

GERS Update



News & Information from the Government Employees' Retirement System of the Virgin Islands

December 2010

Election Special

In accordance with Act 6764 frequently referred to as the Reform Act of 2005, retirees who serve on the GERS Board of Trustees will now have to be elected by their peers.

Administrator, Austin L. Nibbs who serves as the election supervisor along with election committee members in both districts began the process earlier this year once the procedures were drafted and approved by the Board of Trustees. Advertisements were placed in the newspapers as well as press releases were sent to the media informing members about the election, the requirements and the timeline. This information was also placed in GERS' second and third quarter newsletters and on our website.

In the St. Thomas/St. John District, we received four (4) nomination packages; whereas, in the St. Croix district, we did not receive any packages by the deadline. As a result, upon the recommendation of the election supervisor, the Board voted to extend the deadline in the St. Croix district only, for an additional thirty (30) days. Administrator Nibbs also sent a personal plea to all retirees in the St. Croix district by way of a letter, again informing them about the election and sharing the benefits of serving on the GERS Board. When that deadline closed out, we received five (5) nomination packages.

Based on the requirements, as stipulated by law, there were two (2) successful candidates in both the St. Thomas/St. John District and the St. Croix District. One nominee in the St. Thomas/St. John District filed an appeal/challenge, which in turn, delayed the process as we had to await a decision. Hence, the election timeline had to be amended. That appeal has since been resolved and we are now prepared to move forward.

The election is scheduled for **January 2011** and will be done by way of mail-in ballots. We have procured the services of a reputable third party vendor, VR Election Services (VRES), headquartered in Dallas, TX. Celebrating their 26th year anniversary, VRES are the undisputed leader in Retirement System elections throughout the United States.

Election ballots will be mailed to all eligible retired members of the GERS beginning January 7, 2011. Those members will have until February 21 to vote and return their ballots through the mail in the prepaid reply envelope to VR Election Services.

VRES will count the votes and the outcome will be announced at the next scheduled regular board meeting of the GERS Board of Trustees.

With this being our first election, we strongly encourage you to participate in this very important process. 

Your Vote Counts!

Wilbur K. Callender

Education and Training:

MBA, University of the Virgin Islands, 2001
BS, Howard University, 1963
MD, Howard University, 1967
Certificate in Healthcare Management, University of North Carolina, 1996
Certificate in Public Health Leadership: UCLA/CDC, 2000



Candidate Questions

Q: What do you think should be the primary role of a GERS Trustee?

A: To assist in accomplishing the mission of the System; to ensure that the System remains solvent; be obliged to act solely for the benefit of the System's beneficiaries and to participate by bringing innovative ideas and creative solutions to the Board.

Q: How do you think you could contribute to GERS as a member of the Board of Trustees?

A: My experience as a business owner, my training and involvement as a Real Estate owner and investor, my experience as a stock market investor, and my leadership experiences will allow me to contribute as a Board member by providing expertise in certain areas, proposing meaningful legislation for changes to the System, and seeking new ways to fund the System.

Q: Do you have any additional comments?

A: While the System has many challenges, there are also opportunities available to ensure its solvency. All board members will need to use good judgment in analyzing matters that will have an impact on the System. Autonomy, which will enhance the efficiency of the Board, should be sought.

Arturo Watlington, Jr.

Education and Training:

Juris Doctor, Howard University School of Law, 1979
Bachelor of Arts, Howard University, 1975
High School Diploma, SS Peter & Paul School, 1970
Continuing Education, various Post Secondary Seminars & Conferences



Candidate Questions

Q: What do you think should be the primary role of a GERS Trustee?

A: Set policy for the Government Employees Retirement System.

Q: How do you think you could contribute to GERS as a member of the Board of Trustees?

A: My experience and knowledge as an Attorney, a public servant, native Virgin Islander and most importantly a beneficiary of the System gives me the insight to use my multifaceted talents to address the challenges facing the System.

Q: Do you have any additional comments?

A: The System is at a crossroads and has served its beneficiaries well over the years however as we move forward there is a need to have individuals whose perspective reflect the future challenges.

Julia Hansen-Hodge

Education and Training:

Juris Doctor, Howard University School of Law, Washington, DC, May 1985
Master of Arts in Education: University of the VI, St. Croix, May 1981
Bachelor of Arts, Morgan State University, Baltimore, MD, June 1963



Candidate Questions

Q: What do you think should be the primary role of a GERS Trustee?

A: Being fiscally responsible for assets of the GERS, being an adviser of investments, selecting fund managers and assisting in maintaining complicated unfunded liabilities.

Q: How do you think you could contribute to GERS as a member of the Board of Trustees?

A: By reviewing and enforcing policies, helping to devise ways of responsibly investing GERS funds, being an active member of the policymaking body, attending all meetings.

Q: Do you have any additional comments?

A: The VI Retirement System offers a superlative portfolio administered by GERS. If selected to the Board of Trustees, I shall strive to maintain and strengthen the GERS with a special emphasis on the legal sufficiency of existing and proposed legal policies and investment strategies. I possess presentation, verbal, written communication and interpersonal skills and instructional abilities. My wide range of training and experience, including mediating intricate and passionate legal disputes, will prove to be an asset to the Board of Trustees. Moreover, as a beneficiary of the GERS, I value the importance of the fiduciary relationship between a Board member and the GERS and will strive to maintain this interrelationship.

Edgar D. Ross

Education and Training:

Juris Doctor, Howard University, School of Law, 1970
Bachelor of Arts, Lincoln University, PA, 1965
Valedictorian, Claude O. Markoe High School, F'ksted, St. Croix, VI, 1961



Candidate Questions

Q: What do you think should be the primary role of a GERS Trustee?

A: The primary role of a GERS Trustee should be to preserve and protect the interests of the beneficiaries of the System by developing and instituting policies geared towards fostering and promoting the beneficiaries' welfare and by considering and implementing sound and prudent investment policies to conserve and enhance the corpus of the retirement fund.

Q: How do you think you could contribute to GERS as a member of the Board of Trustees?

A: I believe that I could contribute to GERS as a member of the Board of Trustees by applying the specific legal knowledge, skills and experiences that I have accumulated over the years to its peculiar problems and policies thereby insuring the interests of the beneficiaries are protected.

Q: Do you have any additional comments?

A: RETIREMENT IS A STATUS MANY WILL ACHIEVE BUT FEW CAN AFFORD.

GERS Update

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VOTING

Q: Who's eligible to vote?

A: All retirees of the Government who are members of the System and currently receiving a monthly annuity or disability benefit from the GERS.

Q: When will retirees receive their mail ballots?

A: You can expect to receive your mail ballot any time after the first week of January. They will be mailed directly to eligible retirees by VR Election Services.

Q: How does the voting process work?

A: Once you receive your ballot package, please review the materials and the instructions. You then vote on the bar-coded ballot by simply making a mark in the response box next to the candidate of your choice for Board member in your district. When finished, utilize the included Business Reply Envelope to return your completed ballot to VRES's secure tabulation facility. Once there, the ballots are verified, sorted, scanned processed and secured.

Be assured that there is complete voter anonymity, accuracy, total security and quality control.

Make Your Vote Count!



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