

CERTIFIED
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In The Matter Of:
State Employees Retirement Commission

Hearing

April 15, 2021

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1 STATE OF CONNECTICUT
2 STATE EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT COMMISSION

3
4 • APRIL 15, 2021 MEETING
5 HELD VIA ZOOM
6 CONVENED AT 9:00 a.m.

7 Present:

8 Peter Adomeit, Chair
9 Michael Bailey, Trustee
10 Michael Carey, Trustee
11 Martha Carlson, Deputy Comptroller, Ex Officio Member
12 Carl Chisem, Trustee
13 Robert D. Coffey, Trustee
14 John Flores, General Counsel, Office of the Treasurer,
15 Ex Officio Member
16 Paul Fortier, Trustee
17 Sal Luciano, Trustee
18 Karen Nolen, Trustee
19 Claude Poulin, Trustee
20 Angel Quiros, Trustee
21 Timothy Ryor, Trustee

22 Also Present:

23 Bruce Barth, Tax Counsel to the Commission, Robinson &
24 Cole
25 Cindy Cieslak, General Counsel to the Commission, Rose
Kallor
John Herrington, Director, Retirement Services
Division
Michael Rose, General Counsel to the Commission, Rose
Kallor
Colin Newman, Assistant Director, Retirement Services
Division
Alisha Sullivan, Tax Counsel to the Commission,
Robinson & Cole

Karen Vibert, CT CSR 00064

1 (Proceedings commenced at 9:00 a.m.)

2 MR. ADOMEIT: I'm going to call the
3 meeting to order and ask Cindy to read off the
4 attendance, please.

5 MS. CIESLAK: Good morning, everyone.
6 Present today we have Chairman Peter Adomeit,
7 Trustee Angel Quiros, Trustee Carl Chisem, Actuarial
8 Trustee Claude Poulin, general counsel to the office
9 the treasurer and ex officio member of the
10 Commission, John Flores, Trustee Karen Nolen.
11 Deputy comptroller, ex officio member of the
12 Commission, Martha Carlson. Trustee Michael Carey.
13 Trustee Paul Fortier, trustee Robert Coffey, Trustee
14 Sal Luciano, actuarial Trustee Tim Ryor.

15 We have also have division director
16 for the Retirement Services Division,
17 john Herrington, assistant director for the
18 Retirement Services Division, colin Newman, Tax
19 counsel from Robinson & Cole, Bruce Barth, Tax
20 counsel from Robinson & Cole, Alisha Sullivan,
21 General counsel from Rose Kallor, Michael Rose and
22 myself, General Counsel, Rose Kallor, Cindy Cieslak.

23 Did I leave off anyone?

24 Thank you.

25 MR. ADOMEIT: Thank you, Cindy. Before we

1 get further into the meeting, we need to amend the
2 agenda. I'll ask Commissioner Poulin to please make
3 a motion on GASB 68.

4 MR. POULIN: Mr. Chairman, I move to add,
5 after item 16 on the agenda, the following item, 17,
6 request Commission acceptance of the MERS GASB 68
7 report for year ending June 30, 2020.

8 MR. BAILEY: Second.

9 MR. ADOMEIT: Thank you. Any discussion?
10 Hearing none, all in favor say aye say. Opposed
11 nay. The ayes have it.

12 Okay. I guess the next item on the
13 agenda is the chairman's report. It will sound like
14 a repetition, but the business of the Commission and
15 the business of the Division continues to operate in
16 an excellent fashion. It has made progress and I'd
17 like us to shout to out all the people who have been
18 responsible for that.

19 I know they've been involved in doing
20 that. My own son works for a big corporation that
21 had to do the same thing, and it is a tremendous
22 amount of work. Congratulations.

23 Thank you for making sure that we are
24 having this meeting today.

25 Q Okay. Division director's report.

1 MR. HERRINGTON: Hopefully you all
2 received the report. As you'll see, this was a
3 heavy month for us. Historically speaking, April
4 tends to be one of the heaviest months of the year,
5 so, on average, we would expect to see 234
6 applications. This year we saw 337 applications.
7 Quite a bit of activity. We were able to work
8 through that. It actually doesn't close until
9 Monday, so we're all set and where we needed to be.
10 It was a heavy month, but we have certainly kind of
11 relied upon technology. I would say each month we
12 become more familiar with available resources and
13 tools, and getting better at our job. It's a new
14 process, but we continue to innovate. We were able
15 to meet this demand with some room to spare.

16 Right now the disability processes,
17 those are a bit more manual, so we haven't
18 necessarily kept pace where we needed to be today.
19 We have 115 cases that we've processed. We still
20 have three days to go, so we will see what that
21 number winds up being. But, overall a very
22 productive month.

