

STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
STATE EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT COMMISSION

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MAY 20, 2021 MEETING  
HELD VIA ZOOM  
CONVENED AT 9:06 a.m.

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Board Members Present:

Peter Adomeit, Chairman  
Angel Quiros, Trustee  
Carl Chisem, Trustee  
Claude Poulin, Actuarial Trustee  
John Flores, General Counsel, Office of the Treasurer, Ex  
Officio Member  
Karen Buffkin, Trustee  
Karen Nolen, Trustee  
Mark Sciota, Municipal Liaison  
Martha Carlson, Deputy Comptroller, Ex Officio Member  
Michael Carey, Trustee  
Michael Bailey, Trustee  
Michael O'Brien, Trustee  
Robert D. Coffey, Trustee  
Sal Luciano, Trustee  
Sandra Fae Brown Brewton, Trustee  
Timothy Ryor, Trustee  
Janet Andrews, Trustee

Also Present:

Bruce Barth, Tax Counsel to the Commission, Robinson & Cole  
Alisha Sullivan, Tax Counsel to the Commission, Robinson & Cole  
John Herrington, Director, Retirement Services Division  
Colin Newman, Assistant Director, Retirement Services Division  
Yamuna Menon, General Counsel/Assistant State Comptroller,  
Office of the State Comptroller  
Cindy Cieslak, General Counsel to the Commission, Rose Kallor  
Michael Rose, General Counsel to the Commission, Rose Kallor  
Judge Beverly Streit Kefalas, Probate Court Administrator  
Lisa Hansen, Probate Court

TRANSCRIPTIONIST: Karin Empson

1 (Proceedings commenced at 9:06 a.m.)

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4  
5 MS. CIESLAK: This is Cindy Cieslak. I did  
6 not hit record a minute ago when you called the meeting  
7 to order. There's been no other business. But, Peter,  
8 can you please call the meeting to order again?

9 MR. ADOMEIT: I will call the meeting to  
10 order. And you didn't hear me because I was on mute.

11 MS. CIESLAK: Thank you. Chairman, would you  
12 like me to provide those who are in attendance?

13 MR. ADOMEIT: Please.

14 MS. CIESLAK: Sure. All right. This is  
15 Cindy Cieslak. Today we have Chairman Peter Adomeit;  
16 Trustee Angel Quiros; Trustee Carl Chisem; Actuarial  
17 Trustee Claude Poulin; General Counsel to the Office of  
18 the Treasurer and Ex Officio Member of the Commission,  
19 John Flores; Trustee Karen Buffkin; Trustee Karen  
20 Nolen; Municipal Liaison Mark Sciota; Deputy  
21 Comptroller and Ex Officio Member of the Commission,  
22 Martha Carlson; Trustee Michael Carey; Trustee Michael  
23 Bailey; Trustee Michael O'Brien; Trustee Robert Coffey;  
24 Trustee Sal Luciano; Trustee Sandra Fae Brown Brewton;  
25 Actuarial Trustee Tim Ryor.

1           We have Bruce Barth, Tax Counsel from  
2           Robinson & Cole. We also have Alisha Sullivan, Tax  
3           Counsel from Robinson & Cole. We have John Herrington,  
4           Division Director from the Retirement Services  
5           Division; Colin Newman, Assistant Director from the  
6           Retirement Services Division; Yamuna Menon, General  
7           Counsel and Assistant Comptroller. We also have Cindy  
8           Cieslak from Rose Kallor; that's me. And we have  
9           Michael Rose from Rose Kallor.

10           I believe that is - oh, sorry. We also have  
11           two guests. We have Judge Beverly Streit-Kefalus from  
12           the Probate Court, and Lisa Hansen from the Probate  
13           Court.

14           Did I miss anyone? All right, Peter. I  
15           think we are all set.

16           MR. ADOMEIT: All right. Well, my Chairman's  
17           Report is another compliment to the Division, to John  
18           Herrington, Marty Carlson, for having kept this whole  
19           thing going, and actually, in some ways, speeded the  
20           whole thing up. So congratulations and keep it up.

21           Okay. We have Yamuna here, who is our new  
22           general counsel. I'd like to welcome her.

23           And I'll turn it over to Division Director,  
24           John Herrington.

25           MR. HERRINGTON: Good morning, everyone. So

1 before you, you have the analytics for our (inaudible)  
2 over the post month. We continue to make progress  
3 towards all of our priorities. We are in a very good  
4 spot with respect to the disability application and  
5 initial-meetings goal. I think through this summer, we  
6 should get to a point where we're going to be  
7 scheduling meetings up through September for a number,  
8 and then the applications that come in between now and  
9 then. And so probably from September or October  
10 forward, we should be, you know, much closer to being  
11 within maybe 90 days from the submission of an  
12 application to the hearing for individuals that submit  
13 complete files.

