

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT COMMISSION

SEPTEMBER 15, 2022 MEETING
HELD VIA ZOOM
CONVENED AT 9:04 a.m.

Present:

Peter Adomeit, Chairman
Michael Bailey, Trustee
Karen Buffkin, Trustee
Michael Carey, Trustee
Martha Carlson, Deputy Comptroller, Ex Officio Member
Carl Chisem, Trustee
Robert D. Coffey, Trustee
John Disette, Trustee
John Flores, General Counsel Office of the Treasurer, Ex Officio
Member
Karen Nolen, Trustee
Michael O'Brien, Trustee
Claude Poulin, Trustee
Angel Quiros, Trustee
Timothy Ryor, Trustee
Mark Sciota, Municipal Liaison
Rebecca Simonsen, Trustee

Absent:

Sal Luciano, Trustee

Also present:

Bruce Barth, Tax Counsel to the Commission, Robinson & Cole
Cindy Cieslak, General Counsel to the Commission, Rose Kallor
Tara Downes, Assistant Comptroller
Elizabeth Doyon, Tax Counsel to the Commission, Robinson & Cole
Robert Helfand, Assistant Director, Retirement Services Division
John Herrington, Director, Retirement Services Division
Yamuna Menon, General Counsel/Assistant State Comptroller,
Office of the State Comptroller
Colin Newman, Assistant Director, Retirement Services Division
Michael Rose, General Counsel to the Commission, Rose Kallor

TRANSCRIPTIONIST: Karin A. Empson

1 (Proceedings commenced at 9:04 a.m.)

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5 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: All right. Peter Adomeit
6 here. This is the monthly meeting of the Connecticut
7 State Employees Retirement Commission held remotely by
8 teleconference using Zoom technology.

9 Cindy, do you have the attendance, please?

10 MS. CIESLAK: Good morning. This is Cindy
11 Cieslak. Present this morning, we have Chairman Peter
12 Adomeit; Trustee Michael Bailey; Tax Counsel from
13 Robinson & Cole, Bruce Barth; Trustee Michael Carey;
14 Deputy Comptroller and Ex Officio Member of the
15 Retirement Commission, Martha Carlson; Trustee Carl
16 Chisem; General Counsel from Rose Kallor, Cindy
17 Cieslak; Trustee Robert Coffey; Trustee John Disette;
18 Assistant Comptroller Tara Downes; Tax Counsel from
19 Robinson & Cole, Elizabeth Doyon; General Counsel to
20 the Office of the Treasurer and Ex Officio Member of
21 the Commission, John Flores; Assistant Director of the
22 Retirement Services Division, Robert Helfand; Division
23 Director of the Retirement Services Division, John
24 Herrington; General Counsel and Assistant Comptroller,
25 Yam Menon; from the Retirement Services Division, Colin

1 Newman; Trustee Karen Nolen; Actuarial Trustee Claude
2 Poulin; Trustee Angel Quiros; Actuarial Trustee Tim
3 Ryor; Municipal Liaison Mark Sciota; Trustee Rebecca
4 Simonsen.

5 Is there anybody that I missed? Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Okay. The Chairman's
7 Report is going to sound like a broken record, but a
8 shoutout again to John Herrington and Marty for doing a
9 really good job in the face of adversity. And when
10 John gives his report, it'll be more detailed than
11 that. But I just want to shout them out.

12 John Herrington, your report. You have to
13 unmute yourself, John.

14 MR. HERRINGTON: All right, thank you. Yes,
15 good morning, everyone. I've circulated our Division
16 Director's Report. As you can see, there's been a
17 noticeable kind of drop-off in the number of
18 retirements that we're processing each month. This has
19 given us a bit of breathing room for us to kind of
20 remobilize ourselves towards some of the issues,
21 projects that we had to kind of place on the sidelines
22 while we concentrated our efforts on the 2022 surge.

23 One thing that we continue to make a great
24 deal of progress with is kind of our processing of
25 disability applications. We have a pretty sizable

1 population of applications, but we're now in a position
2 for us to kind of change the scheduling of the meetings
3 to meet the demand, and this shows kind of a bit of
4 nimbleness that we haven't necessarily kind of
5 exercised historically. So I have seen that, you know,
6 as we were focused on the surge, the number of pending
7 disability applications ticked up a bit.

8 But we're on track for us to kind of work
9 through all of that by the end of the year. And I do
10 believe that it will be pretty much steady state from
11 January on, unless something, you know, extraordinary
12 happens where we have, you know, an unexpected surge in
13 applications, that we should be in a position that, for
14 most applications, so long as someone has a complete
15 set of records, that they can go before the MEB in as
16 short a time period as 60 days. So that's really some
17 impressive progress that we've made.

