



MIDDLESEX COUNTY RETIREMENT SYSTEM NEWS

Celebrating Over 100 Years of Public Service

Fall 2025

IN THIS ISSUE:

- p2 2025 Board Elections
 - 2026 Social Security
 - Cost-of-Living Adjustment
- p3 2025 MCRS Pension
 - Education Series a Success
 - Post-Retirement Public Work Hours and Earnings Limitations, continued
- p4 Protect Yourself From Scam Artists!
- p5 Reminder: Health Insurance Premium Exclusion for Public Safety Retirees
- p6 Make Retirement Planning Your New Year's Resolution
 - Holiday Wishes
 - Change of Address
- p7 MCRS Portal & Processing Times
- p8 2026 MCRS Pension Payment Schedule

Middlesex County Retirement System

25 Linnell Circle
P.O. Box 160
Nutting Lake, MA 01865

Phone: (978) 439-3000
Toll free: (800) 258-3805
Fax: (978) 439-3050
Email:
mrs@middlesexretirement.org

Office Hours

Monday to Friday
9:00AM – 5:00PM



By Tom Gibson

Post-Retirement Public Work Hours and Earnings Limitations

A reminder to all our retirees working for a Massachusetts public entity that the annual limit on post-retirement employment is 1,200 hours. Retirees are also subject to earnings limitations, which provide that a retiree may earn no more than the difference between the greater of the current salary paid in the position from which the member retired, or upon which the retirement is based, less the retirement allowance. On the January 1st following one full year of retirement, a retiree can earn an additional \$15,000 per year.

The restrictions apply to all services rendered to a Massachusetts public entity, including quasi-public entities such as the MBTA, irrespective of whether the services are rendered as a consultant or independent contractor. This includes payments to retirees for working “details.” With the exception of disability retirees, the restrictions do not apply to private sector employment or to federal employment or to public employment in another state.

Exemptions to the restrictions are limited, and include earnings from elective public office, jury service, and emergency employment with a Massachusetts public entity.

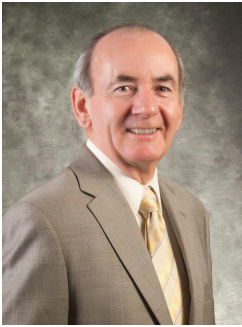
It is important to remember that MCRS can only assist in calculating current calendar year earnings. It is your responsibility, and that of your employer, to keep track of your hours and earnings. As soon as you reach either one of the limitations, you must stop working. Salary received after the limitations have been exceeded must be paid back, either to the employer or the retirement board. Excess earnings can be recouped by the retirement board either by direct payment from the retiree, or by the offset of future retirement benefits, in whole or in part.

The reduction of a retired member's pension by taxes, child support, payments to a former spouse or others, cannot be considered when

Continued on Page 3

www.middlesexretirement.org

2025 Board Elections



Brian Curtin Re-Elected as Second Member

Earlier this year, the Middlesex County Retirement System's Advisory Council re-elected Brian Curtin as its Chairman and member of the Board. Brian's commitment to public service is well established, as 2025 marks Brian's 45th year as a member of the Board, one of the longest serving board members in the Commonwealth. Brian retired as Treasurer of the Town of Burlington in 2020, a position he held since 1977, and is currently the Treasurer of the Burlington Housing Authority.



Joseph Kearns Declared Third Elected Member to the Board

On December 17th, the Election Board is expected to declare Tewksbury Fire Chief Joe Kearns as the elected Third Member of the Board, for a three-year term. Having first been elected in 2016, Chief Kearns was unopposed in seeking his fourth consecutive term on the Board. Chief Kearns' support of the members and beneficiaries of MCRS, and to the MCRS staff, are the hallmarks of his service as a Board member.