14 So that's a considerable amount of progress  
15 from where we've been historically. We continue to  
16 reduce the disability backlog with the goal of  
17 completely eliminating the backlog by the end of this  
18 calendar year.

19 In terms of the normal retirement audits, for  
20 May, the number was just a little bit higher than it  
21 was last year and higher than the 10-year average. You  
22 know, that is what we would expect to see between now  
23 and July of 2022. We would expect to see, you know,  
24 increased numbers each month. What we are also  
25 interested in seeing is we are preparing for the

1 potential that July may be an overly heavy month  
2 considering the fact that there may or may not be a  
3 requirement for more State employees to return to State  
4 offices and that that might be an indicis for increased  
5 numbers of retirements.

6 In terms of our release of the self-service  
7 benefit estimator, we are just over half at this point.  
8 There are somewhere around 14,000 perspective 2022  
9 retirees out there. We've released this tool to just  
10 about 8,900 of those individuals. We've released this  
11 largely to the self-service reporting agencies that  
12 have historical data in CORE and the largest of those.  
13 We have kind of a catch-all release - we're releasing  
14 the tool every two weeks. We have a catch-all release  
15 next Monday to some of the smaller agencies.

16 And then we are going to shift our focus on  
17 some of the more difficult agencies for us to work  
18 with, those agencies that haven't historically reported  
19 to CORE. So there's a requirement for much more  
20 interaction and collaboration in terms of gathering the  
21 data for those agencies. We're starting with judicial  
22 and hope to have that rolled out through June. And  
23 then the heaviest lift is going to be from that point  
24 forward dealing with the higher education agencies,  
25 UConn, the Board of Regents, and the State universities

1 and community colleges. We are also - also UConn  
2 Health Center.

3 We are working very closely with UConn and  
4 UConn Health Center and we've made great strides in  
5 terms of identifying the relevant population and  
6 sharing information. I would say, you know, just as  
7 with the pandemic, this process of preparing for 2022  
8 really has kind of accelerated our kind of abilities  
9 and capabilities to deal with this new technology that  
10 we have. So there's lots of things that we're working  
11 through, but I think at the end of the day, we're doing  
12 everything that we can to be prepared for 2022 and then  
13 beyond that. You know, I think that the Division is  
14 going to be in a much better situation or position to  
15 deal with volumes going forward.

16 Another issue that we brought to the  
17 application is the compilation we've made, revisions to  
18 the compilation, that was submitted to the IRS. We  
19 have all of our changes completed to that document and  
20 we will circulate that to tax counsel, to Peter, and  
21 likely to wider populations in the next couple of days  
22 and weeks.

23 And that's all I have for this month's  
24 report.

25 MR. ADOMEIT: Okay. Before I ask Marty to

1 comment, I'm going to introduce Michael O'Brien, who is  
2 our new commissioner from CSEA. And welcome aboard,  
3 Michael. And I am—

4 MR. O'BRIEN: Thank you, Peter.

5 MR. ADOMEIT: Marty?

6 MR. HERRINGTON: Marty, you're on mute.

7 MS. CARLSON: Just to add on to what John was  
8 saying, as we head into that, you know, June of 2022,  
9 you may be aware or may be not that the administration  
10 has executed an HR consolidation, which created a  
11 number of pods over at DAS of specialists to work on  
12 certain issues. There is a retirement pod over there.  
13 That initially was under-resourced and now I believe  
14 they're hiring a couple of people. But we've been  
15 having discussions with them, you know, sort of helping  
16 them stand up what they need to do there. The goal of  
17 the consolidation, we know, was not to give the  
18 retirement division more work, so we're working very  
19 carefully with Nancy Harnick and her team over there to  
20 make sure that doesn't happen.

21 And the other thing we're going to play, I  
22 think, probably for the fall, John, or - we haven't  
23 discussed timing yet. But we're going to put together  
24 what I'm calling a - you know, a 2022 SWAT team for  
25 retirement with these pods over at DAS and members of

1 our Retirement Division staff together meeting  
2 regularly to try to make sure that we can handle what's  
3 coming.

4 I think right now - John, correct me if I'm  
5 wrong - the pod is handling about 150 current  
6 retirements a month, and it's a burden for them, and  
7 we're trying to figure out how we can help them through  
8 technology to keep that going.