18 We've also had the ability to kind of dig
19 under the couch cushions and identify any kind of
20 problems. And so we're resolving a number of those old
21 cases. That population continues to dwindle. We have,
22 you know, one case that we found that's been pending
23 for a 24-month review since 2010. We continue to
24 research that. But we are fairly confident at this
25 point that we have a very strong command of that

1 population.

2 In terms of the normal retirements, obviously
3 those have dropped off considerably. We now need to
4 focus on the finalizations of those retirements with
5 the surge. Our efforts have been somewhat delayed
6 because there were some complications in the ability
7 for agencies to pay retro amounts to individuals who
8 had previously terminated or retired. So there
9 continue to be some corrections made to some of those
10 retro payments. And we need that process to kind of
11 come to completion before we can turn in earnest to
12 finalizing all of the retirements that we've processed
13 over the last year or so. Once that happens, I do
14 anticipate that it will go much quicker.

15 What I would say is we have the benefits of
16 technology. So once those are kind of resolved, there
17 is going to be a pretty sizable portion that we can
18 rely on the benefit calculator to kind of process those
19 applications or finalizations much quicker than we have
20 in the past. Also, the incoming work is much easier
21 now for us relying on technology than it has been in
22 the past. So we will have more manhours available to
23 devote to the harder cases.

24 So there is a sizable population of
25 approximately 5,000 normal retirements that we need to

1 finalize. I don't anticipate that being anywhere near
2 the obstacle that a number like that would have been,
3 you know, five or ten years ago. In a perfect world,
4 right, we would have started those efforts in earnest
5 sometime in August. So on my timeline, I would say
6 that we are at this point maybe six to eight weeks
7 behind, but that's because we continue to wait for the
8 resolution of this retro piece.

9 My understanding is that that should be all
10 resolved by the first pay period in October. From that
11 point forward, we will start finalizing very large
12 numbers of cases. It's hard for me to make a
13 prediction at this point with that slight bit of
14 uncertainty, but I would expect that we should be
15 through all of those finalizations at some point early
16 2023.

17 And that's my report for this month.

18 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Thank you, John. Does
19 anybody have any questions or comments?

20 Okay, hearing none, Marty, do you have
21 anything to add? You're muted, Marty.

22 MS. CARLSON: For those of you who have been
23 involved in this process for as many years as I have,
24 you'll remember there was a seven- and eight-year
25 backlog in finalizations and now we're talking three

1 months. And that, in an extraordinary year, not only
2 of over 4,000 retirements within the space of six
3 months, but also a SEBAC agreement that involved retro
4 payments to all of those who had already retired. So I
5 just wanted to say that.

6 The other thing I'll just lay out there is I
7 think I've reported out that overall, we had 45, I
8 believe, retirements from the Comptroller's Office. I
9 don't remember, John, how many came from the Retirement
10 Division, but we've been rapid-fire refilling those
11 positions. We also have, I think, 40 TWR's working in
12 various divisions that will be winding down and off by
13 the end of the year.

14 And I just want to say kudos to John who has
15 found a way to not necessarily refill at the same
16 class, but bring in CCT's who have been, for the most
17 part, in all of the divisions rock stars. And I will
18 say, because I'm old, that I think the biggest reason
19 that they're really, really turning out to be rock
20 stars is they are not intimidated by technology at all.
21 They're fresh out of college; they've been, you know,
22 working on a computer or an iPad since they've been
23 watching TV as toddlers. So whatever technology
24 they've been exposed to has really immunized them
25 against any of the technology fears that we had, you

1 know, even in implementing the pension module just a
2 few years ago. So I'm pretty confident that John has -
3 you know, has taken and is in the process of taking the
4 Retirement Division to new heights.

5 The only other thing I will report to is the
6 Teacher's Retirement Program. Some people call it TRS;
7 some people call it TRB. We call it TRP because it's a
8 program. And step two was assigned to us as a - I'm
9 going to call it a bolt-on to Core-CT. They're running
10 that system pretty much with duct tape with great risk
11 of it just stopping one day. So in our cloud migration
12 of the Core-CT system over the next couple of years,
13 we're going to take some period of time of that and
14 pull in the Teacher's Retirement Program to us.

15 It will still be its own entity and own
16 independent authority, but for those synergies that we
17 have - it's pretty similar to the MERS software. So we
18 think it will be a relatively smooth lift. And John is
19 also helping to lead that effort.

20 End of report. Any questions?

21 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Okay, hearing none, we
22 have to amend the agenda. So I'll call on Claude
23 Poulin, please.

