

The regular meeting of the Gardner Contributory Retirement Board was called to order by the Chairperson, Denise Merriam, on Thursday, January 29, 2026, at 10:00 AM in Room #128, 1st Floor, City Hall, Mayor’s Conference Room. Due to boiler issues at City Hall, the building was closed on Tuesday, January 27th and 28th, 2026. Denise Merriam, Board Chairperson, and Board Members Robert Newton, David Walsh, Jacob Cormier, and Jacqueline Leger and Cheryl Bosse, Board Administrator, were all present.

*ANNOUNCEMENT - Any person may make a video or audio recording of an open session of a meeting, or may transmit the meeting through any medium, subject to reasonable requirements of the Chair as to the number, placement and operation of equipment used so as not to interfere with the conduct of the meeting. Any person intending to make such a recording shall notify the Chair forthwith. All Documents referenced or used during the meeting must be submitted in duplicate to the Retirement Board Administrator pursuant to the Open Meeting and Public Records Law. All documents shall become part of the official record of the meeting.*

On a motion by Jacob Cormier, seconded by David Walsh, passing unanimously, the Board voted to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of December 29, 2025. The Board Members then signed the permanent minutes of the regular meeting minutes of November 24, 2025.

On a motion by Robert Newton, seconded by David Walsh, the board unanimously voted to approve the Trial Balances and General Ledger Histories for November 2025, and to accept the City Treasurer’s bank reconciliations for November 2025.

On a motion by Robert Newton, seconded by Jacob Cormier, the Board unanimously voted to approve Warrant #01/26 dated January 30, 2026, totaling \$643,500.00.

<b>Vendor</b>	<b>For</b>	<b>Amount</b>
ABL Tech	Invoice #ABLT-00165	\$ 650.00
Sacco & Collins, PC	Invoice #9031	\$ 740.00
Pension Payroll #01/26	Annuity Paid	\$ 116,858.73
	Pension Paid	\$ 516,692.24
	Veteran's Benefits Paid	\$ 356.25
	Dependents Paid	\$ 120.00
	Bd. COLA	\$ 7,982.78
<b>TOTAL WARRANT #01/26</b>		<b>\$ 643,400.00</b>

The Board reviewed the PRIM statement for the Gardner Retirement System for the month of December 2025, noting a positive \$412,581.01 Net Change in Investment Value for the month. The Management Fees for the month were \$57,133.75.

Under “Correspondence” the Board reviewed PERAC Memo #36/2025; PERAC Memo #37/2025; PERAC Memo #01/2026; PERAC Memo #02/2026; PERAC Memo #03/2026; PERAC Memo #04/2026; PERAC Memo #05/2026; PERAC Memo #06/2026; PERAC Memo #07/2026 and PERAC Memo #08/2026. The Board had a discussion regarding the mandatory board member training and the various webinars that board member’s can view to gain their educational credits.

All Board Members reviewed MASS Retirees, *The Voice January 2026*.

All Board Members reviewed an email that was received on January 15, 2026, from Sacco & Collins, P.C., regarding staffing changes at their office with Kathy Stitler, para legal and Attorney Joe Kenyon both recently resigning.

Under “Old Business,” the Board Administrator, Cheryl Bosse, updated the Board Members on the status of Disability Retirement Applicant #3 and that she recently had a conversation with Attorney Christopher Collins regarding a Webex hearing that has been scheduled for April 14, 2026. Attorney Collins explained that applicant #3’s attorney is questioning if the work accommodation that was previously agreed upon are realistic. Attorney Collins is still planning to point out previous cases that are similar to this one and the rulings that have already been sent out from DALA regarding accommodated work schedules, and to remind the magistrate that applicant #3 never tried the accommodated/modified work schedule.

The Board Members recognized that there will be a board election for two elected board members with election notices being sent out on March 26, 2026.

Under “New Business” the Board opened nominations for election of a Board Chairperson to serve a one-year term from February 1, 2026, through January 31, 2027. Robert Newton nominated Denise Merriam with David Walsh seconding the nomination. There were no other nominations, therefore, nominations were closed and the Board proceeded to unanimously elect Denise Merriam as the Chairperson for this one-year term.

On a motion by Robert Newton, and seconded by David Walsh, passing unanimously, the Board voted to elect Denise Merriam for the one-year term of February 1, 2026, through January 31, 2027, as Board Chairperson.

On a motion by David Walsh, seconded by Jacob Cormier, the Board unanimously voted to elect a 3.00% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for FY2027 pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 32, Section 103(I). The Social Security increase for this year was 2.80%.

Under “New Business”, each Board Member reviewed their copy of Open Meeting Law Guide and Education Materials. Each Board Member signed and returned their acknowledgement of their receipt of the materials to the Board Administrator.

Each Board Member reviewed the information in their packets pertaining to Conflict of Interest and that this is now an online training that each board member would earn three educational credits for completing.

Under “New Business”, on a motion by Robert Newton, seconded by David Walsh, the Board unanimously voted to grant superannuation retirement benefits to John Smith, Option B, effective December 1, 2025.

The Board then recognized the deaths of surviving spouse retiree Judith Burke on January 9, 2026, and retiree Therese Gustafson on January 13, 2026.

The Board Administrator, Cheryl Bosse, updated the Board Members that she still has 2 affidavits that she is still waiting to receive from Patricia Flynn, and Lian Janikas. The Board Administrator has spoken with Patricia Flynn and Lian Janikas, and they both should be returning their forms soon.

The Board Administrator shared with the Board Members that she was recently invited to attend the 2026 Directors/Administrators Conference that will be held April 26<sup>th</sup> to April 28, 2026, hosted by Dukes County Contributory Retirement System and held on Martha’s Vinyard. This is an opportunity to meet with other directors and administrators and discuss issues and problems that come up and work together for solutions and resolutions on a lot of common issues. PERAC Director, Bill Keefe, will also be attending the conference to discuss matters with all the directors and administrators in attendance. This is a great opportunity to meet, learn, and gain more information and education on all the complexities of the retirement board and the daily operations. The Board Members approved Board Administrator, Cheryl Bosse’s attendance at the 2026 Directors/Administrators Conference.

The Board Member's rescheduled their April 2026 monthly meeting to Friday, April 24, 2026, due to the Board Administrator being at the conference on April 28<sup>th</sup>.

Board Member, Robert Newton, shared with the board that he and Board Chairperson, Denise Merriam, met with State Representative, Jon Zlotnik's staff member on Friday, January 16, 2026. They were meeting to discuss the Violent Assault Disability Retirement and a letter that Robert had drafted regarding the violent assault act and how it should be available to all municipal employees, not just members of certain groups. All Board Members received a copy of Robert's letter with their board packets. Board Member Robert also shared that he recently spoke with Representative Zlotnik, and that the State Representative has spoken with and received support for a potential amendment to the violent assault disability act, and people he has spoken to, agree, it should be available to all municipal employees within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Board Member Newton will keep the board updated with any progress and updates he receives.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 24, 2026, at 10:00 A.M. and a future meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, March 26, 2026, at 10:00 A.M.

All meetings are scheduled to be held in City Hall, on the 1st Floor, Room 128, Mayor's Conference Room.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn at 10:40 A.M. was made by Jacob Cormier, seconded by David Walsh, passing unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 10:40 A.M.

APPROVED:

---

Jacqueline Leger, Interim Ex-Officio Board Member

---

David Walsh, Appointed

---

Denise M. Merriam, Elected (Ends 6/30/2026)  
Chairperson

---

Robert W. Newton, Elected (Ends 6/30/2026)

---

Jacob B. Cormier, Appointed (Ends 6/30/2028)