analysis", and "Pension Administration Actual/Budget Comparison"), and seven graphs ("Net YTD Investment Income", "Net Investment Income Rate of Return", "Refunds & Administrative Expenses", "Benefits Paid to Retirees", "Net Assets Available for Benefits Monthly", "FY26 Pension Retiree Population", and "FY26 Retiree Benefit Paid").

The information in the report includes (i) receivables, which include amounts due to the Trust for securities sold, outstanding interest, dividends earned, and contributions as of the date of the report; (ii) liabilities, which include amounts owed by the Trust for securities purchased and accrued expenses as of the date of the report; and (iii) unrealized/realized investment income, which is an estimate of the value of the portfolio as of the reporting dates.

Marin reviewed the statements, schedules, and graphs. The unaudited totals are for the periods ended September 30, 2025. Net assets available for benefits were about 1.079 billion dollars, a net increase of about 22 million dollars for the fiscal year. Contributions were approximately 5.4 million dollars (about 3.3 million dollars from the employer and 2.1 million dollars from employees). Benefits paid to retirees were about 7.1 million dollars. The rate of return, which is the fiscal net investment loss/gain over the average net assets available for benefits, was approximately 2.3 percent. Marin noted the target rate of return for the fiscal year of 7.25 percent, about 0.6 percent for the month ended September 30, 2025.

Chairman Robert Studer noted that for fiscal year 2026, as recently approved by the Board, "Administrative Expenses" will incorporate additional existing expenditures (not new spending) in the annual budget. Studer suggested that the Treasurer's Report include a footnote to specify those additions.

**No action was taken on this item.**

- Item 8. Discussion and action regarding the receipt of an investment performance report for the month of September 2025 and related matters from Callan LLC.

Alex Browning of Callan LLC presented; the Board received and reviewed the monthly investment performance report for September 30, 2025, from Callan.

Browning reviewed asset allocation. Private Equity is overweight and Domestic Fixed Income is underweight (bottom of target range at about 21 percent). Browning reviewed performance,



noting that markets have been resilient despite near-term headwinds like the government shutdown. The total fund return (2.27 percent for the month) was slightly below the benchmark, largely due to the structural overweighting of small/mid-cap companies in Domestic Equity and the use of the public market Russell 3000 benchmark for Private Equity. The Investment Committee ("IC") will analyze the manager effect versus the structure effect of the Domestic Equity underperformance against the benchmark. Browning acknowledged that Private Equity underperforms the opportunity cost benchmark (Russell 3000) in the current momentum-driven bull market. Browning discussed adding a peer median benchmark to Private Equity as a secondary metric to better reflect short-term performance relative to the private market opportunity set. Browning advised that the IC will review and noted that a comprehensive review of Private Equity structure and a pacing analysis (expected cash flows) is scheduled for the December meeting.

**No action was taken on this item.**

- Item 9. Discussion and action regarding the approval of a resolution amending the Trust's Personnel Rules (tabled from the September 2025 Board Meeting).

Executive Director Robert Ash presented; the Board received and reviewed the proposed resolution amending the Trust's Personnel Rules.

Ash advised that while the amendment was not reviewed by the Administrative Services Committee ("ASC"), it was reviewed by members of the Executive Committee and drafted by outside legal counsel. The primary purpose is to delegate the authority for most personnel from the Board to the Executive Director. This delegated authority includes the power to hire, fire, negotiate, sign staff employment contracts, and post staff positions, with the exception of the Executive Director and Deputy Executive Director positions. The effect of approval would be that most future employment contracts would not require Board approval but would be handled by the Executive Director, within existing budget and other constraints.

**Motion made by Karl Rimkus to approve the resolution amending the Trust Personnel Rules; seconded by Rep. Art Fierro. The motion required polling:**

<b>Isaura Valdez</b>	<b>nay</b>
<b>Karina Brasgalla</b>	<b>nay</b>
<b>Matt Kerr</b>	<b>aye</b>
<b>Deborah Hamlyn</b>	<b>nay</b>
<b>Karl Rimkus</b>	<b>aye</b>
<b>Rep. Chris Canales</b>	<b>nay</b>
<b>Rep. Art Fierro</b>	<b>aye</b>

**Motion failed.**

Following the vote and discussion about the resolution, Board Chairman Robert Studer requested that the Administrative Services Committee review the item and return with a recommendation that addresses the concerns raised. Ash acknowledged the request.