24 MR. POULIN: Good morning, everyone. Mr.
25 Chairman - this is Claude Poulin. Mr. Chairman, I move

1 to amend the agenda to add, after Item 4 of the
2 executive session portion section of the agenda, the
3 following Item 5: discussion of written legal opinion
4 on the Groton Housing Authority full reestablishment in
5 the Connecticut Municipal Employees Retirement System.

6 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Is there a second?

7 MR. CAREY: Carey, second.

8 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
9 none, all in favor, say aye or raise your hand.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Aye.

11 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay or raise your
12 hand. The ayes have it. Thank you.

13 Okay, moving on to new matters.

14 MR. BAILEY: Mr. Chairman, this is Michael
15 Bailey. I move approval of the August 18th, 2022
16 minutes.

17 MR. CAREY: Carey, second.

18 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
19 none, all in favor, say aye or raise your hand.
20 Opposed, nay or raise your hand. The ayes have it.

21 MS. CIESLAK: Mr. Chairman, this is Cindy
22 Cieslak. I apologize for the interruption. I wanted
23 to note for the record that Trustee Karen Buffkin,
24 Trustee Michael O'Brien, and General Counsel from Rose
25 Kallor, Michael Rose have joined us.

1 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Thank you.

2 MR. BAILEY: Mr. Chairman, this is Michael
3 Bailey. I move approval of the State Employees
4 Retirement Commission Chairman's per diem expenses.

5 MR. CAREY: Carey, second.

6 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
7 none, all in favor, say aye or raise your hand.
8 Opposed, nay or raise your hand. The ayes have it.

9 MR. BAILEY: This is Michael Bailey. I move
10 approval of the State Employees Retirement Commission
11 Union Trustee Claude Poulin's per diem and travel
12 expenses reimbursement, with Claude abstaining.

13 MR. CAREY: Carey, second.

14 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
15 none, all in favor, say aye or raise your hand.
16 Opposed, nay or raise your hand. The ayes have it.

17 MR. BAILEY: This is Michael Bailey. I move
18 approval of the State Employees Retirement Commission
19 Management Trustee Tim Ryor's per diem expenses, with
20 Tim Ryor abstaining.

21 MR. CAREY: Carey, second.

22 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
23 none, all in favor, say aye or raise your hand.
24 Opposed, nay or raise your hand. The ayes have it.

25 MR. BAILEY: This is Michael Bailey. I move

1 acceptance of the invoices from Robinson & Cole and
2 from Rose Kallor rendered for the month of August 2022.

3 MR. CAREY: Carey, second.

4 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
5 none, all in favor, say aye or raise your hand.
6 Opposed, nay or raise your hand. The ayes have it.

7 MR. BAILEY: This is Michael Bailey. I move
8 approval of the Connecticut State Employees Retirement
9 System service retirements for the month of August
10 2022.

11 MR. CAREY: Carey, second.

12 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
13 none, all in favor, say aye or raise your hand.
14 Opposed, nay or raise your hand. The ayes have it.

15 MR. BAILEY: Michael Bailey. I move approval
16 of the Connecticut State Employees Retirement System
17 voluntary pending retirements for the month of August
18 2022.

19 MR. CAREY: Carey, second.

20 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
21 none, all in favor, say aye or raise your hand.
22 Opposed, nay or raise your hand. The ayes have it.

23 MR. BAILEY: This is Michael Bailey. I move
24 approval of the Connecticut State Employees Retirement
25 System disability retirements for the month of August

1 2022.

2 MR. CAREY: Carey, second.

3 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
4 none, all in favor, say aye or raise your hand.
5 Opposed, nay or raise your hand. The ayes have it.

6 MR. BAILEY: This is Michael Bailey. I move
7 approval of the Connecticut State Employees Retirement
8 System retroactive retirements for the month of August
9 2022.

10 MR. CAREY: Carey, second.

11 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
12 none, all in favor, say aye or raise your hand.
13 Opposed, nay or raise your hand. The ayes have it.

14 MR. BAILEY: Michael Bailey. I move approval
15 of the Connecticut State Employees Retirement System's
16 preretirement death benefits for the month of August
17 2022.

18 MR. CAREY: Carey, second.

19 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
20 none, all in favor, say aye or raise your hand.
21 Opposed, nay or raise your hand. The ayes have it.

22 MR. BAILEY: Michael Bailey. I move approval
23 of the Connecticut State Employees Retirement System
24 municipal employees' retirements for the month of
25 August 2022.

1 MR. CAREY: Carey, second.

2 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
3 none, all in favor, say aye or raise your hand.
4 Opposed, nay or raise your hand. The ayes have it.

