



**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE
FIRE LOCAL BOARD OF THE
PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL RETIREMENT SYSTEM (PSPRS)
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday, September 11, 2025

North Corporation Yard
Anasazi Conference Room
9191 E San Salvador Drive
Scottsdale, AZ 85258

PRESENT: Hugo Meraz, Chairperson/Mayoral Designee
Monica Boyd, Citizen Member/Merit Head
Steve Springborn, Elected Member
Todd Cavner, Elected Member (MS Teams)

STAFF: Millie Carlson, PSPRS Local Board Secretary
Darlene Ganger, Senior HR Benefits Analyst

GUESTS: Cindy Kelley, PSPRS Local Board Attorney

Call to Order

Board Member Springborn called the meeting to order at 10:09 a.m.

Roll Call

Members present as listed above.

Public Comment

There were no members of the public who wished to speak.

Possible Executive Session

1. Approval of the May 8, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes of the Public Safety Local Fire Pension Board

BOARD MEMBER SPRINGBORN MOVED TO APPROVE AS PRESENTED THE REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES FROM THE MAY 8, 2025, PSPRS FIRE LOCAL BOARD MEETING. BOARD MEMBER CAVNER SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED FOUR (4) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR MERAZ, BOARD MEMBERS BOYD, CAVNER, AND SPRINGBORN VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

2. Approval of Fire Executive Session Meeting Minutes from May 8, 2025

BOARD MEMBER SPRINGBORN MOVED TO APPROVE AS PRESENTED THE EXECUTIVE SESSION MEETING MINUTES FROM THE MAY 8, 2025, PSPRS FIRE LOCAL BOARD MEETING. BOARD MEMBER CAVNER SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED FOUR (4) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR MERAZ, BOARD MEMBERS BOYD, CAVNER, AND SPRINGBORN VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

3. Discussion and possible action on the Accidental Disability Retirement Application of Firefighter James Harris

BOARD MEMBER SPRINGBORN MOVED TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION. BOARD MEMBER CAVNER SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED FOUR (4) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR MERAZ, BOARD MEMBERS BOYD, CAVNER, AND SPRINGBORN VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

EXECUTIVE SESSION WAS HELD FROM 10:15 A.M. TO 10:33 A.M.

Chair Meraz recalled that the Board received an initial independent medical examination (IME) request and at that time had some additional questions and other items that would be helpful in consideration and review of the file.

Board Member Boyd commented that she felt it necessary to share her experience with the process and with employees on transitional duty. She read the following statement into the record:

**Statement to the PSPRS Disability Retirement Board by Monica Boyd
Regarding Former Employee Jim Harris**

I would like to share the following information in regard to Jim Harris' request for the Public Safety Personnel Retirement Board's consideration of his application for accidental disability retirement.

This matter was initially reviewed by the Board on April 10, 2025. In addition to the medical facts presented, the Board requested that Mr. Harris provide additional background information in consideration of his request.

In that statement dated April 18, 2025, Mr. Harris shared he had been off work on transitional duty due to treatment for prostate cancer. He mentioned that the decision to return was based upon his belief that he needed to return to work or could face termination. He believed he would be terminated due to meeting the time limitations of the City's Transition Duty policy. At that time, it had been the

practice at the City to afford the employee 360 days of transitional duty (in two 180-day increments). If an employee did not return to full duty by the end of the 360 days, they were medically separated from City employment, without consideration of other factors.

I became the Human Resources Director at the City of Scottsdale in December 2022. After some time and experience with the City's process for transitional duty, I recognized that the City should take other factors into consideration prior to a medical separation. Over the last year and a half, I began changing the evaluation of employees on transitional duty, ensuring that employees' circumstances were assessed under the federal Family and Medical Leave and American with Disabilities Acts, as well as Arizona Civil Rights Act. Had this been the practice at the time of Mr. Harris' transitional duty experience, there would have been additional communication with Mr. Harris about his medical status and the impact on employment based upon the federal and state regulations mentioned earlier. It is possible that he would not have felt the undue pressure to seek a release to work to keep his job, while undergoing treatment and evaluation for prostate cancer.