23 In terms of the processing of
24 disabilities, we are in a position now, and this
25 pretty consistent now that I think we're just going

1 to continue to improve. But, we are currently
2 scheduling meetings in July.

3 Just as an anecdote, for years there
4 was always concern about, you know, how long it was
5 taking us to process individual applications. This
6 month we actually had a situation where an applicant
7 asked if they could delay their time before the MEB.
8 So that was kind of a new problem for us. I think
9 that's a good problem to have, that we are keeping
10 pace with demand.

11 In terms of our other issues and
12 projects, we continue to think through the messaging
13 for 2022 and the impact that that would have on
14 various populations. We hope to have something
15 circulated, a formal memo summarizing the changes
16 prior to next meeting. That would be a coordinated
17 effort. As all of you know, some of those changes
18 will affect retirement, which we're very comfortable
19 with. It's just a question of how do we package the
20 message for the different populations. There are
21 also the health insurance changes. So, we need to
22 coordinate efforts across divisions. We hope to
23 have something formalized by next meeting.

24 Then the next issue we continue to
25 work through is finding -- or striking the proper

1 balance between our efforts and a new DAS pod. This
2 was probably the greatest test for the DAS pod with
3 its high level of volume. This is the highest level
4 of volume they've worked through for a month. There
5 were as many hiccups of the processing of the
6 retirement payment, which has been kind of the
7 primary focus. What we're trying to capture right
8 now are some of the other functions that are kind of
9 in need of improvement. We've had discussions in
10 terms of disseminating information to individuals
11 and answering individual questions. You know, it
12 used to be that agencies -- each agency had a
13 dedicated individual that could answer those
14 questions, and essentially triage those questions
15 dealing with routine questions of agency level, and
16 the higher-level questions would come to us. That's
17 something that still is in the works. I think we
18 have a direction for improving that.

19 A larger issue for some employees
20 would be the service purchase piece. That is
21 something that I think needs some -- leaves some
22 room for improvement and we continue to work through
23 that internally and ultimately with the pods. Those
24 are the projects that we're working on this month.

25 MR. ADOMEIT: Thank you, John. Does

1 anybody have any questions of John? Okay. Hearing
2 none. We can move on.

3 Marti, do you have anything to add?

4 MS. CARLSON: just that at the risk, like
5 you said, Peter, of being redundant, I just want to
6 put a marker down again at the extraordinary progress
7 the Retirement Division has made in all aspects under
8 John Herrington, from backlogs to-day-to-day
9 processes to an extremely robust call center, even in
10 a pandemic when we're all on remote working at
11 98 percent productivity. The 2 percent is the mail
12 keeps coming in the door, and there's, you know,
13 paper processing that has to be done with people, you
14 know, mailing in their applications or whatever, and
15 our mail folks have to be there to open mail, and our
16 scanners have to be there.

17 A That is the 2 percent of, you know, we're
18 trying to transfer some of that as much as we can to
19 paperless. You know, as we start to sort of
20 hopefully getting COVID in the rear-view mirror, I
21 will also say there are no plans to repopulate our
22 office. That will happen at some point, but the COO
23 has stated in, you know, the 90-member meeting of
24 all the commissioners and interested parties that we
25 won't be thinking about office worker repopulation,

1 quote, until COVID is in the rear-view mirror. So,
2 the lucky thing for us is we have -- we're in full
3 production and full productivity, so we can sort of,
4 you know, just work the status quo. But I just
5 wanted to just hit that one more time. Thank you.

6 MR. ADOMEIT: Thank you, Marti.

7 Does anybody have any questions of
8 Marti? Okay. Hearing none, we will move on to new
9 matters.

10 MR. LUCIANO: Motion to approve item 1,
11 the minutes.

12 MR. BAILEY: Second.

13 MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
14 none, all in favor say aye. Opposed nay. The ayes
15 have it.

16 MR. LUCIANO: Motion to move the
17 chairman's per diem expenses.

18 MR. BAILEY: Second.

19 MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
20 none, all in favor say aye. Opposed, nay. The ayes
21 have it.

22 MR. LUCIANO: Motion to improve Claude's
23 expenses with Claude abstaining.

24 MR. BAILEY: Second.

25 MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing

1 none, all in favor say aye. Opposed nay.

2 MR. POULIN: I abstain.

3 MR. ADOMEIT: The ayes have it.

4 MR. LUCIANO: Motion to approve Tim's
5 expenses with Tim abstaining.

6 MR. BAILEY: Second.

7 MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
8 none, all in favor say aye. Opposed nay.

9 The ayes have it.

10 MR. LUCIANO: Motion to approve items 5
11 and 6.

12 MR. BAILEY: Second.

13 MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
14 none, all in favor say aye. Opposed nay. The ayes
15 have it.

