

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT COMMISSION MEETING

NOVEMBER 16, 2023 MEETING
HELD VIA ZOOM
CONVENED AT 9:03 a.m.

Board Members Present:

Peter Adomeit, Chairman
Michael Bailey, Trustee
Karen Buffkin, Trustee
Michael Carey, Trustee
Carl Chisem, Trustee
Tara Downes, Deputy Comptroller, Ex Officio Member
Brian Hill, Trustee
David Kraveski, Trustee
Sal Luciano, Trustee
Karen Nolen, Trustee
Michael O'Brien, Trustee
Claude Poulin, Trustee
Timothy Ryor, Trustee
Mark Sciota, Municipal Liaison
Rebecca Simonsen, Trustee

Absent:

John Disette, Trustee
Angel Quiros, Trustee
Ted Wright, Chief Investment Officer, Office of the Treasurer,
Ex Officio Member

Also Present:

Bruce Barth, Tax Counsel to the Commission, Robinson & Cole
Cindy Cieslak, General Counsel to the Commission, Rose Kallor
Robert Helfand, Assistant Director, Retirement Services Division
John Herrington, Director, Retirement Services Division
Virginia McGarrity, Tax Counsel to the Commission, Robinson &
Cole
Yamuna Menon, General Counsel & Assistant Comptroller

Also Present, continued:

Colin Newman, Retirement Services Division

Michael Rose, General Counsel to the Commission, Rose Kallor

Ben Sedrowski, Retirement Services Division

Christina Darling

Russell Zimmerman, representing Ms. Darling

TRANSCRIPTIONIST: Karin A. Empson

1 (Proceedings commenced at 9:03 a.m.)

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5 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: This is Peter Adomeit.
6 We'll call the meeting to order. This is the monthly
7 meeting of the State Employees Retirement Commission
8 being held with a teleconference.

9 Cindy, do you have the attendance, please?

10 MS. CIESLAK: Yes. Good morning. This is
11 Cindy Cieslak. Present this morning, we have Chairman
12 Peter Adomeit; Trustee Michael Bailey; Tax Counsel from
13 Robinson & Cole, Bruce Barth; Trustee Michael Carey;
14 Trustee Carl Chisem; General Counsel from Rose Kallor,
15 Cindy Cieslak; Deputy Comptroller and Ex Officio Member
16 of the Retirement Commission, Tara Downes; Retirement
17 Services Division Assistant Director, Robert Helfand;
18 Division Director, Retirement Services Division, John
19 Herrington; Trustee Brian Hill; Trustee David Krayeski;
20 Trustee Sal Luciano; Tax Counsel from Robinson & Cole,
21 Virginia McGarrity; General Counsel and Assistant
22 Comptroller, Yam Menon; Assistant Director, Retirement
23 Services Division, Colin Newman; Trustee Karen Nolen;
24 Trustee Michael O'Brien; Actuarial Trustee Claude
25 Poulin; General Counsel from Rose Kallor, Michael Rose;

1 Actuarial Trustee Tim Ryor; Municipal Liaison Mark
2 Sciota; Trustee Rebecca Simonsen; and from the
3 Retirement Services Division, Ben Sedrowski.

4 And I believe that is it, but let me know if
5 I missed anyone.

6 MR. LUCIANO: Sal Luciano.

7 MS. CIESLAK: Good morning, Sal. I did get
8 you right as you were joining.

9 MR. LUCIANO: Oh. Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Sal, will you be making
11 the motions today?

12 MR. LUCIANO: No, I have the agenda on this
13 phone that I'm using.

14 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Got it. Mike Bailey?
15 Mike, can you do that, please?

16 MR. BAILEY: Sure, no problem.

17 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Okay, thank you. I'm
18 going to cede my time to Division Director Report, John
19 Herrington.

20 MR. HERRINGTON: Yes. Good morning,
21 everyone. We have a pretty standard month. We
22 continue to have historically low levels of retirement.
23 We continue to perform our record maintenance on all of
24 the outstanding cases with the goal of releasing the
25 self-service calculator to the entire population, not

1 just those that are within range of retirement. We've
2 kind of shifted our focus in earnest in that direction.
3 We have a team of some of our newer employees who have
4 started off with some of the enrollment process that
5 are getting involved into the record maintenance
6 process going forward.

7 One of the next priorities of the division
8 continues to be the Municipal Employees Retirement
9 System implementing the reforms that were passed this
10 past legislative session and evaluating a set of
11 potential new reforms for what we are calling MERS 2.0
12 with the goal of providing an opportunity to non-MERS-
13 participating entities and incentives for those
14 entities to consider joining MERS. To that end, this
15 week, we've hired a new individual in the Retirement
16 Services Division. The name is Megan Kowanski
17 (phonetic). She's an actuary and she's been employed
18 in the past by USA - USI and Milliman, and we're very
19 happy to have her.

