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TOWN OF ESSEX
ESSEX RETIREMENT BOARD MINUTES

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, April 18, 2023 – Meeting Room B/ZOOM – 5:00 p.m.

Present:

Board Members: Peter Decker (Chair), Robert Parkerson, Kelly Sterner, Mary-Louise Polo

Absent:

Stacia Libby

Others Present:

Tracey Celentano, Finance Director

Rodger Metzger, Hooker & Holcombe Investment Advisors, Inc. President

Peter Decker called the meeting to order on Tuesday, April 18, 2023, at 5:01 p.m.

Approval of the Agenda:

Peter Decker asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Motion to approve made by Robert Parkerson seconded by Mary-Louise Polo. Motion passed.

Approval of Minutes from February 28, 2023:

Peter Decker asked for a motion to approve the minutes of February 28th, 2023. Motion to approve made by Kelly Sterner seconded by Robert Parkerson. Motion passed.

New Business:

a. Hooker & Holcombe Acquisition (USI Consulting Group)

Mr. Metzger spoke about H&H joining USI Consulting Group along with a presentation that showed its services and features.

b. First Quarter 2023 Portfolio Review - Rodger Metzger, H&H Quarter

Mr. Metzger summarized the quarter's review by discussing S&P valuation measures, returns and valuations by sector, inflation, valuation measures, inflation, inflation heatmap, U.S. Treasury yield curve, and global equity markets.

He then discussed the Town of Essex's retirement plan allocation overview, the portfolio's appraisal, and the merit service plan as well as the returns of the underlying funds.

Mr. Metzger then spoke about the continued restructuring of the bond portfolio, and the Retirement Board agreed to the changes he recommended.

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c. Application to Initiate Benefits

Tracey Celentano spoke about a Town employee that is retiring in July and will have 6.33 years of service. Peter Decker asked for a motion to approve the benefits. Motion to approve made by Robert Parkerson and Kelly Sterner seconded. Motion passed.

d. Hooker & Holcombe Contract Review

Peter Decker asked for a motion to review and recommend to the Board of Selectmen approval of the three-year contract renewal of Hooker & Holcombe. It is expected that this contract will be “re-papered” when Hooker and Holcombe is acquired by USI Consulting Group. Motion to approve made by Mary-Louise Polo and Kelly Sterner seconded. Motion passed.

e. Proxies

Tracey Celentano presented the Proxy Log listing proxies received. The Retirement Board acknowledged receipt.

f. Invoice Review

Tracey Celentano stated the first quarter invoices were unavailable, so this motion was tabled.

Old Business:

a. Review of Plan Documents

Peter Decker brought up that Kelly Sterner found meeting minutes from September 2014 documenting a motion to grant Hooker & Holcombe discretion. Mr. Metzger mentioned USI Consulting Group has capabilities for discretion. The Investment Policy Statement and determination of discretion will be revisited after the merger is finalized. Rodger and Peter briefly spoke about the next phase for Hooker & Holcombe, regarding updating agreements (“re-papering”) with USI Consulting Group.

Peter reminded Mr. Metzger that if the Retirement Board needs to consider changing discretion, a resolution must be brought forth to BOS and Town meeting.

Peter Decker spoke about the plan documents and amendments, specifically Section 10, and that next year the Retirement Board is going to be subject to a full restatement of all plans because of the CARES Act. Peter circled back to speaking about plan documents and discussed the original Trust document from 1969 and IRS determination letter. The Town Clerk, Joel Marzi, is collaborating with Peter to research signatories and develop an updated Ordinance.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, June 13th, 2023. The May 9th meeting will be canceled.

Adjournment:

Peter Decker asked for a motion to adjourn at 6:22 p.m. Motion to adjourn made by Mary-Louise Polo seconded by Kelly Sterner. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,
Elson Guo