

DRAFT

MINUTES

March 26, 2025

Executive Committee

Employee Trust Funds Board (Board)
State of Wisconsin



Location:

This meeting was held via teleconference.
3:30 p.m. – 4:14 p.m.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

William Ford, Chair
Steve Wilding, Vice Chair
Chris Heller, Secretary

PARTICIPATING EMPLOYEE TRUST FUNDS (ETF) STAFF:

Office of the Secretary:
John Voelker, Secretary
Diana Felsmann, Deputy Secretary
Pam Henning, Assistant Deputy Secretary
Kimberly Schnurr, Board Liaison

Division of Benefits Administration:
Patti Epstein, Chief Benefits Officer
Gene Janke, Benefit Services Bureau Director

OTHERS PRESENT:

Office of the Secretary:
Kathryn Young, Staff Services Supervisor

Mr. Ford, Chair, called the Executive Committee (Committee) meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

CONSIDERATION OF OPEN MINUTES OF DECEMBER 11, 2024, MEETING ([Ref. EXC | 03.26.25 | 2](#))

MOTION: *Mr. Wilding moved to approve the open minutes of the December 11, 2024, meeting, as submitted by the Board Liaison. Mr. Heller seconded the motion, which passed unanimously on a voice vote.*

Board	Mtg Date	Item #
EXC	06.18.25	2

GOVERNANCE MATTERS

Board Agenda Review

Mr. Voelker reviewed the agendas for the following day. He also provided a status update on Employee Trust Funds Board (ETF Board), Teachers Retirement Board (TR Board), and Wisconsin Retirement Board (WR Board) members that confirmed they would be attending either virtually or in person. The committees and boards would be conducting their annual election of officers, and preparations to have secret ballots distributed to members both virtually and in person had been made. Both the TR Board and WR Board would vote to appoint a representative from each board to the State of Wisconsin Investment Board (SWIB). After the TR Board and WR Board had adjourned, the ETF Board meeting would begin.

Mr. Voelker highlighted the following items on the ETF Board meeting agenda:

- SWIB would present an overview on the 2024 Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS) investment performance and the 2025 financial outlook.
- Gabriel, Roeder, Smith and Company (GRS) would provide information on the annual valuation of retired lives and adjustments of 2.3% for Core and 15% for Variable annuities. Their presentation would include details on the adjustments and variabilities from last year and the five-year smoothing impacts.
- Minor revisions to the WRS Funding Policy would require approval.
- Cindy Klimke would present the Core Fund annuity adjustment and effective rate projections for the next several years.
- Amelia Slaney would provide an overview of the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report and discuss that the report had resulted in a clean audit.
- Kyle Kundert would share information on Social Security and the WRS, including Wisconsin's 218 Agreement and the Social Security Administration, Government Pension Offset, Windfall Elimination Program, and Social Security Fairness Act.
- Tarna Hunter would provide a legislative update on a variety of bills and highlight the agency's biennial budget, which had recently been approved by the Governor. The main legislation focuses on rehired annuitants, and ETF anticipates that some version will pass this legislative session.
- Mr. Voelker would provide his Secretary's Report, and authors for the operational updates that were written memos only would be available to answer any questions.
- The ETF Board would move to closed session to hear an appeal.

OBJECTIVES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

[Executive Committee Accomplishments Report: December 2024-February 2025 \(Ref. EXC | 03.26.25 | 4A\)](#)

Ms. Felsmann provided the following updates:

- Under Customer Experience, ETF successfully onboarded 40 new employers to the WRS, including Milwaukee County.
- The Social Security Earnings Offset Reviews under the Disability Program had been streamlined for a better member and ETF staff experience.
- The Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP)/Business Continuity Team had been busy with implementing a new tool required by the Department of Administration to prepare for any continuity issues.
- The performance evaluation process mid-year review had been completed, and the process was streamlined to define role expectations and reduce staff time by consolidating four behaviors down to one per competency. This had resulted in an overall more positive experience for supervisors and staff.
- Insurance Administration (IAS)/Pension Administration System (PAS)
 - IAS remains in an at-risk status, and BenefitFocus had the next 10 days to provide ETF with crucial deliverables. However, ETF was now receiving all local employer data, which meant a major milestone of the IAS Program had been completed.
 - PAS issued a notice of intent to award contracts to two vendors, TELUS Health and Heywood, to conduct a proof of concept (mini project) to see which vendor would meet ETF's needs the best.

Mr. Voelker added that ETF is expecting crucial deliverables from BenefitFocus by April 7. In the meantime, ETF has identified a few contingency plans. One of these was to go live with just the Universities of Wisconsin (UWs) to pilot the system, then go live with all other employers by a later date. Another contingency plan included moving the go-live date from July 1 to August 1 or September 1. This option would provide more time for testing and report development. Mr. Voelker noted that pushing back the go-live date would involve coordinating with the UWs. The UWs need to go live with their new HR system at same time as ETF's IAS implementation date. Mr. Voelker added that reporting of financial data was currently one of the main outstanding challenges for go-live decisions. He stated that he would keep the ETF Board apprised of any final decisions on IAS implementation dates.

DISABILITY COMMUNICATIONS [\(Ref. EXC | 03.26.25 | 5\)](#)

Mr. Voelker explained that Mr. Janke had provided the memo to address the Committee's questions that had been brought up from a recent appeal. These questions

focused on ETF's communications with members and the current processes for administering benefits for Long Term Disability Insurance (LTDI). The memo also included actions under consideration by ETF to enhance the disability program communications with members and improve internal resources and existing policies. Mr. Voelker informed the committee that Mr. Janke was available to answer any questions.

PERSONNEL MATTERS

Executive Committee Quarterly Human Resources Report: March 2025

Ms. Henning highlighted some of the recent recruitments that had been made at ETF, which included several internal promotions, external hires, and critical vacancies. She noted that ETF launched its Mentorship Program as a pilot. Two individuals had applied and were currently being matched with mentors. Ms. Henning added that ETF is in the process of interviewing three potential interns for the summer from the State's Student Diversity Internship Program. She also stated that staff had completed the mandatory privacy training and assessment, as well as training required to be completed by COOP-assigned staff. Additionally, ETF had submitted the Discretionary Equity and Retention Adjustments for various ETF staff to the Division of Personnel Management. In May, ETF planned to submit lump sum awards for staff eligible to receive Discretionary Merit Compensation.

Secretary's Evaluation and Timetable ([Ref. EXC | 03.26.25 | 6B](#))

Ms. Henning explained that the Secretary's evaluation process and timeline was the same as it had been in prior years. The supervisor/manager survey would go out after the March ETF Board meeting, and the results would be reviewed with the Committee by May 8. The Secretary's evaluation survey would be distributed by May 15 to ETF Board members, who had until May 30 to submit their responses. At the June 19 ETF Board meeting, the ETF Board would utilize the survey results for their annual evaluation of Secretary Voelker.

FUTURE ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

No future items were discussed.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Mr. Heller moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Wilding seconded the motion, which passed unanimously on a voice vote.

The Committee adjourned at 4:14 p.m.

Date Approved: _____

Signed: _____
Chris Heller, Secretary
Executive Committee