



Natick board's trips explained - to some.(News)

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Spending \$63,000 on trips to Las Vegas and Florida is all part of the job, Natick Retirement Board members explained.

That's if you caught the meeting.

The board met with town employees and retirees Wednesday to explain their jaunts but the rest of the public wasn't invited.

Michael Sacco, the board's lawyer, said yesterday the meeting was informational. He said the controversy surrounding the board's travels was largely a function of the press trying to sell newspapers. "I don't think the board has anything it needs to apologize (for)," Sacco said.

Both town employees and taxpayers pay into the retirement system, which has about \$79 million in assets, according to the board.

Selectman Joshua Ostroff said he believes transparency in government should be encouraged.

"The town's taxpayers add more than \$5 million a year to the system, and any meeting notice that goes to the system's members should extend to the public at large, like other meetings held at Town Hall.

"In the world I live in, when 5 percent of the town's budget is going into this pool, that alone suggests there's information that's in the interest of the public," Ostroff said.

Board members and staff went on six out-of-state trips from 2003 to 2005, including Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas. Board members said the trips were strictly business conferences held in sunny locations to draw a healthy turnout.

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