9 John, I have other (inaudible). Do you have  
10 anything to add to that on that issue?

11 MR. HERRINGTON: No, I don't. What I would  
12 say is certainly, that's a focus, and we would hope  
13 that we can find some improvements in efficiencies with  
14 the pod. But we also are going to need to partner with  
15 some of the other larger agencies as well-

16 MS. CARLSON: Right.

17 MR. HERRINGTON: --judicial and UConn. And  
18 our whole process through the SAG was very helpful in  
19 terms of the collaboration that we had with those  
20 stakeholders. And I would expect that, you know, we  
21 may need to pursue this on parallel tracks, but at one  
22 point, you know, once we have some clear plans, it  
23 might be helpful to have that entire group come  
24 together.

25 MS. CARLSON: Right. And then secondarily, I



1 would like to also introduce our new general counsel.  
2 You all know that Natalie Braswell transitioned over to  
3 DEEP. I'd like to introduce Yamuna Menon, who we all  
4 know as Yam, and just give her a moment to say hi and  
5 sort of give her background a little bit.

6 Yam?

7 MS. MENON: Hi, folks. Just want to  
8 introduce myself. I'm Yam Menon. I've been in the job  
9 about a month now. Longtime Connecticut resident and  
10 went to law school here. That's how I know Cindy and  
11 several others in State government.

12 So, looking forward to working with all of  
13 you. Thanks.

14 MR. ADOMEIT: All right. Cindy, could you  
15 correct the record? I mispronounced Yam's name.

16 MS. MENON: Thanks, Peter.

17 MR. ADOMEIT: Yeah. I'm sure you caught it.

18 MS. MENON: It happens all the time.

19 MR. ADOMEIT: Yeah. Welcome aboard.

20 MS. MENON: Thank you.

21 MR. ADOMEIT: Okay.

22 MS. CIESLAK: Peter, before you call the  
23 agenda—

24 MR. ADOMEIT: Sure.

25 MS. CIESLAK: This is Cindy Cieslak. I just

1 wanted to welcome Janet Andrews, Trustee for the  
2 Retirement Commission.

3 MR. ADOMEIT: Okay.

4 MR. CIESLAK: And also Attorney Zimmerman,  
5 who is representing Ms. Williams-Knight, who is on the  
6 agenda, I believe, as Item 17.

7 MR. ADOMEIT: That's interesting.

8 MS. CARLSON: Item 18. I think it's Item 18,  
9 you mean. Item 17 is probate.

10 MS. CIESLAK: Then I believe a motion to  
11 amend the agenda is in order because - this is Cindy  
12 Cieslak. I had just printed out the agenda that was  
13 posted on the website, and I have 16 as the personnel  
14 expenses from probate, 17 as Ms. Williams-Knight. And  
15 I do know that the Judge and Ms. Hansen are here for  
16 another probate matter. I do not believe it's on the  
17 agenda that is posted on the website, so a motion to  
18 amend would be in order.

19 MR. ADOMEIT: Miss Cindy, I don't have a copy  
20 of that agenda.

21 MR. LUCIANO: I don't either.

22 MR. ADOMEIT: Yeah.

23 MR. POULIN: I don't either.

24 MS. CIESLAK: I'm going to pull it up here  
25 and I'll put the link in the chat.

1 MR. ADOMEIT: Okay.

2 MS. CIESLAK: If you'd give me a minute.

3 MR. ADOMEIT: Yeah, I'll just try (inaudible)  
4 mine. Sal needs it too.

5 MR. CIESLAK: I have the link.

6 MR. LUCIANO: I actually have the newest one.  
7 Seventeen says request Commission approval of the  
8 probate judges fund lump sum contribution. Eighteen is  
9 request received from Tina Williams-Knight, that the  
10 Commission review and reconsider its October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
11 denial of her request for the Retirement Commission to  
12 direct that her May 1, 2009 application for service-  
13 related disability go before the Medical Examining  
14 Board for reconsideration of the Board's November 20<sup>th</sup>,  
15 2009 denial; appearance via Zoom.

16 MS. CARLSON: Cindy, if everybody has the  
17 correct one, or the one that we're working on right now  
18 is the correct one, is it not just a matter of  
19 substituting the correct one on the website? There's  
20 no motion here; right? We've all got the right one.

21 MS. CIESLAK: Mike Rose, correct me if I'm  
22 wrong. I believe because the agenda that was posted  
23 does not have the probate matter on it, a motion to  
24 amend would be in order.

25 MR. ROSE: I believe it would, Cindy.

1 MR. LUCIANO: Since the public notice doesn't  
2 have Item 18, I make a motion that we amend the agenda  
3 to include Item 18, the one I just read.

