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**City of Cincinnati Retirement System
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
December 4, 2025 / 2:00 P.M.
City Hall – Council Chambers and remote**

Board Members

Bill Moller, Chair
Tom Gamel, Co-Chair
Kathy Rahtz
Mark Menkhaus Jr.
Monica Morton
Seth Walsh
Aliya Riddle
Sonya Morris
Tom West

Administration

Jon Salstrom

Law

Kevin Frank

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Moller called the meeting to order at 2:12 p.m. and a roll call of attendance was taken. Trustees Moller, Gamel, Rahtz, Morton, Morris, and West were present. Trustees Menkhaus, Walsh, and Riddle were absent.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Trustee Gamel moved to approve the minutes of the Board meeting of November 6, 2025, with one amendment. The motion was seconded by Trustee Rahtz. The minutes were approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Report on Benefits & Investment Committees

Chair Morris stated that the Board must vote on one motion. The Investment Committee approved a new pension plan asset allocation effective January 1, which also includes the addition of several new investment managers approved by the committee. The motion, as outlined in Director Salstrom's November 26, 2025 memo, approved his recommendation. Because it originated from the committee, no second was required. The Board approved the motion unanimously by roll call vote.

Chair Gamel reported that the Benefits Committee reviewed the survey results, noting a lower response rate than the previous survey, with only 15% participation from retirees. The committee plans to

improve future response rates through increased outreach and advertising. He also noted that some benefit costs decreased this year compared to prior years, which is positive for CRS cash flow.

Informational – Staff Report

Marquette Investment Report

Year-to-date performance is closely tracking the benchmark, with an overall composite return of 12.1%. One-year performance shows a similar pattern. While private debt is slightly behind, overall investment performance is strong.

Staff Update

There are currently two open positions: Administrative Specialist and Investment Analyst.

S&P and Moody's Bond Rating Report

Pension information is important to include because rating agencies such as S&P and Moody's consider pension obligations in their broader assessment of long-term liabilities. Pension funding levels, particularly underfunding, have a direct impact on the City's bond rating.

Fiduciary Audit Recommendations Update

There are no changes, as the item has been fully worked through. Director Salstrom will bring several action items from the CEM Benchmarking to the Board next month. These include adding surveys to interactions with active members and retirees, improving Member Direct to allow updates to personal information and retirement filings, and expanding access to one-on-one counseling sessions for members on both pension and healthcare matters.

Old Business

No Old Business to discuss.

New Business

CEM Pension Administration Benchmarking Presentation

Presenters: Kevin, Victor, and Yvette

CEM Benchmarking aims to improve pensioner outcomes globally, covering \$14 trillion in assets under management (AUM).

Pension Administration Evaluation:

- Total service score: 64/100 (above peer median of 62.)
- Strengths: Purchases and transfers-in, contact center quality, transfers-out, pension estimates, assisted service, outbound communication.
- Opportunities: Personal information management, contact center capability, secure website accessibility, member feedback/surveying.
- Costs:
 - Total pension administration cost per member: \$349 (below peer average of \$486).
 - Scale-adjusted cost: \$442 (below adjusted peer average of \$791).
 - Main reasons for lower costs: lower "other administration" costs and lower amortization cost per member.

Investment Benchmarking:

- 2024 net total return: 9.7% (above U.S. Public median of 8.9% and peer median of 9.6%).

- 2024 policy return: 9.8% (above US. Public median of 9.4%, equal to peer median of 9.8%).
- 2024 net value added: -0.1% (better than U.S. Public median of -0.5% and peer median of -0.5%.)
- Investment cost: 85.4 bps (above benchmark of 75.3 bps), due to higher payments for certain services compared to peers.

CRS performs well in both pension administration and investment returns relative to peers, with opportunities to improve member services and reduce some investment costs.

2026 Budget Review

Staff is not requesting any budget changes. The proposed budget decreases by \$168.7 thousand from the current year, largely due to staffing reductions following turnover and evaluation. Staffing is set at 15 full-time employees, down from 16, with succession planning in place. Reduced expenses include travel and data processing, while professional services and insurance increased slightly. Professional services increases are driven by CEM Benchmarking, actuarial work, engagement with LRS (the pension GOLD vendor), and ongoing cybersecurity efforts.

The Board anticipates evaluating next year whether there is a need for an additional member counselor position. On the investment side, negotiated fee reductions include lower index and custodial fees, though investment management fees increased by \$2 million due to strong fund performance and benchmark outperformance. A shift toward more direct private equity investments is expected to reduce fees over time, though it makes them more visible. Overall, management fees remain in line with peer funds.

Trustee Gamel made a motion to approve the 2026 Budget and seconded by Trustee Morris. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Board and Committee 2026 Schedule

The 2026 Board and Committee meeting schedule is largely unchanged from the current year. Trustee Gamel made a motion to approve the 2026 schedule, which was seconded by Trustee Rahtz. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Adjournment

Following a motion to adjourn by Trustee Gamel and seconded by Trustee Morris. The Board approved the motion by unanimous roll call vote. The meeting was adjourned at 3:14 p.m.

Meeting video link: <https://archive.org/details/crs-board-12-4-25>

Next Meeting: Thursday, January 8, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. – City Hall Council Chambers and via Zoom


 Secretary