Board Reappoints Robert W. Healy as its Fifth Member

At the November 12, 2025 Board meeting, following a public application process, former Cambridge City Manager Robert W. Healy was unanimously reappointed as the Board's Fifth Member, for a five-year term. Bob was initially appointed to the Board in 2013. Bob's vast government experience and expertise in public administration were cited by the Board members as compelling reasons for his reappointment.

2026 SOCIAL SECURITY COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT

On October 24, 2025, the Social Security Administration announced a 2.8% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for 2026. The 2.8% COLA will begin with benefits payable in January 2026 and affects 71 million Social Security beneficiaries and 7.5 million Supplemental Security Income recipients.

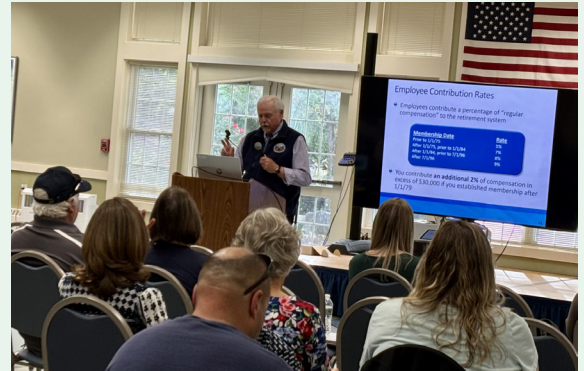
Most recipients will be able to view their COLA notice online by logging into their my Social Security account. If you haven't created an account yet, you can do so at <https://www.ssa.gov/myaccount>. This secure portal offers a convenient way to access notices and manage your benefits electronically.

Remember, the Social Security Administration's services are free of charge. They will never ask for personal information or advanced payment via wire transfers or gift cards. If you suspect fraud, report it immediately at <https://oig.ssa.gov/report> or call the Inspector General's Fraud Hotline at 1-800-269-0271 (TTY: 1-866-501-2101).

2025 MCRS Pension Education Series a Success

Our popular pension education seminars, “*Understanding Your Public Pension and Social Security*”, were successfully delivered in multiple formats to accommodate our members’ diverse needs. These sessions were offered in:

- small group settings at the retirement office;
- larger regional programs in Chelmsford, Acton, and Hopkinton; and
- a live webinar held in November.



Board Chairman Tom Gibson and Chief Administrative Officer Lisa Maloney presented important information to more than 400 members and guests on such topics as the retirement application process, retirement benefit calculations and payment options, what to expect post-retirement, and valuable information about Social Security benefits.

Whether attending in person or virtually, participants appreciated the opportunity to engage with the

presenters and ask questions tailored to their individual circumstances. The presentation is free and open to all our active members and should be an important part of your financial planning whether early or mid-career, or near retirement.

The 2026 Pension Education Series begins in February with small group presentations at the retirement office. To register for one of the sessions listed below, email mrs@middlesexretirement.org:



Tuesday, February 17, 2026 4 p.m.-5:30 p.m.

Middlesex County Retirement System Office, 25 Linnell Circle, Billerica
Limited to 20 people

Monday, March 16, 2026 4 p.m.-5:30 p.m.

Middlesex County Retirement System Office, 25 Linnell Circle, Billerica
Limited to 20 people

We will be promoting the rest of the 2026 Pension Education Series as soon as the schedule is set early next year. Keep an eye on our website for further information.

Post-Retirement Public Work Hours and Earnings Limitations, continued from Cover

calculating post-retirement earnings in the Massachusetts public sector. It is gross numbers that matter.

A retiree may also waive their retirement allowance prospectively in order to provide public services which would otherwise exceed the hours and earnings limitations.

If you have any questions about your post-retirement work restrictions, please contact our office.

Earnings restrictions are calculated as follows:

Current Salary/Salary Average:	\$60,000
Retirement Allowance:	\$40,000
Allowable Public Sector Earnings:	\$20,000
Add \$15,000:	\$35,000



Protect Yourself From Scam Artists!

