

ATTACHMENT 1

RETIRED EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION OF VENTURA COUNTY (REAVC)

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting on June 27, 2023

Hosted by Roberta Griego on Zoom

- **Call to Order and Roll Call**

Roberta Griego, 1st Vice President, called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.

Present-Roberta Griego, Reddy Pakala, Kenneth Cozzens, Paul Callaway, Nancy Settle, Colleen Bruns, Ben Emami, Art Goulet, Lyn Krieger, Jacquie Richardson, Cindy Schneider, Kelly Shirk,

Absent- Will Hoag, Anne Dana, Colleen House, Tom McEachern, Maryellen Benedetto

- **Minutes** - Approval of Minutes from April 4, 2023, Board Meeting - Attachment 1 Ken Cozzens moved to accept the minutes with a revision to add Jacquie Richardson to the volunteers who attended the VCERA Board meeting. Nancy Settle seconded, the motion passed with abstentions from Colleen Bruns and Paul Callaway. (Note: Minutes from the April 12, 2023, Special Meeting will be provided at the next regular meeting.)
- **Financial Report** – Butch Britt
Financial Report –Recommendation: Receive and file, subject to audit – Attachment 2 The report is routine and Butch Britt made a recommendation to receive and file. Reddy Pakala moved, and Paul Callaway seconded a motion to receive and file. The motion carried.
- **Annual Audit Report** – Ken Cozzens indicated that the Annual Audit Report showed no irregularities and all is in order for REAVC business. He commended Cindy Schneider and Butch Britt for their assistance with the audit. Reddy Pakala thanked the Audit team for its thorough job. (In accordance with REAVC Bylaws, Article 2, the Audit Committee met and conducted an examination and audit of all books, records, and accounts maintained by the Bookkeeper for the Association on May 17, 2023 at Ken Cozzens's house. No deficiencies were observed.) Ken's recommendation was that the Board acknowledge the Annual Audit, receive and file. Nancy Settle moved, with a second by Roberta Griego. The motion carried.
- **September Luncheon Status** – Anne Dana is on vacation, her report is addressed by Attachment 4. Nancy Settle moved and Roberta Griego seconded a motion to receive and file. The motion carried.
- **Committee Reports**

Retirement Board/Legislation - (Art) Board Member Goulet discussed AB1020 which is under review by the Senate and on a path to the Governor. The Bill adds workers compensation injury presumptions in the Labor Code to the disability retirement provisions of CERL. Workers Compensation and CERL Disability Retirement are covered by different bodies of law. The Professional Firefighters Association (PFFA) sponsored the Bill. Art also indicated that addressing straddling has been in place by VCERA since August. Retirees on or after August received reduced benefits which could be restored depending on the outcome of appeal of the Superior Court decision. Reddy Pakala said that an appeal was filed by two Ventura County unions and others joined. Art said only the CRIMINAL JUSTICE ATTORNEY'S ASSOCIATION OF VENTURA COUNTY and VENTURA COUNTY PROFESSIONAL PEACE OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION appealed. and Appeals have been filed by the Professional Firefighters Association regarding standby pay. Appeals for various other items have also been filed. The BoR approved the report with Ashby and Richards dissenting. The PFFA may continue to litigate. The County sent a letter requesting the disability approval process go to the Board if the County disagrees with a VCERA denial. They cited a case in which a Port District employee was injured in conjunction with an event that was deemed not to be work-related, so disability retirement was denied. The County objected to the denial and was later reminded VCERA is an independent body that must comply with CERL and the County cannot direct VCERA to do so. Once Risk Management determined ineligibility for disability retirement, it was determination by a hearing officer. Art shared the results of the Retirement Board Election. Art prevailed over Candidate Henry Solis. Cecilia Hernandez Garcia lost to Greg Bergman, the Assistant GSA Department Director. The Safety Seats remained unchanged. Maeve Fox ran unopposed. The election results are not considered official until approval by the BOS, likely in July. Tommy Joe has not yet been reappointed by the BOS and a resigned member has not been replaced. Sue Horgan does her homework and has been an asset to the VCERA Board. Roberta Griego asked whether VCERA appointed an interim Administrator. Art Goulet said no since Linda is on payroll until August. Kelly Shirk asked about a recruitment. Art said there will be none for interim but will be conducted for a permanent Administrator. President Pakala thanked Art for the report and congratulated him on his reelection to the VCERA Board of Retirement.

Newsletter - (Dee) The new vendor for newsletter distribution is working well. Article submissions are due on the fifteenth day of each month. Some non-members requested an email newsletter. When this happens the membership application may be mailed to them. Postage for mailed newsletters has reduced from funding approximately 2000 to 2500 mailed down to 200 to keep a bulk-rate.

Membership Report/Courtesy – Nancy – Retirement workshops have recommenced, providing opportunities to reach out to potential members. Ken Cozzens attended both workshops and commended Nancy and Maryellen for doing a great job. Membership is increasing.