4 MS. BROWN BREWTON: Fae Brown Brewton,  
5 second.

6 MR. ADOMEIT: All in favor, say aye.

7 MS. CARLSON: Question. I have a question.

8 MR. ADOMEIT: Question? Yes.

9 MS. CARLSON: Indeed. What is the one that's  
10 missing off of the agenda on the website?

11 MS. CIESLAK: I think - thank you, Marty.  
12 This is Cindy Cieslak. I think a clarification can be  
13 made that Item 17, which is Ms. Williams-Knight,  
14 request for reconsideration, be moved to Item 18. And  
15 the matter with the probate court be added as Item 17.  
16 And Sal, if you wouldn't mind reading the language of  
17 the new Item 17.

18 MR. ADOMEIT: Is that the request, commission  
19 approval of probate judges?

20 MR. CIESLAK: Well, there is an Item 16 that  
21 involves the probate judges' personnel expenses, which  
22 is a regular matter on the agenda traditionally.

23 MR. LUCIANO: It's - 17 is the lump sum.  
24 Seventeen is the lump sum.

25 MS. CARLSON: I think - right, right. You

1 just need to read that, Sal.

2 MR. LUCIANO: Request Commission approval of  
3 the probate judges fund lump sum contribution, not  
4 attached.

5 MR. ADOMEIT: All right. Have we amended the  
6 agenda to include that 17 and the 18 that Sal read?

7 MR. CIESLAK: The motion has been made and  
8 seconded. It was made by Mr. Luciano and seconded by  
9 Ms. Brown Brewton. There was some discussion.

10 Chairman, I believe you can call the vote  
11 now.

12 MR. ADOMEIT: All right. Motion to amend the  
13 agenda, all in favor, say aye.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.

15 MR. ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay. The ayes have it  
16 unanimously. All right.

17 MR. LUCIANO: Motion to accept the minutes of  
18 April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

19 MR. BAILEY: Bailey, second.

20 MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing none,  
21 all in favor, say aye.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.

23 MR. ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay. The ayes have  
24 it.

25 MR. LUCIANO: Motion to approve the

1 Chairman's per diem.

2 MR. BAILEY: Bailey, second.

3 MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing none,  
4 all in favor, say aye.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.

6 MR. ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay. The ayes have  
7 it.

8 MR. LUCIANO: Motion to approve the union  
9 actuaries' expenses with Claude abstaining.

10 MR. BAILEY: Bailey, second.

11 MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing none,  
12 all in favor, say aye.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.

14 MR. ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay. The ayes have  
15 it.

16 MR. LUCIANO: Item 4, motion to approve  
17 management, Tim's expenses, with Tim abstaining.

18 MR. BAILEY: Bailey, second.

19 MR. ADOMEIT: There was a second, thank you.  
20 Any discussion? All in favor, say aye.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.

22 MR. ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay. The ayes have  
23 it.

24 MR. LUCIANO: Motion to accept expenses from  
25 our legal consultants.

1 MR. BAILEY: Bailey, second.

2 MR. ADOMEIT: And that's number 5?

3 MR. LUCIANO: Item 6.

4 MR. BAILEY: Bailey, second.

5 MR. ADOMEIT: Yeah. All in favor, say aye.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.

7 MR. ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay. The ayes have  
8 it.

9 MR. LUCIANO: Motion to approve Items 7 and  
10 8, Retirement System Service Retirements and Voluntary  
11 Pending Retirements.

12 MR. BAILEY: Bailey, second.

13 MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing none,  
14 all in favor, say aye.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.

16 MR. ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay. The ayes have  
17 it.

18 MR. LUCIANO: Motion to approve Item 9, State  
19 Employees System Disability Retirements.

20 MR. BAILEY: Bailey, second.

21 MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing none,  
22 all in favor, say aye or raise your hand.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.

24 MR. ADOMEIT: Thank you. Thank you, Karen.  
25 The ayes have it.

1 MR. LUCIANO: Motions to approve Items 10 and  
2 11.

3 MR. BAILEY: Bailey, second.

4 MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing none,  
5 all in favor, say aye.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.

7 MR. ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay. The ayes have  
8 it.

9 MR. LUCIANO: Motion to accept Items 12 and  
10 13 from the Medical Examining Board.

11 MR. BAILEY: Bailey, second.

12 MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing none,  
13 all in favor, say aye.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.

15 MR. ADOMEIT: Or raise your hand. Thanks,  
16 Karen. Opposed, nay. The ayes have it.

17 MR. LUCIANO: Motion to approve Items 14 and  
18 15.

19 MR. BAILEY: Bailey, second.

20 MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Okay. All in  
21 favor, say aye or raise your hand.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.