We cannot overemphasize the need for caution, as we are seeing an increase in scam attempts that are targeting our members, especially older retirees, who are on Medicare. These scams can sound very convincing, especially now that these crooks have artificial intelligence tools that make their scams more believable. It is vitally important to recognize these wrongful attempts to separate you from your money.

SCAMMERS WILL TRY TO PRESSURE YOU TO ACT FAST. TAKE YOUR TIME TO VERIFY!

Scammers use text, email, phone calls, social media and computer pop-ups to obtain your personal and financial information to steal your money. They may install malware on your devices to steal information usually claiming one or more of these scenarios:

- There is fraud in your bank account, and you need to move or withdraw your money.
- They are a grandchild, family member or an online romantic interest who needs money now.
- They are the IRS and you have an unexpected overdue tax payment or are owed a refund.
- They are from Amazon, FedEx, UPS, etc., calling about a failed package delivery attempt.
- They are from National Grid, Eversource, etc., and are shutting off your electricity or heat.
- There is a computer issue that they can help fix.
- They are from a company you do business with and are refunding you an overcharge.
- A credit or job application needs your Social Security number, account number or PIN.
- They are from “Medicare” seeking to confirm your coverage or offer you additional coverage — Never give your Medicare card, Medicare Number, Social Security card, or Social Security Number to anyone except your doctor or people you know should have it. **If you get an unsolicited call, just hang up!**

Scammers may pressure you to act quickly, but don't fall for it. Take your time and verify everything with someone you trust. If you ever receive a suspicious call, text, or email, or if you're unsure about any message you have received, please let a family member or police know. **If you are told or asked to do any of the following, do not comply:**

- Withdraw cash and deposit it into a “new” bank account or into your digital wallet.
- Make the deposit through an ATM, or in Bitcoin, or other crypto currency.

- > Click a link or download an attachment to provide your payment information.
- > Share your PIN numbers or security codes.
- > Ignore warning messages when you are following their instructions.
- > Provide remote access to a device or download an app.
- > Type a code or phone number into your device beginning with special characters such as *72 or **21. Your incoming calls and texts may be forwarded to the scammer.

If you follow their instructions, the scammer succeeds in moving your money into the

scammer's account, and it is highly unlikely it can ever be recovered. MCRS will never ask you to change your direct deposit or beneficiary information, or to withdraw your retirement contributions. If you receive any requests regarding your retirement account or requesting personal information, please call us immediately to verify that it is legitimate.

Reminder! Never give your Medicare card, Medicare Number, Social Security card, or Social Security Number to anyone except your doctor or people you know should have it (like insurers acting on your behalf or people who work with Medicare.)



Reminder: Health Insurance Premium Exclusion for Public Safety Retirees

If you are a retired public safety officer, the Pension Protection Act of 2006 and the Healthcare Enhancement for Local Public Safety (HELPS) Retirees Act of 2022 allow you to exclude up to \$3,000 of your health, accident, or long-term care insurance premiums from your gross taxable income each year. The premiums can be for coverage for you, your spouse, or dependents.

If you are filing a federal tax return, please carefully read the IRS tax instructions to take full advantage of this benefit. Premium contributions will be reflected on your 2025 1099R.

The following tips may be helpful when you prepare your federal return:

- You must be a public safety retiree who retired for

disability or after attaining “normal retirement age” (i.e., age 55 for Group 4 for those entering service prior to April 2, 2012, age 57 for Group 4 for those entering service on or after that date).

- You need to file a federal income tax return to take advantage of the exclusion. If you do not file a federal return, then the exclusion will not benefit you.
- Married couples who are both public safety retirees may take a reduction in income of up to \$6,000.
- Beneficiaries who receive survivor pensions are not eligible for the exclusion.

Please be aware that the retirement office is not able to render tax advice. If you have your federal tax return prepared by someone, please make sure the tax preparer knows that you are entitled to the exclusion. For additional assistance, retirees should contact a tax consultant.

