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www.coaers.org

The City of Austin Employees Retirement System Newsletter

COAERS CONNECT

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CONTACT COAERS
Our staff is available to assist members via telephone appointments, in-person appointments, or virtual visits. Please contact us to schedule an appointment.

Monday - Friday
8:00 am to 5:00 pm
Tel: (512) 458-2551

www.coaers.org/contact
member.services@coaers.org

COAERS
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Kennard Wright
Katy Zamesnik



COAERS Deputy Director Russell Nash and newly elected Board Trustee Katy Zamesnik

Katy Zamesnik Elected to COAERS Board of Trustees

Katy Zamesnik has been elected to Place 7 on the COAERS Board of Trustees after receiving the highest number of votes. The Board certified the election results at its September 17, 2026 meeting, and Zamesnik was sworn in on September 22.

The special election was held to fill the remainder of the Place 7 term following the resignation of Ben Ellinor from the Board. Zamesnik will serve through the end of that term on December 31, 2027.

Zamesnik brings nearly 15 years of budgeting and finance experience with the City of Austin. She began her City career in 2011 as a budget analyst in Financial Services and has since worked closely with numerous City departments. She currently serves as Interim Director of the Austin Convention Center, where she oversees financing for the center's $1.6 billion expansion. She holds a Master of Public Affairs from the University of Texas at Austin and a bachelor's degree in economics from Florida State University.

COAERS thanks Ben Ellinor for his invaluable service to the members and the Board. Thank you to all the candidates for their participation, the election committee for its commitment to this important process, and every member who cast a ballot.

To learn more about the Board and upcoming meetings, visit www.coaers.org/board-of-trustees.



Member Summit 2026: Empowering Retirement Readiness

City of Austin employees and retirees gathered at Austin Energy HQ in July for the 2026 COAERS Member Summit. This year's theme, Empowering Retirement Readiness, guided a full day of educational sessions, expert conversations, and connections with community resource partners.

The summit brought members together across every career stage, from those just beginning their City service to retirees already drawing their pension benefit. Over the course of the day, COAERS experts and invited partners covered the many pieces that make up a secure retirement, from understanding your COAERS benefit to planning for life well beyond your final day of work.

Sessions covered the many pieces that make up a secure retirement:

- Retirement Readiness: Understanding Your Lifetime Benefit
- Demystifying Service Purchase
- Empowering Retirement with Deferred Compensation, presented by Empower
- Navigating Aging, Caregiving, and Community Resources, presented by the Area Agency on Aging
- Building Financial Longevity
- State of the Pension Fund update and Leadership Q&A

How to Watch the Member Summit Sessions

All sessions from the 2026 Member Summit are now available to watch on the COAERS YouTube channel. From understanding your lifetime benefit to the State of the Pension Fund update, you can watch at your own pace and return to the topics that matter most to you. Watch here: www.youtube.com/@coaers

Thank you to every member who attended and to the partners and presenters who made the day possible.



Benefits 101: What is a Deferred Compensation Plan?

A deferred compensation plan, also known as a 457(b) plan, provides employees with an additional way to save for retirement through convenient payroll deductions. City of Austin employees may enroll in the City's deferred compensation plan administered by Empower.

Many financial professionals recommend supplementing a pension with personal retirement savings to help meet retirement income goals. A deferred compensation plan can help you save for future expenses, provide additional flexibility during retirement, and support your long-term financial goals.

Get Started with Empower

Active City of Austin employees who are not signed up with Empower can call 866-613-6189 to get started.

Current Empower participants can also call and make an appointment for a session with a personal financial planner.

To reach Empower:

www.DCAustin.com
1-866-613-6189
512-457-9240
dcaustin@empower.com

MONEYWISE

Join our monthly webinars on financial wellness and education. Visit www.coaers.org/financialwellness for more resources.

Thriving in the Transition to Retirement
November 19 at 12 pm

Conquer the art of transitioning into a fulfilling retirement. This class is tailored for those nearing retirement age, providing essential strategies and insights to ensure a secure and satisfying post-work life.

Moves for the Sandwich Generation
December 10 at 12 pm

Supporting kids and aging parents while building your own future is no easy feat. This class gives you practical strategies to manage multi-generational costs, protect your retirement, and keep your financial life balanced without burning out.

Register at www.coaers.org



These highlights are a summary of actions taken and topics discussed by the COAERS Board.

Policy Review
At its September meeting, the Board made updates to several policies as part of its regular review, including the Board Governance Policy, the Emergency Succession Policy, the Communications Policy, and the Records Management Policy. Trustees also discussed the development of the 2027-2031 COAERS Strategic Plan.

Actuarial Analysis
The Board received a special actuarial study from the System's actuarial consultant Milliman examining the potential impact of investment return scenarios on future contribution rate calculations. Milliman analyzed both deterministic and stochastic situations to determine the likelihood that the City contribution rate reaches the corridor maximum, the likelihood that member contribution rates need to increase above 10%, and what impact a significant market downturn would have on both City and member contribution rates.

