Texas Emergency Services Retirement System
Strategic Planning Workshop
May 20, 2026, 1:00 p.m.
North Lamar Blvd. Building, TCFP Conference Room Suite 140
4800 N. Lamar Blvd., Austin, TX 78756

Members Present:
Jerry Romero, Chairman
Matthew Glaves, Vice Chairman
Edward Keenan, Trustee
Rodney Ryalls, Trustee
Nathan Douglas, Trustee

Members Absent:
Rupal Chaudhari, Secretary
Brian Smith, Trustee

Staff and Others Present:
Jessica Almaguer, Executive Director, TESRS
Michael Villanueva, Executive Assistant, TESRS
Scott Miller, Director of Compliance and Marketing, TESRS
Benjamin Lawler, Retirement System Operational Specialist, TESRS
Kathy Hubert, Chief Financial Officer, TESRS
Sheri Howe, Staff Service Officer, TESRS
Rosalind Hunt, Assistant Attorney General, OAG (via, Zoom)

Chairman Romero called the meeting to order at 1:08 p.m.

1) **Roll Call and Excuse of Board Member Absences**

Michael Villanueva, Executive Assistant, called the roll. Five Board members were present, and two were absent. Chairman Romero announced that a quorum of the Board was present.

Chairman Romero called for a motion to excuse the absent member. The motion to excuse the absent members was made by Vice Chairman Glaves, seconded by Trustee Ryalls and unanimously passed by the board.

2) **Invitation for Public Comment**

Chairman Romero called for public comment. Michael Villanueva, Executive Assistant, informed the board no public comments were submitted.

No action was taken on this agenda item.

3) **Continuation of the Strategic Planning for Retirement System**

A. **Purpose, Vision, Values (may include statutory authority, legislation, rulemaking, sunset objectives, budget, contracting, membership/plan growth, outreach, and training)**
B. **Identify Critical Issues**
C. **Development of Goals and Implementation**

The Texas Emergency Services Retirement System (TESRS) held a comprehensive strategic planning workshop to develop the agency's strategic plan for fiscal years 2027–2031. The session focused on refining mission and vision statements, identifying critical issues, reviewing marketing and recruitment progress, implementing web accessibility improvements, and establishing technology and cybersecurity initiatives. The board made significant progress on mission statement development and approved a strategic plan framework for submission to the Legislative Budget Board and Governor's Office.

TESRS Staff presented the following topics to the board for the strategy session:

- **Purpose, Vision, Values**
    - Agency Mission Statement:
        - "To honor our Texas emergency service(s) personnel by providing stable, equitable member benefits while strengthening the future of emergency service(s) communities by growing investments and membership.
    - Agency Vision Statement:
        - "To honor our Texas emergency service(s) personnel by providing trusted, secure, and protected benefits.

- **Identify Critical Issues**
    - Negative Cash Flow:
        - The board determined that negative cash flow should be removed from the list of critical issues, as the recently implemented state funding mechanism has substantially addressed cash flow concerns. The agency will remain vigilant regarding funding adequacy.
    - Non-Vested Terminated Members and Deceased Individuals:
        - The board engaged in extensive discussion regarding non-vested terminated members and potential funds held for deceased individuals. Key concerns included the difficulty of verifying death status without Social Security numbers and the potential impact on actuarial calculations. The board directed staff to conduct an analysis to identify deceased members, members with 6–10 years of service who returned to volunteer status, and members who returned from non-vested terminated to active status.
    - Visibility and Marketing
        - The board recognized that many potential members and eligible departments remain unaware of TESRS's existence. Focus groups were deemed unnecessary, as the agency's full-time marketing staff can accomplish more through continued expansion of marketing and recruitment efforts.

- **Development of Goals and Implementation**
    - Recruiting & Marketing Expansion
        - The agency reported significant progress in marketing and visibility since the previous strategic planning session. Social media presence has expanded across Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube, with a shift from static images to interactive video content and "reels." A promotional reel about the agency building received nearly 600 views, and Instagram followers have grown substantially.
        - Upcoming initiatives include testimonial videos featuring firefighters and their families (beginning June 1, 2026), congratulatory letters to new firefighter graduates, and partnership exploration with SFMA. The agency is also exploring more sophisticated

email marketing platforms, AI-generated graphics, and embedding surveys in email signatures via Microsoft Forms.
- Customer service survey results from approximately 200–220 respondents indicated members want increased COLA, information about facilities, and better communication about payroll dates.

- **Information Technology**
  - Web/Accessibility:
    - Web Accessibility Compliance:
      - Testing revealed significant accessibility issues with the current website, particularly regarding screen reader functionality. Staff attended training on Section 508 compliance and identified Verdana as the preferred accessible font. A comprehensive website overhaul was approved rather than minor fixes.
    - Website Redesign Project:
      - A parallel development approach was approved — a “band-aid” fix for current functionality alongside a complete redesign with cleaner presentation. The project will begin the first week of June 2026 with a six-month completion target. A new web accessibility coordinator position was approved for hiring.
    - Forms Simplification:
      - The agency will move most-used forms online, simplify them by reducing content and breaking them into smaller components, and investigate cost-effective digital signature solutions through Microsoft Office Suite and Adobe Suite, avoiding DocuSign due to per-transaction charges.
    - Secure Access and User Authorization:
      - The team is researching costs for a new server environment and authorization structure to expand portal access to retirees and terminated employees.
    - Operational Continuity and Disaster Recovery:
      - The agency will prioritize stronger contingency planning for system failures, examining backup solutions, recovery procedures, and acceptable downtime parameters.
  - Artificial Intelligence:
    - The agency conducts annual mandatory cybersecurity awareness training. The Department of Information Resources has created a new AI training video addressing information security concerns. Sister agencies have established mandatory state guidelines for AI training. All board members and staff must be certified by August 31, 2026. Training completion documentation will be included in the strategic plan submission.

- **Legislation/Leadership:**
  - Staff met with both the Rules Committee and the Legislative Committee and have drafted some rules— which Kathy will present in detail tomorrow using slides she created. There's also a specific rule that Scott and Ed discussed, to be covered more thoroughly the next day, along with how the board wants to proceed. The speaker notes there are good opportunities

to make changes.

- **Strategies/Action Planning**
  - The agency developed a comprehensive strategic plan addressing multiple statutory requirements. A budget structure expansion was approved to enhance marketing and recruitment efforts, focusing on targeted outreach and statewide visibility through community outreach, social media, and content creation. Performance measure definitions will be clarified to ensure proper tracking. The strategic plan was approved for submission to the Legislative Budget Board, Governor's Office, and other designated state offices, with a placeholder template for pending budget structure directives.

The board took one break:

- 3:00 p.m. and returned at 3:15 p.m.

No Action was taken regarding the agenda item.

6) Adjourn

Chairman Romero called for a motion to adjourn at 3:40 p.m. The motion was made by Vice Chairman Glaves and the second motion by Trustee Douglas and unanimously passed by the board.

Minutes Approved by:

Signed by:
Matthew Glaves
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Matthew Glaves, Vice Chairman

08/24/2026
Date: August 24, 2026