- Item 10. Discussion and action regarding the selection of Baker Tilly US, LLP to provide professional auditing services.

Executive Director Robert Ash presented; the Board received and reviewed the proposal from Baker Tilly.

Three firms submitted proposals for the required annual audit. The Financial Oversight Committee ("FOC") reviewed the proposals and is recommending moving forward with negotiations with Baker Tilly. The evaluation process was weighted equally: 50% based on price and 50% based on the auditing experience and professionals assigned to the audit. Trustee and FOC Chair Matt Kerr advised that although Baker Tilly's bid was the lowest, all three proposals were in a similar price range. The recommendation was not solely a price-based decision. Baker Tilly's proposed team and resources were also deciding factors in the FOC's recommendation.

**Motion made by Karl Rimkus to select the audit firm Baker Tilly US, LLP to provide audit services as recommended by the Financial Oversight Committee and authorize the Executive Director or legal counsel to negotiate and contract for such audit services and further authorize the Board Chair or Executive Director to sign related contracts; seconded by Rep. Chris Canales. The motion required polling:**

Isaura Valdez	aye
Karina Brasgalla	aye
Matt Kerr	aye
Deborah Hamlyn	aye
Karl Rimkus	aye
Rep. Chris Canales	aye

**Motion carried.**

- Item 11. Discussion and action terminating the current contract with Carr, Riggs and Ingram for audit services.

Executive Director Robert Ash presented; the Board received and reviewed the draft letter to terminate the current contract with Carr, Riggs and Ingram ("CRI") for audit services.

Action is necessary as the Board has authorized negotiations with Baker Tilly (Item 10). The current contract with CRI provides for a 30-day termination notice. CRI has already been instructed not to perform any audit work this year. The motion would authorize the Executive Director to send the official termination letter immediately.

**Motion made by Karl Rimkus to authorize the Executive Director to send a termination notice to the audit firm Carr, Riggs and Ingram; seconded by Rep. Chris Canales. The motion required polling:**

Isaura Valdez	aye
Karina Brasgalla	aye
Matt Kerr	aye
Deborah Hamlyn	aye
Karl Rimkus	aye
Rep. Chris Canales	aye

**Motion carried.**

- Item 12. Discussion and action on a report from the Executive Director regarding:

Executive Director reported on the following:

A. Office Operating Hours

The office hours will temporarily change during the winter months of November, December, and January. The schedule will revert to 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday, as



opposed to the usual 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM schedule. This change is to accommodate holidays and reduced daylight hours. The webpage will be updated to reflect the new hours. Ash noted that the office will be closed on Veterans Day, following the standard holiday schedule.

**B. Compass Points Newsletter**

The semi-annual newsletter, "Compass Points," was released and has been well-received. Ash thanked Administrative Assistant Karina Chavez and staff for their work on the newsletter. The Trust aims to increase electronic distribution but will continue to send postcards to retirees, allowing recipients to request a hard copy by mail.

**C. Special Board Meeting**

A Special Board Meeting is scheduled for October 29th, from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. The primary focus will be strategic planning. Staff from the City's Performance Office will lead the strategic planning process. A working lunch will be provided. Attendance and participation are strongly encouraged.

**D. Staff Recruitment**

The Trust is close to making an offer for the Retiree Benefits Clerk position. Hiring is contingent on the amendment to the Personnel Rules, which will likely be reviewed at the October 29th meeting. Multiple rounds of interviews have been conducted, and the quality of the applicants was notably strong.

Board Chairman Robert Studer reminded the Board that the November and December Regular Board Meetings will be held on the second Thursday of the month. Ash noted that the Investment Committee meeting will be the day before the Regular Board Meeting in November.