5 MR. BAILEY: Michael Bailey. I move
6 acceptance of the recommendations of the Medical
7 Examining Board for the continued entitlements
8 approvals.

9 MR. CAREY: Carey, second.

10 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
11 none - excuse me - all in favor, raise your hand or -
12 all in favor, say aye or raise your hand. I'm losing
13 my voice. Opposed, nay or raise your hand. The ayes
14 have it.

15 MR. BAILEY: Michael Bailey. I move
16 acceptance of the recommendations by the Medical
17 Examining Board for the continued entitlement tabled
18 and denials.

19 MR. CAREY: Carey, second.

20 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
21 none, all in favor, say aye or raise your hand.
22 Opposed, nay or raise your hand. The ayes have it.

23 MR. BAILEY: Michael Bailey. I move approval
24 of the Connecticut Probate Judges and Employees
25 Retirement System.

1 MR. CAREY: Carey, second.

2 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
3 none, all in favor, say aye or raise your hand.
4 Opposed, nay or raise your hand. The ayes have it.

5 MR. BAILEY: Michael Bailey. I move approval
6 of the Connecticut Judges, Family Support Magistrates,
7 and Compensation Commissioners Retirement System.

8 MR. CAREY: Carey, second.

9 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
10 none, all in favor, say aye or raise your hand.
11 Opposed, nay or raise your hand. The ayes have it.

12 MR. BAILEY: Michael Bailey. I move approval
13 of the Probate Judges and Employees Retirement Fund
14 personnel expenses for the pay period of July 15th, 2022
15 through August 11th, 2022.

16 MR. CAREY: Carey, second.

17 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
18 none, all in favor, say aye or raise your hand.
19 Opposed, nay or raise your hand. The ayes have it.

20 MR. BAILEY: And this is Michael Bailey. I
21 move that the Commission move into executive session to
22 discuss the agenda in the executive session.

23 MR. CAREY: Carey, second, and note that we-

24 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion?

25 MR. CAREY: --will need to include in that

1 motion Cindy Cieslak and Bert Helfand - just going up
2 and down the screen - and Yam Menon and Bruce Barth,
3 Tara Downes, and Liz Doyen, and Michael Rose, and Colin
4 Newman. And did I miss anybody?

5 MS. CIESLAK: And John Herrington.

6 MR. CAREY: And John Herrington. Sorry,
7 John. There's John.

8 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: All right. Did I call -
9 all in favor, say aye or raise your hands. Opposed,
10 nay or raise your hand. The ayes have it. Okay.

11 (The Commission was in executive session from
12 9:20 a.m. until 10:56 a.m.)

13 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Peter Adomeit here. We
14 need a motion on the Cathy Wilson matter.

15 MR. COFFEY: Mr. Chairman, this is Bob
16 Coffey. I'll take a shot at it. I move that we
17 approve the request of Cathy Wilson retroactive to
18 December 1st, 2018 based upon the fact that the matter
19 contains extraordinary circumstances where information
20 was requested and not addressed properly, which is
21 unique to Ms. Wilson. Further, this decision will not
22 serve as precedent, and any other similar requests
23 should be looked at on their individual facts because
24 it is not the Commission's ordinary practice to permit
25 individuals to change their type of retirement.

1 MR. BAILEY: Bailey, second.

2 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Thank you, Bob. I now am
3 quite familiar with those words.

4 MR. COFFEY: Yes.

5 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: All right. All in favor,
6 say aye or raise your hand.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Aye.

8 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay or raise your
9 hand. The ayes have it.

10 Oh, we need one on Cynthia Dabbs-
11 Lindenberger.

12 MR. COFFEY: I'll take a shot at that too,
13 Peter, if that's okay.

14 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Yes, please.

15 MR. COFFEY: I move that the Commission
16 direct counsel to prepare a declaratory ruling in the
17 Dobbs-Lindenberger matter.

18 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Okay. Is there a second?

19 MR. CAREY: Carey, second.

20 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Okay. Any discussion?
21 Hearing none, all in favor, say aye or raise your hand.
22 Opposed, nay or raise your hand. The ayes have it.

23 Any further matters to come before us, or are
24 we in the situation of asking for a motion to adjourn?

25 MR. BAILEY: Mr. Chairman, this is Michael

1 Bailey. I move we adjourn the Commission meeting.

2 MR. CAREY: Carey, second.

3 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: All in favor, say aye or
4 raise your hand. Opposed, nay or raise your hand. The
5 ayes have it.

6 (Adjourned at 10:58 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 9:04 a.m. on September 15, 2022.

Karin A. Empson

Karin A. Empson

10/24/2022

Date