Per Mr. Harris, he returned for a limited number of days and ended up taking leave from work about 50% of the time he had returned. He indicated he was unable to continue working with the knowledge of his condition and the presumptive status tied to the job; he opted for a normal retirement in December 2023. My own observations of the handling of employees under the transitional duty process validates his claim of concern over loss of employment due to meeting a brightline 360-day time restriction.

My records indicate that Mr. Harris applied for accidental disability within one year of his normal retirement on October 9, 2024. He produced a doctors' note dated September 23, 2024, from Dr. Shulka indicating:

"In my professional opinion, continued exposures to toxins, as well as known and suspected carcinogens, is risky given his prostate cancer which is currently on active surveillance, and the risk of progression and worsening of his cancer."

Recent medical records support his statement that he continues to be under doctors' treatment and evaluation for elevated PSA counts.

Board Member Springborn said that he would support forwarding all of the documentation, including the additional information, to Dr. Brown for a chart review. The information should include the City's history and the current handling of these cases, that Firefighter Harris was one of the first to go through a presumptive cancer issue, and that the department is better supporting members with presumptive cancers than in the past. Board Member Springborn commented he hoped that with this additional information Dr. Brown will be able to address the Board's concerns with the original IME and provide an independent evaluation of Firefighter Harris' condition and whether or not it meets the PSPRS accidental disability requirements.

BOARD MEMBER SPRINGBORN MOVED TO APPOINT DR. TERRY BROWN AS AN IME FOR FIREFIGHTER JAMES HARRIS' ACCIDENTAL DISABILITY APPLICATION, INCLUDING PROVIDING HIM WITH BOARD MEMBER BOYD'S STATEMENT REGARDING THE CITY'S CURRENT HANDLING OF THESE CASES AND THE CHANGES THAT HAVE OCCURRED SINCE FIREFIGHTER HARRIS' INITIAL DIAGNOSIS AND ONGOING TREATMENT. THE IME PACKET WILL INCLUDE DOCUMENTATION TO ENSURE THAT DR. BROWN IS AWARE OF PRESUMPTIVE CANCERS IN ARIZONA AND THAT THE CAUSATION IS AUTOMATICALLY DETERMINED TO BE EXPOSURE AS A FIREFIGHTER. BOARD MEMBER CAVNER SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED FOUR (4) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR MERAZ, BOARD MEMBERS BOYD, CAVNER, AND SPRINGBORN VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

4. Induction of new City of Scottsdale Firefighters into PSPRS

BOARD MEMBER SPRINGBORN MOVED TO APPROVE THE INDUCTION OF NEW SCOTTSDALE FIRE FIGHTER RECRUITS EVAN ANDERSON, DONALD BLOUGH, JACKSON BOOTH, BRODY BOXBERGER, MIGUEL BUNTHOUWONGSE, ISIAH CAMACHO, JUSTIN DEAL, AUSTIN DENHAM, JORDAN FARIA, MARAH GONZALES, WYATT GOSNELL, MICHAEL GREEN, ETHAN HEISE, AUSTIN MARSDEN, MARK MINTZ, PATRICK MUNLEY, DYLAN NELSON, HARRISON NOYD, JOSE PRIETO, GAVIN QUEZADA, ANDREW RICHELLE, ANDREW ROOSE, DOMINIC SAUSMAN, DYLAN SMITH, MIGUEL SULLIVAN, AUSTIN WILKS, COLE WILLIAMS, AND PORTER ZUCCATO INTO PSPRS WITH AN EFFECTIVE DATE OF JULY 28, 2025. THEY WILL BE INDUCTED WITH PRE-EXISTING MEDICAL CONDITIONS, IF ANY, AS NOTED ON THE LISTING THAT IS INCLUDED WITH THE BOARD PACKET. BOARD MEMBER CAVNER SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED FOUR (4) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR MERAZ, BOARD MEMBERS BOYD, CAVNER, AND SPRINGBORN VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

5. Suggestions for upcoming agenda items

There were no agenda items suggested.

Board Member Cavner announced that he will officially retire the first week of December 2025.

Adjournment

BOARD MEMBER SPRINGBORN MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. BOARD MEMBER CAVNER SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED FOUR (4) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR MERAZ, BOARD MEMBERS BOYD, CAVNER, AND SPRINGBORN VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

With no further business to discuss, being duly moved and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.