23 MR. ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay. The ayes have  
24 it.

25 MR. LUCIANO: A motion to approve Item 16,



1 request Commission approval of the Probate Judges and  
2 Employees Retirement Fund Personnel Expenses.

3 MR. BAILEY: Bailey, second.

4 MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing none,  
5 all in favor, say aye.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.

7 MR. ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay. The ayes have  
8 it.

9 MR. LUCIANO: Motion to approve Item 17,  
10 Probate Judges Fund Lump Sum Contribution.

11 MR. BAILEY: Second.

12 MR. ADOMEIT: Okay. Do we need discussion?  
13 I guess not. All in favor, say aye.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.

15 MR. ADOMEIT: Or raise your hand. Opposed,  
16 nay, or raise your hand. The ayes have it.

17 MR. LUCIANO: Item 18 is the request received  
18 from Tina Williams-Knight that the Commission review  
19 and reconsider its October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 denial. I believe  
20 she has counsel, and I believe she's on. If you want  
21 to, I'll hand it over to the Chair to invite them to do  
22 whatever.

23 MR. ADOMEIT: Yes. Attorney Zimmerman, could  
24 you, in a nutshell - we've all read this obviously.  
25 Tell us what the case is about-

1 MR. ZIMBERLIN: Yes. (Inaudible)

2 MR. ADOMEIT: --and why you think  
3 reconsideration is necessary.

4 MR. ZIMBERLIN: I'm sorry. Tina is walking  
5 in right now. She's in a walker. She's right at our  
6 door.

7 MR. ADOMEIT: All right.

8 MR. ZIMBERLIN: So if I could get one minute  
9 to get her in here.

10 MR. ADOMEIT: Sure.

11 Yeah, Attorney Zimmerman?

12 MR. ZIMBERLIN: Yes.

13 MR. ADOMEIT: Yeah, as you know, the standard  
14 here is any new material that had not been previously  
15 before the Commission. And I take it you are - you  
16 have a letter from a Dr. Belski (phonetic) dated  
17 12/15/20, and the memo to us from Attorney Cieslak  
18 indicates that that has not been previously given to  
19 the Commission.

20 MR. ZIMBERLIN: That's right. That's kind of  
21 new. I'd like to just kind of make kind of a statement  
22 about the whole thing and kind of the extenuating  
23 circumstances and an oral history on the case.

24 Well, this is Tina Williams-Knight. We're  
25 requesting that this Commission allow her to proceed to

1 the Medical Examining Board due to the extenuating  
2 circumstances, which prevented her from the timely  
3 filing from the 2017 Division letter. The Medical  
4 Examining Board initially denied Tina's disability  
5 application in 2009 because the record did not clearly  
6 establish that her condition was not treatable and her  
7 condition did not render her permanently unable to  
8 perform her previous occupation.

9 It should be noted that the 2009 Board  
10 applied the incorrect standard of review in its 2009  
11 decision. A member need not prove that she is clearly  
12 entitled to disability benefit, only that a member  
13 proves by a preponderance of the evidence that he or  
14 she is disabled. Moving back to the current appeal, in  
15 2012, the regulations were passed requiring that  
16 applicants appeal Medical Examining Board decisions  
17 within one year of the denial.

18 On March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017, the Division sent Tina a  
19 letter stating that she had one year to appeal the 2009  
20 Board decision. The Division also sent Tina a letter  
21 requesting a response if she was not intending to seek  
22 reconsideration on her disability application. Tina  
23 did not—

24 MR. ADOMEIT: Your audio went.

25 MR. ZIMBERLIN: Yes?

1 MR. ADOMEIT: Attorney Zimmerman, we can't  
2 hear you.

3 MR. ZIMMERLIN: Can you hear me now?

4 MR. ADOMEIT: Attorney Zimmerman, we can't  
5 hear you.

6 MR. ZIMMERLIN: Okay, okay.

7 MR. LUCIANO: I can.

8 MS. CIESLAK: Peter, can you hear me?

9 MR. LUCIANO: Yeah, I can hear.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: We all can hear.

11 MS. CIESLAK: Okay. I think it might be -  
12 this is Cindy Cieslak. It might be Peter's audio. I'm  
13 going to send him a text message real quick, or  
14 actually a message in the chat.

15 MR. ADOMEIT: Attorney Zimmerman, you're on  
16 mute. We cannot hear you. At least, I can't.

17 MR. ZIMMERLIN: I (inaudible) everybody hear  
18 me?

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Yes.