Make Retirement Planning Your New Year's Resolution

As we welcome a fresh start in the new year, there's no better time to commit to your future. Setting a resolution to begin planning for retirement can give you peace of mind and a clear path forward. Here are five tips to get you started:

- **Set clear goals:** Think about when you plan to retire and make a timeline so that you have a schedule to follow – and look forward to!
- **Review your savings:** Take stock of your current retirement accounts and contributions.
- **Set up an account:** Visit our website to create an account. You'll be able to review your account, generate superannuation retirement estimates, access select forms and income verification letters, and much more.
- **Create a budget:** Map out expenses now and anticipate future needs.
- **Attend a MCRS Program:** We offer small group settings at our office and programs in the community. All programs are listed on our website.

Remember, retirement planning is a journey, not a sprint—and starting now makes all the difference. You can always check out the Middlesex County Retirement System website at www.middlesexretirement.org for more information.



The Middlesex County Retirement Board and Staff wish all of our members a healthy and enjoyable holiday season. It's an honor to serve you and we look forward to continuing to help members navigate retirement planning in 2026.

Happy Holidays & Happy New Year



Calling All Members: Do You Have A Change of Address?

Please notify the Middlesex County Retirement System in writing of any change of address. Be it a permanent address change or a temporary winter mailing address, the retirement staff wants to ensure you receive your 1099R and other important notices. Please visit our website at www.middlesexretirement.org to download a Change of Address Form. Then mail or fax the form to our office. For security purposes, we require the original document with your signature.



MCRS Portal & Processing Times

View your account online!

Employee Self-Service provides our members and retirees with the ability to review their account

information, generate superannuation retirement estimates, access select forms and income verification letters, and much more.

How to Create Your ESS Account

1. Go to the Website: www.middlesexretirement.org
2. Navigate to Resources: Under the Resources tab, select Employee Self-Service: Online Account Access.
3. Self-Register: Use the Self-Registration feature to create your account.

4. Bookmark the Login Page: After registration, bookmark the Log In page for easy future access.

We are here to help! Every day, we receive dozens of requests from our members seeking assistance. We understand how important it is to provide you with the information you need to plan for your retirement in a timely manner.

However, some requests may take longer to process than others because we need information from your current or former employers, or other retirement systems to ensure we have all the necessary information to assist you. Thank you in advance for your patience!

PROCESSING TIMES

Request	Processing Time
Creditable Service and Estimate Request Form	4-6 weeks.
Make Up Request Form (Used to purchase prior non-membership service)	Approximately 6 months depending on where your prior service was rendered. Be sure to leave plenty of time to purchase your service prior to retirement.
Redeposit Form (Used to purchase a previous refund.)	Approximately 1 month if it is a Middlesex County Retirement System refund. Longer if it is from a different retirement system.
Refund Application	60 days. Submit the original application, including the employer section, with a copy of your driver's license.
Superannuation Retirement Application	Submit approximately 3 months in advance of your retirement date to receive a timely payment. Submit the original application with all supporting documentation.



2026 MCRS Pension Payment Schedule

Direct Deposit of your
monthly benefit occurs
on the last business day
of the month.

Month	2026 Direct Deposit Dates
January	Friday, 1/30
February	Friday, 2/27
March	Tuesday, 3/31
April	Thursday, 4/30
May	Friday, 5/29
June	Tuesday, 6/30
July	Friday, 7/31
August	Monday, 8/31
September	Wednesday, 9/30
October	Friday, 10/30
November	Monday, 11/30
December	Thursday, 12/31

MIDDLESEX COUNTY
RETIREMENT BOARD

Thomas F. Gibson, Chairman
Brian P. Curtin, Advisory Council Member
John Brown, Elected Member

Joseph W. Kearns, Elected Member
Robert W. Healy, Appointed Member
Lisa M. Maloney, Chief Administrative Officer

Middlesex County Retirement System
25 Linnell Circle
P.O. Box 160
Nutting Lake, MA 01865

