



John Strate, Chairman
Tammie Gaff, Secretary

Members:
Anthony Shea
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Retirement Board **COUNTY OF ARMSTRONG**

ARMSTRONG COUNTY RETIREMENT BOARD

Meeting Minutes
July 9, 2025, 10:30 AM

The meeting of the Armstrong County Retirement Board (The Board) was called to order by Commissioner Strate in the Commissioners' Conference Room on Wednesday, July 9, 2025 at 10:30AM. The following attended, unless marked absent:

Board Members:

Commissioners John Strate (Chairman), Anthony Shea (Member), Pat Fabian (Member),
Controller Tammie Gaff (Secretary), Treasurer Amanda Hiles (Member)

Guests:

Mr. Pat Wing, Marquette Associates
Ms. Karen Notto, Chief Clerk
Mrs. Amanda Rybarik, Retirement Specialist
Ms. Jessa Kinter, Commissioner Office Intern

The meeting was being electronically recorded.

Commissioner Strate led the Pledge of Allegiance.

It was motioned by Commissioner Shea, seconded by Controller Gaff, and carried unanimously to approve the Minutes of the March 12, 2025 Retirement Board Meeting.

It was motioned by Controller Gaff, seconded by Commissioner Shea, and carried unanimously to amend the 02/2025 Decrease amount to \$450,808 on the ACRB Meeting Agenda for July 9, 2025.

It was motioned by Controller Gaff, seconded by Commissioner Shea, and carried unanimously to discuss and acknowledge the Peirce Park Group/Marquette Associates Cash Flow Summary Reports for 01/31/25 – 05/31/25. It was noted that during the same time period there was a net increase in the Combined Asset Market Value of \$697,615 (01/31/2025 - \$86,246,393 to 05/31/2025 - \$86,944,008).

It was motioned by Commissioner Shea, seconded by Controller Gaff, and carried unanimously to discuss and acknowledge the Trade Transactions for **FEBRUARY 2025 - MAY 2025**.

It was motioned by Commissioner Shea, seconded by Controller Gaff, and carried unanimously to discuss and acknowledge the Retirement Summary for **MARCH 2025 - JUNE 2025**.

It was motioned by Commissioner Shea, seconded by Controller Gaff, and carried unanimously to discuss and acknowledge Retirement A/P Bills for **MARCH 2025 - \$14,716.88, APRIL 2025 - \$36,495.51, MAY 2025 - \$20,367.28 and JUNE 2025 - \$36,273.04**.

It was motioned by Commissioner Shea, seconded by Controller Gaff, and carried unanimously to acknowledge the 2025-2026 Fiduciary Liability Renewal at a cost of \$7,959.00.

It was motioned by Commissioner Shea, seconded by Controller Gaff, and carried unanimously to open discussion for agenda items b. – e. (Q1 Performance Report, Q2 Performance Report, WCM Agreement, and PPG/Marquette Agreement) under Current Business.

Mr. Wing presented an investment review, discussing the global economic environment, capital markets and performance of the Retirement Fund in Q1 2025. Notably, capital market returns were very different compared to Q4. U.S. equity markets posted a return of -4.7% for the quarter, while non-U.S. equities outperformed notably thanks to a decline in the U.S. dollar and weakness in U.S. mega-cap growth stocks. Fixed income, meanwhile, also posted a solid gain amid falling interest rates. Regarding non-traditional asset classes, private real estate, private infrastructure, and private credit also generated gains.

The Fund had an investment return of 0.4% for the quarter (all returns are net of investment management fees), beating its policy benchmark return of -0.3%. Outperformance was driven by an underweight to mega-cap growth stocks. Mr. Wing noted that the Fund has exposure to these stocks but is underweight in relative to the broad U.S. equity market, given concerns about their valuation.

He then reviewed preliminary second quarter performance through June, noting that most asset classes continued to post gains, with U.S. equities also participating in the rally. The Fund generated a strong return during the quarter, but was behind its policy benchmark during the period (6.6% vs. 7.3%). For the first six months of 2025, the Fund returned 7.0%, though Mr. Wing noted that this was likely understated due to the lack of Q2 data for private real estate, private infrastructure, and private credit at this time.

Mr. Wing then began to discuss a new investment manager within the Fund, WCM. He noted that Marquette added the investment earlier in Q1, moving assets from an existing manager to WCM. He also noted that it was Marquette's intention to move more assets to WCM, but the mutual fund was somewhat expensive. Given that, Marquette worked with WCM to launch a commingled investment trust ("CIT") for the strategy that would have a fee of about 25% less than the mutual fund. He reviewed the characteristics of CITs, also noting that the Fund utilized CITs already (e.g., MFS). Finally, he noted that the County would need to submit and execute an application to utilize the CIT. After discussion, Commissioner Fabian moved to recommend that the Board of Commissioners approve the completion and execution of the WCM CIT application. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Shea and passed unanimously.

Finally, Mr. Wing reviewed the history of Peirce Park Group ("PPG") and Marquette, noting that it has been about 8.5 years since Marquette acquired PPG. Several clients, including Armstrong County, remain on PPG contracts since it is a subsidiary of Marquette. However, Marquette is asking clients to

consider moving from a PPG contract to a Marquette contract to help alleviate the administrative burden of maintaining the PPG subsidiary. Mr. Wing stated that there would be no changes to services, fees, etc. if the County approved moving to a Marquette contract and asked the Board to consider the request. After discussion, Commissioner Shea moved to recommend that the Board of Commissioners approve the completion and execution of a Marquette contract. The motion was seconded by Controller Gaff and passed unanimously. Mr. Wing will send the proposed agreement for review.

It was motioned by Commissioner Shea, seconded by Controller Gaff, and carried unanimously to adjourn the July 9, 2025 Retirement Board Meeting at 11:13 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tammie Gaff", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tammie Gaff
Secretary/Controller