20 MR. ZIMMERLIN: Mr. Adomeit, can you hear me?

21 MR. ADOMEIT: Ah, thank you, Cindy.

22 MR. ZIMMERLIN: Okay.

23 MR. ADOMEIT: Okay. Just one second here.

24 MR. ZIMMERLIN: Yep.

25 MR. ADOMEIT: Okay. Proceed, please.

1 MR. ZIMBERLIN: Okay. So basically the  
2 Retirement Services Division sent Tina a letter asking  
3 her to respond within one year or she also - there was  
4 a part in the letter that said that she could waive her  
5 right and not proceed with the disability retirement  
6 application. Tina did not respond to either of those  
7 documents in that correspondence.

8 On July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019, over one year later, Tina,  
9 through our office, requested reconsideration of the  
10 Board's denial. Tina's extenuating circumstances,  
11 which prevented an earlier appeal of all medical in  
12 nature, even after the one year passed, Tina was only  
13 able to request reconsideration through counsel, help  
14 from her family members, and some stabilization of two  
15 medical conditions, which resulted in hospitalizations  
16 during the timeframe of 2016 through 2019.

17 During the initial claim to SERC, I outlined  
18 three reasons why this Commission should find  
19 extenuating circumstances. First, our office sent over  
20 an affidavit detailing Tina's memory of her health  
21 condition over the past decade, and more specifically,  
22 from the timeframe of 2017 through 2019, including two  
23 life-threatening hospitalizations including a blood  
24 clot at the end of 2016, which resulted in slurred  
25 speech and a slumped eye, and an appendix burst in

1 2017.

2 Our office also submitted over 1,500 pages of  
3 medical records, which showed consistent treatment from  
4 2005 through the present time. These records were not  
5 submitted in an intent to prove disability as of today.  
6 The records were submitted to show that Tina had a  
7 serious medical condition from the time of active  
8 employment through the current period, and also more  
9 specifically, from the 2017 to 2019 timeframe, which  
10 was life-threatening.

11 The more current records also responded to  
12 the Medical Examining Board's determination that Tina  
13 did not prove that her condition was not treatable.  
14 New medical records are evidence that her previous  
15 condition was not treatable. Additionally, our office  
16 submitted—

17 MR. ADOMEIT: Attorney Zimmerlin, I'm going  
18 to interrupt you at this point and focus in on what the  
19 issue is before us right now. We're here to determine  
20 whether there are extraordinary circumstances to allow  
21 her to seek reconsideration from the MEB after the one-  
22 year deadline. So that's the issue before us, so could  
23 you please focus on that.

24 MR. ZIMBERLIN: Okay. Well, the final  
25 argument is Regulation 5-155-10(b) relates to petitions

1 for review of a benefit denied and it states basically  
2 that the Medical Examining Board is probably the proper  
3 entity which will determine a medical issue. This  
4 regulation does not refer to the typical MEB denial,  
5 and those regulations are in 5-155(a).

6 It's our contention that this request to  
7 grant her review where the Medical Examining Board can,  
8 you know, reach the merits of the claim be granted.

9 And if there's any questions, Tina is here to  
10 answer them.

11 MR. ADOMEIT: All right. Does anybody have  
12 any questions?

13 MR. CAREY: Mr. Chairman, this is Mike Carey.  
14 I think I have two questions, please.

15 MR. ADOMEIT: Sure. Go ahead.

16 MR. CAREY: Attorney Zimmerlin, I believe  
17 somewhere in the package that I saw that at some point  
18 your client had applied for and was granted social  
19 security disability.

20 Would you be able to tell us when that  
21 application was made and when, if and when, social  
22 security disability was granted, please?

23 MR. ZIMBERLIN: Social security, it says our  
24 records show that she became disabled February 15<sup>th</sup>,  
25 2009. Her previous attorney who represented her for

1 social security has passed away, but I'm not sure when  
2 she-

3 Do you remember when you applied? Was it  
4 around the time that you left State service?

5 Around 2010, the timeframe, 2011, is when she  
6 was granted.

7 MR. CAREY: Are there records of that, sir?

8 MR. ZIMBERLIN: Yes. I can do a share-  
9 screen. We did submit some social security documents.  
10 I'm not sure if I have the ability to share with the  
11 screen, but-

12 MR. ADOMEIT: Yeah, I have to give you that  
13 ability. Just one second. Or Cindy has to because  
14 she's the host.

15 MS. CIESLAK: One second. Attorney  
16 Zimberlin, can you try now?

17 MR. ZIMBERLIN: Just one second. This is the  
18 document, if you can see it. It says - it's dated  
19 August 8, 2017 and it just shows that she became  
20 disabled on 2009.

