

CORAL GABLES RETIREMENT SYSTEM
Minutes of November 13, 2025
Public Safety Building
Community Meeting Room A
2151 Salzedo Street
8:00 a.m.

MEMBERS:	N	J	F	M	A	M	J	A	S	O	N	APPOINTED BY:
	24	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	
Sean McGrover	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	Mayor Vince Lago
Alex Mantecon	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	A	E	E	P	Commissioner Castro
Juan Lucas Alvarez	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	E	P	P	Commissioner Ariel Fernandez
Derrek Space	-	-	-	-	-	-	P	P	P	P	A	Commissioner Richard Lara
Manny Carreno	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	Commissioner Rhonda Anderson
Joshua Nunez	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	E	E	Police Representative
Christopher Challenger	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	Member at Large
Sureya Serret	E	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	General Employees
Troy Easley	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	Fire Representative
Diana Gomez	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	Finance Director
Jose Rodriguez	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	P	P	Interim Director
Rene Alvarez	P	P	E	P	P	E	E	P	P	P	E	City Manager Appointee
James Gueits	P	P	E	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	City Manager Appointee

STAFF:

Kimberly Groome, Finance Administrative Specialist	P = Present
Dave West, Mariner	E = Excused
Pete Strong, Gabriel Roeder Smith (via phone)	A = Absent
Edemir Estrada, Gabriel Roeder Smith	
Manuel Garcia-Linares, Board Attorney	

1. Roll call.

Chairperson Diana Gomez called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

2. Consent Agenda.

All items listed within this section entitled as also in attendance "Consent Agenda" are considered to be self-explanatory and are not expected to require additional review or discussion, unless a member of the Retirement Board or a citizen so requests, in which case, the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered along with the regular order of business. Hearing no objections to the items listed under the "Consent Agenda", a vote on the adoption of the Consent Agenda will be taken.

- 2A. The Administrative Manager recommends approval of the Retirement Board meeting minutes for October 24, 2025.
- 2B. The Administrative Manager recommends approval of the minutes for the Joint meeting with the City commission held on October 24, 2025.
- 2C. The Administrative Manager recommends approval of the following Benefit Certifications: Benefit Change – Larry Brooks (Firefighter).

A motion to approve the Consent Agenda was made by Mr. Alex Mantecon and seconded by Mr. Christopher Challenger. Motion unanimously approved (10-0).

3. Comments from Retirement Board Chairperson.

No comments from Chairperson Diana Gomez.

4. Pete Strong from Gabriel Roeder Smith presented the 2026 COLA letter and actuarial analysis. He reported that the preliminary investment rate of return for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2025 was 10.1%, exceeding the 10% threshold required to trigger a COLA under the City ordinance and settlement agreement. Mr. Strong explained that certain private investment values were still pending due to customary reporting delays; however, all indications were that the remaining values would be accretive and would not reduce the calculated return below the required threshold. The calculated COLA was 1.45%, representing one-half of the CPI increase of 2.9% for the applicable period.

The actuarial impact of a 1.45% COLA was reported as:

- Increase in plan liability: approximately \$5.25 million
- Increase in annual contribution requirement: approximately \$700,000.00

Following discussion, the Board addressed the two required actions pursuant to the ordinance and settlement agreement.

- a. Grant of COLA to Eligible Members

A motion to approve a 1.45% Cost-of-Living Adjustment effective January 1, 2026 to eligible Class Members, Opt-Out Members, and GAP Members, as the conditions of the ordinance had been met was made by Mr. Alex Mantecon and seconded by Mr. Juan Lucas Alvarez. Motion unanimously approved (10-0).

- b. Denial of COLA to Non-Eligible Members. The Board discussed that the ordinance requirements for non-class members had not been met.

A motion to deny the COLA to all other members who are not Class Members, Opt-Out Members, or GAP Members, as the applicable conditions had not been satisfied was made by Mr. Juan Lucas Alvarez and seconded by Mr. Alex Mantecon. Motion unanimously approved (10-0).

The approved COLA actions will be forwarded to the City Commission for final consideration, in accordance with the settlement agreement process.

Mr. Strong provided a follow-up regarding the recalculation of disability benefits for Mr. Brooks. GRS confirmed that all historical COLAs, including a retroactive COLA granted in 1997 and a prorated COLA in the first year of retirement, had been reconciled.

The Board had previously approved an increase in Mr. Brooks' disability benefit from 662/3% to 75% at the October 24, 2025 meeting. GRS confirmed the revised benefit calculation was accurate.

- Revised benefit effective date: November 1, 2025
- One retroactive payment to be issued reflecting November 1, 2025
- Mr. Brooks received a copy of the calculation and was advised of the final approved benefit amount.

5. Service-Connected Disability Application – Officer David Rosario

The Board reviewed a request from Officer David Rosario for approval of a service-connected disability benefit. The Administrative Manager summarized the application, supporting documentation, medical records, and physician's letter, all of which confirmed the disability was permanent and not expected to improve. The application and supporting materials were reviewed by plan counsel prior to the meeting.

A motion to approve the service-connected disability benefit for Officer David Rosario based on the application and supporting documentation was made by Mr. Christopher Challenger and seconded by Ms. Sureya Serret. Motion unanimously approved (10-0).

Staff was directed to notify Officer Rosario and proceed with benefit processing.