- **Continued Business**

1. **2025 CRCEA Conference** -Nancy Settle reported that a CRCEA survey showed that most members want to continue having Spring and Fall Conferences. There has been no decision on allowing joint conferences. Santa Barbara believes that Ventura lodging may be more economical. Nancy Settle suggested using the previous site at the Crown Plaza. Kelly Shirk knows the sales manager and offered to help. Nancy said there are often hidden fees such as resort fees, package fees, etc., that impact hotel costs.
2. **VCERA (Alameda Decision & PEPRA) Art Goulet and Will Hoag** recused themselves from this portion of the meeting. Lyn Krieger indicated quite a bit of work has been done and was asked to summarize what REAVC could assist with. She responded that VCERA would file a brief order later in the day. Fire may litigate.

- **New Business for Discussion and/or Approval**

1. **Committee Members for Jan 2023 – Dec 2024** Colleen Bruns clarified that she will help with edits and review of the newsletter. Ben and Dee Emami will continue to put the newsletter together and coordinate distribution.
2. **REAVC website Ben Emami** – Ben asked the Board to email him any suggestions for the website. MaryEllen has indicated that the site needs to be “spiffed up.” The look of the site and its user friendliness will both be reviewed. Roberta suggested that Ben look at the NAMI website because it was recently updated. Ben indicated that WordPress is not user friendly.
3. **Select volunteers to seek and report on venues for Board meetings. Include availability, location, average meal cost, parking, etc.** Roberta Griego has paid for REAVC meetings through December. It is ok to seek a new site for January. Restaurants are noisy and lack privacy unless there is a private room. Black Bear has a back room with glass doors. If REAVC members attend, then lunch will be provided. Reddy Pakala indicated that the Board should limit guests to 3 per meeting. Ken Cozzens researched the Spring Garden Chinese Restaurant by Trader Joe’s. They do not charge for a room. Orozco’s Mexican Restaurant on Front Street is not open for lunch. However, Guillermo, the owner would open for REAVC only. There would be no additional charge. Cindy Schneider said she would check with the Sheraton. Colleen Bruns suggested meeting at the HOA or HOJ. Roberta Griego informed the Board that there is a room rental fee for doing so.
4. **Proposed policy for guests at future meetings- recommended maximum of 3 guests. If meals are provided, REAVC will host. Chair to be notified in advance of any guests.**
Consider \$500 for research, obtaining copies of legal documents, retaining an attorney to advise REAVC to join other County labor unions in challenging VCERA actions taken on April 17, 2023. Lyn Krieger and others discussed the Professional Peace Officers Association, Deputy Sheriff’s Association and Attorneys might have joined and she believed the Sheriff filed an appellate brief which is based on concerns that are almost identical to those of REAVC. An economical first step is to join others on the amicus brief since we agree with the other groups. An attorney is needed to review the first draft to file, perhaps Robert Ariana. The REAVC committee will meet again. Lyn will follow up early the following week. Kelly Shirk, Tracy Pirie, Chris Stevens, Roberta Griego watched a VCERA appeal hearing online. Lyn was disappointed at how the Fire hearing went. Kelly Shirk indicated that standby pay and Firefighter shifts are not understood by many hearing officers. Key members of the VCERA Retirement Board, such as Kelly Long, were missing at the meeting. Roberta Griego emphasized that the purpose and obligation of REAVC is to help protect retirees. As employees, retirees put money into the system, and it is their money. Alameda took care of their employees. We must file an amicus brief and let members know we are doing so. Reddy Pakala expressed his support of moving forward with an amicus brief.
5. **Item was added to consider any issues related to PEPRA.** Lyn Krieger moved and Ken Cozzens seconded allocating \$500 to obtain copies of legal documents and retain an attorney to challenge. The motion passed unanimously. Lyn Krieger requested an emergency special meeting. Reddy Pakala clarified that the committee can conduct meetings as necessary and report back to the Board.
6. **Item was added to authorize President Pakala to send a letter as representative of REAVC to ask VCERA staff to set August 31, 2020, as the effective date for vacation buydown.** Nancy Settle said an effective date of

August 31, 2020, would be a good gesture, and if the unions are successful the date issue is eliminated. Ken Cozzens was anxious to act with an amicus brief. Roberta Griego agreed and added court processes are lengthy. Reddy reached out to VCERA staff, but they were unable to provide detailed calculation information about buydowns, at this time. Reductions of pension will not occur until later. No payback of past benefits is expected. Reductions are to occur to current retirees in the future. Those who retired after August 31, 2020, already received a reduced pension amount. Calculations are very cumbersome due to the numerous variations in effective dates, unions, benefits, and pay codes involved. Amy Harris informed Lyn that a human touches the calculations twice for everyone to avoid errors. After much discussion, Reddy Pakala made a motion and Roberta Griego seconded sending a letter about the August 31, 2020, effective date to VCERA. Motion passed. Will Hoag and Art Goulet recused themselves during the discussion and vote.

- **The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m. and the next regular meeting was tentatively set for Tuesday, August 1, 2023, at noon to be hosted by Roberta Griego.**

Respectfully submitted by,



**Dee Emami
REAVC Executive Assistant**

Reviewed and approved by,



**Reddy Pakala
REAVC President**