21 MS. CIESLAK: Attorney Zimberlin, we are not  
22 seeing it. I'm going to check the settings. Oh, here  
23 it comes up.

24 MR. ADOMEIT: There we go.

25 MR. ZIMBERLIN: Okay.



1 MR. ADOMEIT: Perfect. We see it.

2 MR. ZIMBERLIN: Do you remember going in  
3 front of the judge for social security?

4 MS. WILLIAMS-KNIGHT: No, no.

5 MR. ZIMBERLIN: So she was probably granted  
6 at the initial or the Recon level.

7 MR. CAREY: So I can definitely see it. I'm  
8 not quite sure I can read it. But I can see an  
9 underlying date of 2/15/2009.

10 MR. ZIMBERLIN: That's just when social  
11 security says that she first became too disabled from  
12 working.

13 MR. CAREY: Okay.

14 MR. ZIMBERLIN: That's not only just her past  
15 job, but any job that exists in the economy.

16 MR. CAREY: And so does that mean that  
17 benefits were afforded retroactive to that date, sir?

18 MR. ZIMBERLIN: There's a six-month waiting  
19 period, so her monetary benefits probably started July,  
20 and that's for everybody who files for social security.

21 MR. CAREY: Of 2009?

22 MR. ZIMBERLIN: Right. So probably June of  
23 2009. That's what she's been living off of.

24 MR. CAREY: Thank you. I do have one other  
25 question. Is it correct that your client is currently

1 not receiving any pension benefit from the State of  
2 Connecticut?

3 MR. ZIMBERLIN: (Inaudible)

4 MS. WILLIAMS-KNIGHT: (Inaudible)

5 MR. ZIMBERLIN: I believe that's correct.  
6 Did you opt into the early?

7 MS. WILLIAMS-KNIGHT: (Inaudible)

8 MR. ZIMBERLIN: Did you opt into early  
9 retirement?

10 MS. WILLIAMS-KNIGHT: (Inaudible)

11 MR. ZIMBERLIN: She did mention that she  
12 opted into the early retirement to me.

13 MR. CAREY: Okay. So does that mean she is  
14 getting a pension currently, or no, please?

15 MS. WILLIAMS-KNIGHT: (Inaudible)

16 MR. ZIMBERLIN: She says she's not getting  
17 anything right now.

18 MR. CAREY: Has she applied to receive a  
19 pension? I believe based upon the materials I saw that  
20 she is currently eligible. That's why I ask.

21 MR. ZIMBERLIN: It looks like she would be  
22 eligible for the early retirement.

23 MR. CAREY: Correct.

24 MR. ZIMBERLIN: Yeah.

25 MR. CAREY: But - so she's not getting a

1 pension right now from the State of Connecticut?

2 MS. WILLIAMS-KNIGHT: No, I'm not.

3 MR. ZIMBERLIN: No.

4 MR. CAREY: Thank you. Thank you, Attorney  
5 Zimberlin.

6 Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those are all the  
7 questions that I had.

8 MR. ADOMEIT: All right. Thank you.

9 You could stop the screen-share now, Attorney  
10 Zimberlin.

11 MR. ZIMBERLIN: Oh.

12 MR. ADOMEIT: There we go. Thank you.

13 All right. Does anybody else have any other  
14 questions?

15 MR. POULIN: Yes, I do have a question.

16 MR. ADOMEIT: Claude?

17 MR. POULIN: In Exhibit A, it says that she  
18 was a member of Tier II, which is non-contributory.  
19 But in your affidavit of November 2019, she says that  
20 she was a member of Tier I. Now, since she was hired  
21 in 1984, she would have been eligible, on October 1,  
22 1985, to go from Tier II to Tier I. But did this  
23 happen?

24 MR. ZIMBERLIN: Do you remember opting into  
25 Tier I?

1 MS. WILLIAMS-KNIGHT: (Inaudible)

2 MR. ZIMBERLIN: She's basically saying that  
3 she didn't receive notice about the Tier I option, but  
4 she's not a hundred-percent sure what happened with  
5 that. It's been so long ago for her, and I think that  
6 could be figured out after - you know, when she goes in  
7 front of the Board, but we don't know right now.

8 MR. POULIN: Thank you.

9 MR. ADOMEIT: All right. Are there any  
10 further questions from anyone, or comments? All right.  
11 Hearing none, I will close the hearing then, obviously  
12 just the evidentiary part of it.