**No action was taken on this item.**

**Item 13. For Notation:**

**A. Refund of Contributions:**

	Name	Department	Total Refund
1.	Alvarado Gutierrez, Alejandro	El Paso Water	\$ 5,410.34
2.	Arenas, Jesus	Sun Metro	\$ 46,410.05
3.	Avila, Jonathan	Economic Development	\$ 1,525.62
4.	Ayala, Maria	Fire	\$ 14,412.78
5.	Barron, Xochitl	Sun Metro	\$ 29,423.30
6.	Caraballo, Diego	Fire	\$ 9,520.81
7.	Carlton, Alisa	Parks and Recreation	\$ 1,015.90
8.	Dominguez, Ramon	Environmental Services	\$ 5,387.87
9.	Fernandez, Anthony	Fire	\$ 1,223.11
10.	Flores, Bibiana	El Paso Water	\$ 11,492.62
11.	Flores, Josh	Streets and Maintenance	\$ 2,888.90
12.	Frias, Roberto	Information Technology	\$ 42,798.09
13.	Hamilton, Coleen	El Paso Water	\$ 7,164.46
14.	Heredia, Elizabeth	Animal Services	\$ 548.45
15.	Huante, Alexandra	Libraries	\$ 2,022.67
16.	Longoria, Christopher	Sun Metro	\$ 7,170.77
17.	Lopez, Alan	El Paso Water	\$ 6,503.60

18.	Martinez, Miguel	Police	\$	9,207.78
19.	Mena, Paul	Beneficiary	\$	63,257.79
20.	Montes, Stephanie	Purchasing and Strategic Planning	\$	40,749.46
21.	Navedo, Hector	Sun Metro	\$	15,777.68
22.	Rodriguez, Joshua	Sun Metro	\$	11,530.35
23.	Salinas, Katia	Parks and Recreation	\$	3,400.65
24.	Tarin, Rosalia	QDRO	\$	102,211.33
25.	Valenzuela, Christie	Municipal Court	\$	284.54
26.	Vargas, Pedro	El Paso Water	\$	4,189.92
27.	Villalobos, Michael	El Paso Water	\$	4,502.64
28.	Zambrano, Susana	Public Health	\$	10,546.44
29.	Zamorano, Daniel	Streets and Maintenance	\$	11,445.20
				<b>\$ 472,023.12</b>

**Item for notation only. No action was required on this item.**

### **OPEN COMMENT PERIOD**

The Board of Trustees allowed speakers from the public to comment on any pension-related issue that was not on the agenda. During the Open Comment Period of the meeting, the public was given an opportunity to address the Board.

There were no speakers to comment on any pension-related issue that was not on the agenda.

**Motion made Karl Rimkus to retire into Executive Session; seconded by Rep. Chris Canales. None opposed. The Board retired into Executive Session pursuant to the Texas Government Code, Sections 551.071-551.076 and Section 551.078 at 9:10 A.M.**

**Motion made by Karl Rimkus to reconvene from Executive Session; seconded by Deborah Hamlyn. None opposed. Motion carried.**

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The Board will retire into EXECUTIVE SESSION pursuant to the Texas Government Code, Sections 551.071-551.076 and Section 551.078 to discuss any of the following:

**Section 551.071 CONSULTATION WITH ATTORNEY**

Section 551.072 DELIBERATION REGARDING REAL PROPERTY

**Section 551.074 PERSONNEL MATTERS**

Section 551.075 CONFERENCE WITH EMPLOYEES

Section 551.076 DELIBERATION REGARDING SECURITY DEVICES

Section 551.078 DELIBERATION REGARDING DISABILITY APPLICANT'S MEDICAL RECORDS

**EX1. Sections 551.071 and 551.074**

Discussion and action regarding the Executive Director's employment contract.



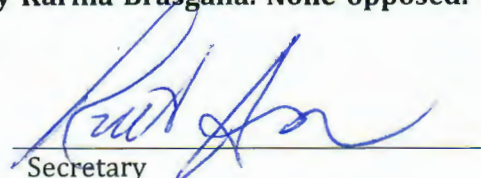

**Motion made by Karl Rimkus to approve a contract amendment to the employment contract of the Executive Director and that the Board Chair be authorized to sign related documents; seconded by Karina Brasgalla. The motion required polling:**

Isaura Valdez	aye
Karina Brasgalla	aye
Deborah Hamlyn	aye
Karl Rimkus	aye
Rep. Chris Canales	aye

**Motion carried.**

Item 14. Adjournment.

**Motion made by Karl Rimkus to adjourn the City of El Paso Employees Retirement Trust Board Meeting on October 15, 2025; seconded by Karina Brasgalla. None opposed. The motion was carried at 9:27 AM.**


Secretary

Chairman