6. Items from the Board Attorney

Attorney Manny Garcia-Linares discussed the termination of services with PenChecks Trust Company of America. It was confirmed that a formal termination letter had been issued pursuant to the terms of the agreement and that the required notice provisions had been satisfied. The Board discussed the importance of ensuring that all contractual obligations are fully completed by the outgoing administrator, including but not limited to final benefit payments, record reconciliation, and year-end reporting responsibilities. Particular emphasis was placed on the preparation and issuance of Forms 1099 for retirees. Attorney Garcia-Linares advised that PenChecks remains responsible for issuing the final Forms 1099 for the applicable tax year. The Board discussed prior issues related to tax reporting accuracy and agreed that draft Forms 1099 should be provided to the Board and its consultants for review and spot-checking prior to distribution. It was noted that drafts are expected to be provided in early January, allowing sufficient time for review and correction before the statutory mailing deadline at the end of January.

The Board Attorney further addressed coordination and communication with the outgoing administrator to confirm receipt of the termination notice and to avoid any ambiguity regarding responsibilities during the transition period. Board members discussed the importance of maintaining clear documentation and follow-up communications to ensure that no outstanding contractual or administrative matters remain unresolved.

In addition, the Board Attorney provided guidance regarding the transition to Northern Trust as the new service provider effective January 1. The discussion included execution of remaining transition and delegation documents, confirmation of authority for processing payments and reports, and ongoing coordination among staff, consultants, and Northern Trust to ensure continuity of operations. The Board Attorney advised that parallel processing and ongoing oversight during the transition period were appropriate and consistent with best practices.

7. Items from the Third-Party Pension Administrator

Ms. Edemir K. Estrada provided updates on current administrative matters and ongoing operational activities. Ms. Estrada reported that open enrollment for general employees was currently underway and that informational materials, including premium information and enrollment notices, had been distributed to retirees and eligible participants.

Updates were provided regarding the transition to Northern Trust as the new pension service provider effective January 1. The administrator confirmed that coordination meetings with Northern Trust, PensionSoft, and related transition teams were occurring on a regular basis and that parallel processing was in place to ensure continuity of benefit payments and recordkeeping during the transition period. Ms. Estrada advised that required transition and delegation documents were being prepared and reviewed, including documents authorizing the processing of reports and payments without the need for repeated Board or legal approval once delegation is in effect. It was noted that certain documents still required execution by the Board Chair. Discussion also included retiree communications related to the transition. The administrator reported that a transition letter to retirees was being prepared for distribution, which would include information regarding Northern Trust, payment processes, and the anticipated payment schedule for 2026. The payment schedule will reflect that benefits are paid on the first of the month, or the next business day if the first falls on a weekend or holiday, and will also be posted to the pension portal. The administrator further discussed year-end processing and coordination related to final benefit payments and tax reporting, emphasizing the importance of timely and accurate completion of all remaining responsibilities prior to the full transition.

8. Investment Issues

Dave West, provided a detailed investment report and overview of current market conditions and portfolio performance. Mr. West reviewed the Plan's investment performance for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2025, noting that overall results were strong and generally consistent with expectations given market conditions. He discussed performance across major asset classes, including equities, fixed income, and alternative investments, and explained how diversification continued to help manage volatility within the portfolio.

Mr. West specifically addressed private market investments, explaining that valuation reporting for certain private equity and real asset funds lags behind public market reporting due to the timing of manager-provided financial statements. He advised that this lag is customary and does not indicate any underlying performance concerns. Based on available information and preliminary reports, the outstanding private investment valuations were expected to be neutral to positive and not materially alter the Plan's overall investment return. The Board discussed the relationship between investment performance and actuarial assumptions, including the role of investment returns in meeting funding objectives and triggering benefit-related provisions such as the Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA). Mr. West confirmed that investment results remained aligned with the Plan's long-term return assumptions and investment policy. Mr. West also provided commentary on broader market conditions, including interest rate trends, inflation expectations, and market volatility, and discussed how these factors may affect the portfolio going forward. He emphasized the importance of maintaining a long-term investment perspective and adhering to the Board-adopted investment policy rather than reacting to short-term market fluctuations. Board members asked questions regarding risk management, liquidity, and the pacing of capital calls and distributions within the private investment portfolio. Mr. West responded to questions and confirmed that liquidity levels were adequate to meet benefit payment obligations and anticipated commitments.

No formal action was taken by the Board on the investment report, which was received for informational purposes.

9. Old Business. There was no Old Business
10. New Business. There was no New Business.
11. Public Comment

Retiree Henry Pickering made a public comment regarding the transition, asking if the pension portal will remain the same. Plan Administrator Edemir Estrada confirmed that the portal will stay the same. Mr. Pickering inquired whether deaths would be reported at meetings, noting that no deaths had been reported during the previous two meetings. Ms. Estrada confirmed that deaths will be reported at the monthly meetings. Mr. Pickering also sought clarification regarding the amount referenced by Mr. Strong during the presentation, which Chairperson Diana Gomez clarified and addressed.

Retiree Martin Barros stated that during the October 24, 2025 Joint Commissioner meeting, it was mentioned that meetings would be held twice a year, in April and October. Chairperson Diana Gomez confirmed that those meetings will be scheduled once the dates draw closer.

12. Meeting Schedule for Year 2026 was provided. Next meeting will be held on Thursday, January 8th, 2026.
13. Adjournment. Meeting was adjourned at 9:02 a.m.

APPROVED ON: _____