16 MR. LUCIANO: Motion to approve items 7
17 and 8, State service retirement and voluntary
18 pending.

19 MR. BAILEY: Second.

20 MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
21 none, all in favor say aye. Opposed nay. The ayes
22 have it.

23 MR. LUCIANO: Motion to move item 9,
24 disability retirements for March.

25 MR. BAILEY: Second.

1 MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
2 none, all in favor say aye. Opposed nay. The ayes
3 have it.

4 MR. LUCIANO: Motion to approve items 10
5 and 11.

6 MR. BAILEY: Second.

7 MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
8 none, all in favor say aye. Opposed nay. The ayes
9 have it.

10 MR. LUCIANO: Motion to approve municipal
11 disability retirement tabled and denials, item 12.

12 MR. BAILEY: Second.

13 MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
14 none, all in favor say aye. Opposed nay. The ayes
15 have it.

16 MR. LUCIANO: Motion to approve judges,
17 magistrates and Comp commissioners retirement
18 system.

19 MR. BAILEY: Second.

20 MR. ADOMEIT: That's item 13.

21 Any discussion? Hearing none, all in
22 favor say aye. Opposed nay. The ayes have it.

23 MR. LUCIANO: Motion to move Item 14,
24 probate judges and employee retirement fund
25 personnel expenses.

1 MR. BAILEY: Second.

2 MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
3 none, all in favor say. Opposed nay. The ayes have
4 it.

5 MR. LUCIANO: Item 15, motion to accept
6 purchase of services and related matters
7 subcommittee recommendations.

8 MR. BAILEY: Second.

9 MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
10 none, all in favor say aye. Opposed nay. The ayes
11 have it.

12 MR. LUCIANO: Motion to accept A and B,
13 CMERS operation and balance sheet, both as of
14 12-31-2020.

15 MR. BAILEY: Second.

16 MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? All in
17 favor say aye. Opposed nay. The ayes have it.

18 MR. LUCIANO: Motion to accept CMERS
19 GASB 68 report ended 12-31-2020.

20 MR. POULIN: Second.

21 MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
22 none, all in favor say aye. Opposed nay. The ayes
23 have it.

24 MR. LUCIANO: Now I would like to move
25 that we go into executive session for the purposes

1 of Albert Horvath's request for reconsideration,
2 with the usual suspects also invited.

3 MR. BAILEY: Second.

4 MR. ADOMEIT: All right. Any discussion?

5 MS. CIESLAK: For the record --

6 MS. CARLSON: Excuse me. For the record,
7 can we please name the usual suspects. ?

8 MS. CIESLAK: That's exactly what I was
9 about to do.

10 So, we have John Herrington,
11 Colin Newman, Bruce Barth, Alisha Sullivan,
12 Michael Rose, and myself, Cindy Cieslak.

13 MR. LUCIANO: Yes.

14 MR. ADOMEIT: All in favor say aye.
15 Opposed nay. The ayes have it.

16 (The Commission was in executive session
17 from 9:21 a.m. until 9:30 a.m.)

18 MR. LUCIANO: Mike, do you want to do the
19 honors?

20 MR. CAREY: Mr. Chairman, I would like to
21 make a motion on the Horvath matter and I would like
22 to move that the Commission deny Mr. Horvath's
23 request for reconsideration.

24 MR. LUCIANO: Second.

25 MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing

1 none, all in favor say aye. Opposed nay. The ayes
2 have it.

3 MR. LUCIANO: Well, good luck on your
4 retirement, Paul, and I believe a motion to adjourn
5 is in order.

6 MR. FORTIER: Motion to adjourn.

7 MR. BAILEY: Second.

8 MR. ADOMEIT: Paul, was that your last
9 motion?

10 MR. FORTIER: It was.

11 MR. ADOMEIT: Very fitting. Be well. I'm
12 sure we will see you around.

13 (Concluded at 9:31 a.m.)
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1 STATE CONNECTICUT:
2 : ss: Bristol
3 COUNTY OF HARTFORD :

4 I, Karen Vibert, LSR No. 00064, a
5 Notary Public for the State of Connecticut, do hereby
6 certify that the preceding pages are an accurate
7 transcription of the meeting held electronically via
8 Zoom, convening at 9:00 a.m., on April 15, 2021.

9
10 Dated at Bristol, Connecticut, this
11 6th day of June, 2021.

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24 _____
25 Karen Vibert, Notary Public
My commission expires: 08/31/2024.