



**CITY OF MESA, ARIZONA  
ARIZONA PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL RETIREMENT SYSTEM  
LOCAL PENSION BOARD MEETING – FIRE/POLICE  
MARCH 21, 2024**

A meeting of the Public Safety Local Fire and Police Pension Boards of Mesa, Arizona, was held in Conference Room 170, 20 E. Main Street, 1st Floor, March 21, 2024 at 11:03 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Dee Ann Mickelsen, Chair  
Chris Brady, City Manager  
Kurt Castaneda (Fire)  
Stephen Lentz (Police)  
Ryan A. Russell (Police)  
Jenny Sheppard (Citizen Member)  
David Silides (Fire)\*

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

None

**STAFF PRESENT**

Holly Moseley, City Clerk  
Vanessa Liristis, Sr. Program Asst.

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Steven Aguilar  
Kathryn Baillie  
Nicole Fazzio  
Melissa Green  
Nitra Hawkins  
Dave Hicks  
Brian Kelley  
Cynthia Kelley  
Teri Overbey  
Crystal Parks  
Jennifer Pena  
Marie Reece

(\*Participated telephonically.)

(Items on the agenda were discussed out of order, but for the purposes of clarity will remain as listed on the agenda.)

1. Approval of the minutes of the Public Safety Local Fire and Police Pension Boards meeting of February 15, 2024.

It was moved by Boardmember Sheppard, seconded by Boardmember Castaneda, that the minutes of the Public Safety Local Fire and Police Pension Boards meeting of February 15, 2024 be approved.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Brady-Castaneda-Lentz-Mickelsen-Russell-Sheppard-Silides  
NAYS - None  
ABSENT – None

Carried unanimously.

## FIRE PENSION BOARD

(The Local Fire Pension Board recessed at 11:08 a.m. in order to convene an Executive Session and reconvened the meeting at 11:51 a.m.)

2. Discuss and take action on the Accidental Disability Retirement application of Fire Captain Christopher Love.

Chairperson Mickelsen welcomed Kathryn Baillie, the attorney representing Fire Captain Christopher Love, to the meeting. She encouraged the members to pose any questions they may have regarding Mr. Love's pending Accidental Disability Retirement application.

Boardmember Castaneda stated that the Local Board has reviewed all documents provided to the Local Board, which included both disciplinary actions and medical treatment records. He advised that the documentation provided is insufficient to support Mr. Love's claimed disability.

It was moved by Boardmember Castaneda, seconded by Boardmember Brady, that the Accidental Disability Retirement application of Fire Captain Christopher Love be denied due to insufficient evidence in support of the claimed disability.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES - Brady-Castaneda-Mickelsen-Sheppard-Silides

NAYS - None

ABSENT - None

Carried unanimously.

In response to Ms. Baillie's questions, Boardmembers advised that to move forward with the process, Mr. Love will need to submit a new application, more records related to causation and treatment, and demonstrate that he has been seeking treatment for a significant period of time.

Boardmember Castaneda added that the treatment timeline is too short.

Ms. Baillie thanked the Local Board.

3. Discuss and take action on the Accidental Disability Retirement application of Firefighter Danna Taylor.

Chairperson Mickelsen welcomed Kathryn Baillie, the attorney representing Firefighter Danna Taylor, to the meeting. She advised that the Local Board has reviewed additional documents submitted, which included updated medical records and the VA form listing service-connected disabilities that the Local Board requested. She encouraged the members to pose any questions they may have regarding Ms. Taylor's pending Accidental Disability Retirement application.

Boardmember Castaneda advised that the Local Board should move ahead with caution due to the IRS code regarding receipt of duplicate benefits for the same disability. He added that if the Local Board approves Ms. Taylor's application, the PSPRS Board of Trustees may determine that she does not qualify due to state statute which supports the IRS code.

Chairperson Mickelsen advised that supplemental questions will be sent to the IME physician to clarify military service-connected injury versus the claimed work-related injury.

It was moved by Chairperson Mickelsen, seconded by Boardmember Brady, that Accidental Disability Retirement applicant, Firefighter Danna Taylor, be sent for an independent medical evaluation with supplemental questions.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES - Brady-Castaneda-Mickelsen-Sheppard-Silides

NAYS - None

ABSENT - None

Carried unanimously.

Ms. Baillie thanked the Local Board.

Without objection, the meeting of the Local Fire Pension Board adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

### **POLICE PENSION BOARD**

#### **4. Discuss and take action on the Accidental Disability Retirement application of Police Officer Jeffrey Covington.**

Chairperson Mickelsen advised the Local Board that Police Officer Jeffrey Covington is not in attendance. She encouraged the members to pose any questions they may have regarding Officer Covington's pending Accidental Disability Retirement application.

Boardmember Russell stated that he did have some questions for Officer Covington. He reminded the Local Board that during the November 2023 meeting, Officer Covington was directed to seek a diagnosis related to his claim, including permanency and causation, from a medical doctor. He advised that he would be making a motion to allow Officer Covington an additional sixty days to seek what the Local Board previously requested and would not likely entertain an additional extension if the requested documentation is not provided in that sixty days.

Boardmember Lentz stated that documentation is also needed that ties his claim to specific work-related events with the Mesa Police Department. He commented that Officer Covington's history includes time working for a Sheriff's Department in California and as a Marine.

Boardmember Brady advised that he will be carefully assessing all future claims and asking additional questions to determine if the submittal of a claim was triggered because an employee is displeased with assignment changes or pending disciplinary action. He added that it is costly to the City and a waste of the Board's time. He stated that he will not stand for or support the Local Board process being abused as a method to avoid discipline or because an employee feels that the City does not support them.

It was moved by Boardmember Russell, seconded by Boardmember Lentz, that the Accidental Disability Retirement application of Police Officer Jeffrey Covington be continued for sixty days to allow Officer Covington to gather medical and incident related documentation requested by the Local Board.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Brady-Lentz-Mickelsen-Russell-Sheppard

NAYS - None

ABSENT - None

Carried unanimously.

5. Adjournment.

Without objection, the meeting of the Local Police Pension Board adjourned at 11:08 a.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Public Safety Local Police Pension Board meeting of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 21st day of March 2024. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

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HOLLY MOSELEY, CITY CLERK