Investment Update
The Board approved a proposal to conduct the Investment Practices and Performance Evaluation. In accordance with state statute, COAERS is required to conduct this review every three years to evaluate the appropriateness, adequacy, and effectiveness of the system's investment practices and performance and to make recommendations for improving its investment policies, procedures, and practices.

Benefits Open Enrollment Period is Now Open

Open Enrollment is an opportunity for retired members to make changes to current health, dental, vision, or other benefits coverage for the upcoming year. Retiree open enrollment will close on **November 13 at 11:59 pm**.

How to Enroll or Make Changes

You can make changes to your benefits by logging into the City's Workday portal, the newly implemented system where retirees can access their retiree benefits information and make benefits changes. If this is your first time logging in, your login credentials can be found in your 2027 Open Enrollment Packet, or you may email the Benefits Division at Benefits.HRD@austintexas.gov to obtain your username credentials.

To make benefits changes by phone, call 888-800-7308. The Open Enrollment Call Center is available Monday through Friday from 7 am to 7 pm and Saturday from 9 am to 1 pm.

For more information on retiree benefits, including a Medicare Advantage video and FAQs, visit www.austintexas.gov/retirees.

Vote in the Retired Member Place 11 Election

The voting period is now open for the 2026 COAERS Board Election for Place 11. COAERS retirees can cast their votes. Only retired members of COAERS are eligible to vote in this election. Ballots must be received by or before the election deadline. **The deadline to vote is by 5 pm on December 1, 2026.**

How to Vote

There are two ways to vote in this year's retiree election:

- **Online:** Log in to the voting website with your election code and PIN provided in your mailed ballot and email from COAERS. Visit vote.yeselections.com/COAERS and submit your vote.
- **By paper ballot:** Fill out the ballot and mail it back to COAERS using the pre-paid stamped envelope.
- **How to Vote Webinar on November 10 at 12 pm**
  Join COAERS for an interactive webinar on the Place 11 election. Learn about the election and review how to cast your vote.
  Join via Zoom
  Webinar link: coaers-org.zoom.us/j/87012371819
  Meeting ID: 870 1237 1819

About the Candidates for Retired Member Place 11

This year, three members declared their candidacy for the Place 11 position. To read their full candidate statements, visit www.coaers.org/board-elections.

Reason for wanting to serve on the Board of Trustees

Deep Institutional Stewardship: My financial plan counts on my COAERS pension, giving me the ultimate personal stake in its absolute stability. My focus is also rooted in 14 years of helping build, lead, and support the City of Austin's workforce. Having worked side by side with these great employees, ensuring their long-term retirement security is a deeply personal extension of my career's work.

Commitment: I want to leverage my financial and strategic planning experience developing, reviewing, and approving departmental budgets to ensure our pension fund remains actuarially sound, structurally sustainable, resilient against market volatility, and secure for the long term.



Robert Goode

Management Services - City Manager's Office, Assistant City Manager
11 years, 10 months

Reason for wanting to serve on the Board of Trustees

I'd like to serve my fellow retirees and active participants as a Board of Trustees member by contributing to the Board's mission, strategic planning, and oversight of system policies and investment programs. I know that financial market conditions occasionally present major challenges to investment programs and it is incumbent upon oversight boards to meet such challenges with well planned strategies and fiduciary best practices. I feel that my background and knowledge align well with Trustee fiduciary duties and will work hard with trustees, staff, and consultants to ensure the safeguarding of promised benefits to participants and their beneficiaries.



Leandro Garcia

Austin Water Utility, Consumer Services Division Manager
23 years, 2 months

Reason for wanting to serve on the Board of Trustees

I want to continue serving on the governing board of COAERS for the exclusive benefit of its members. My desire to work tirelessly to ensure the long-term viability of the retirement system for retirees, surviving annuitants, active-contributing, and future employees. In other words, I want to work to make sure that all promises are kept.



Anthony Ross, Sr.

Austin Energy, Internal Audit Manager
17 years, 11 months

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IMPORTANT 2026 DATES

NOVEMBER

11/11 Veterans Day Holiday Closure
11/12 Board Meeting
11/13 Retiree Open Enrollment Ends
11/18 Virtual Pre-Retirement Seminar
11/19 Financial Wellness Webinar: Thriving in the Transition to Retirement
11/26 Thanksgiving Holiday Closure
11/27 Thanksgiving Holiday Closure
11/30 Retiree Annuity Issue Date

DECEMBER

12/1 December Retirement Application Deadline
12/1 Retired Member Place 11 Voting Deadline
12/10 Financial Wellness Webinar: Moves for the Sandwich Generation
12/15 Virtual Pre-Retirement Seminar
12/16 Virtual Pre-Retirement Seminar - Spanish
12/17 Board Meeting
12/24 Christmas Holiday Closure
12/25 Christmas Holiday Closure
12/31 Retiree Annuity Issue Date

30-DAY RETIREMENT APPLICATION DEADLINES

To retire during your intended month, the retirement application must be submitted at least 30 calendar days prior to your retirement date. You can review the deadlines here: www.coaers.org/retirement-application-deadlines.

COAERS
CITY OF AUSTIN
EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
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CITY OF AUSTIN EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM

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NEWSLETTER