13 Thank you, Attorney Zimberlin.

14 MR. ZIMBERLIN: Thank you for having us.

15 MR. ADOMEIT: Okay. Are you folks ready to  
16 discuss it now?

17 MS. BROWN BREWTON: I think we need a motion  
18 before we discuss.

19 MR. ADOMEIT: Yeah, we do.

20 MS. BROWN BREWTON: This is Fae.

21 MR. LUCIANO: I make a motion that she go  
22 back to the Medical Examining Board.

23 MS. BROWN BREWTON: I second that. Fae.

24 MR. ADOMEIT: Okay. Is there any discussion  
25 on the motion? Hearing none, all in favor, say aye.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.

2 MR. ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay. The ayes have  
3 it.

4 Thank you very much. Thank you, Attorney  
5 Zimberlin.

6 MR. ZIMBERLIN: Have a good rest of the day.  
7 Thank you.

8 MR. LUCIANO: Motion to go into executive  
9 session for purposes of virtual meetings, written legal  
10 opinion.

11 MR. BAILEY: Bailey, second.

12 MR. ADOMEIT: All in favor, say aye.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.

14 MR. ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay. The ayes have  
15 it.

16 MS. CIESLAK: Mr. Luciano, before I turn the  
17 recording off, can you confirm that your motion  
18 includes to invite Alisha Sullivan, Bruce Barth, Colin  
19 Newman, John Herrington, Michael Rose, Yam Menon, and  
20 Cindy Cieslak?

21 MR. LUCIANO: Yes, because all of those  
22 people may have information that's pertinent.

23 MR. ADOMEIT: Yeah, Judge Beverly is still  
24 online.

25 JUDGE STREIT-KEFALAS: I just-

1 MR. ADOMEIT: We have granted her request, so  
2 there's no reason for her to hang around.

3 JUDGE STREIT-KEFALAS: And if I may just take  
4 an opportunity to thank all of you for approving the  
5 request. Have a great day. Thank you.

6 MR. ADOMEIT: Thank you.

7 MS. CIESLAK: Thank you.

8 MR. ADOMEIT: All right. Cindy?

9 MS. CIESLAK: Give me one second.

10 (The Board was in executive session from 9:03  
11 a.m. to 9:50 a.m.)

12 MR. LUCIANO: --ends the executive session.  
13 And we're back on the record.

14 And so I'd like to make a motion that we  
15 approve Armando Bettini's request for reconsideration.

16 MR. BAILEY: Bailey, second.

17 MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing none,  
18 all in favor, say aye.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.

20 MR. ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay? The ayes have  
21 it, unanimous.

22 MR. LUCIANO: Mike, you want to give Vito  
23 Barbagallo a shot?

24 MR. CAREY: Absolutely. Mr. Chairman, in the  
25 matter of Mr. Barbagallo, I'd like to move that the

1 Commission grant his request for reconsideration and  
2 that an appearance be scheduled before the Commission.

3 MR. POULIN: Second.

4 MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing none,  
5 all in favor, say aye.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.

7 MR. ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay. The ayes have  
8 it.

9 MR. LUCIANO: (Inaudible)

10 MS. BROWN BREWTON: Mr. Chairman?

11 MR. ADOMEIT: Yes.

12 MS. BROWN BREWTON: This is Fae. And I'd  
13 like to make a recommendation regarding Mr. Krasinsky,  
14 that the Commission accept the recommendation of the  
15 Subcommittee on his request.

16 MR. LUCIANO: Second.

17 MR. ADOMEIT: And the Subcommittee denied his  
18 - recommended that you deny the request; correct?

19 MS. BROWN BREWTON: Correct.

20 MR. CAREY: That is correct.

21 MR. ADOMEIT: All right. Is there any  
22 further discussion? Hearing none, all in favor, say  
23 aye.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.

25 MR. ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay. The ayes have

1 it, unanimous.

2 MR. LUCIANO: The recommendation for - or a  
3 motion for adjournment is in order.

4 MR. BAILEY: Bailey, second.

5 MS. BROWN BREWTON: Second.

6 MR. ADOMEIT: All in favor, say aye.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.

8 MR. ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay. The ayes have  
9 it.

10 MR. LUCIANO: Thank you, everybody. Be safe.

11 MR. HERRINGTON: You too.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: You too.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Take care.

14 (Adjourned at 10:19 a.m.)

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I, Karin A. Empson, do hereby  
certify that the preceding pages are an accurate  
transcription of the Connecticut State Employees  
Retirement Commission meeting held electronically via  
Zoom, conducted at 9:06 a.m. on May 20, 2021.

Karin A. Empson

Karin A. Empson

09/01/2021

Date