20 But other than that, I don't have anything
21 new to report this week.

22 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Okay. Any questions,
23 anyone? All right, hearing none, let's move on to new
24 matters.

25 MR. BAILEY: Good morning, everyone. Good

1 morning, Mr. Chair. This is Michael Bailey. I move
2 approval of the State Employees Retirement Commission
3 minutes with the Director's Report for the October 19,
4 2023 meeting.

5 MR. LUCIANO: Sal Luciano, 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. It's unanimous; the
9 ayes have it.

10 MR. BAILEY: Mr. Chairman, I move approval of
11 the Connecticut State Employees Retirement System
12 expenses for October 2023.

13 MR. LUCIANO: Sal Luciano, second.

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

16 MR. LUCIANO: Aye.

17 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay or raise your
18 hand. It's unanimous; the ayes have it.

19 MR. BAILEY: Mr. Chairman, I move approval of
20 the State Employees Retirement Commission chairman's
21 per diem expenses of October 2023.

22 MR. LUCIANO: Sal Luciano, second.

23 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
24 none, all in favor, say aye or raise your hand.
25 Opposed, nay or raise your hand. It's unanimous; the

1 ayes have it.

2 MR. BAILEY: Mr. Chairman, I move approval of
3 the State Employees Retirement Commission Union
4 Trustee, Claude Poulin's per diem and travel expenses
5 reimbursement for October 2023 with Claude abstaining.

6 MR. LUCIANO: Sal Luciano, second.

7 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
8 none, all in favor, say aye or raise your hand.
9 Opposed, nay or raise your hand. It's unanimous; the
10 ayes have it.

11 MR. BAILEY: Mr. Chairman, I move approval of
12 the State Employees Retirement Commission Management
13 Trustee, Tim Ryor's per diem expenses of October 2023
14 with Tim abstaining.

15 MR. LUCIANO: Sal Luciano, second.

16 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
17 none, all in favor, say aye or raise your hand.
18 Opposed, nay or raise your hand. It's unanimous; the
19 ayes have it.

20 MR. BAILEY: Mr. Chairman, I move Items 6 and
21 7 on the agenda, acceptance of the invoices from
22 Robinson & Cole and from Rose Kallor in executive
23 session, October 2023.

24 MR. LUCIANO: Sal Luciano, second.

25 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing

1 none, all in favor, say aye or raise your hand.

2 Opposed, nay or raise your hand. It's unanimous; the
3 ayes have it.

4 MR. BAILEY: Mr. Chairman, I move Items 8, 9,
5 and 10 of the agenda, approval of the Connecticut State
6 Employees Retirement System service retirements,
7 voluntary pending retirements, and disability
8 retirements for October 2023.

9 MR. LUCIANO: Sal Luciano, second.

10 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
11 none, all in favor, say aye or raise your hand.
12 Opposed, nay or raise your hand. It's unanimous; the
13 ayes have it.

14 MR. BAILEY: Mr. Chairman, I move Items 11
15 and 12 on the agenda, approval of the Connecticut State
16 Employees Retirement System retroactive retirements and
17 pre-retirement deaths for August (sic) 2023.

18 MR. LUCIANO: Sal Luciano, 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. It's unanimous; the
22 ayes have it.

23 MR. BAILEY: Mr. Chairman, I move Items 13
24 and 14 on the agenda, approval of Connecticut State
25 Employees Retirement System municipal employee

1 retirements and tabled and/or denials disability
2 retirements from the Medical Examining Board for
3 October 2023.

4 MR. LUCIANO: Sal Luciano, second.

5 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
6 none, all in favor, say aye or raise your hand.
7 Opposed, nay or raise your hand. It's unanimous; the
8 ayes have it.

9 MR. BAILEY: Mr. Chairman, I move approval of
10 the Municipal Employees Retirement System approved
11 disability retirement from the Medical Examining Board
12 for October 2023.

13 MR. LUCIANO: Sal Luciano, 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. It's unanimous; the
17 ayes have it.

18 MR. BAILEY: Mr. Chairman, I move approval of
19 the Retirement Services Division to discontinue
20 disability applications one-year limitations for
21 November 2023.

22 MR. LUCIANO: Sal Luciano, second.

23 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
24 none, all in favor, say aye or raise your hand.
25 Opposed, nay or raise your hand. It's unanimous; the

1 ayes have it.

2 MR. BAILEY: Mr. Chairman, I move approval of
3 the Probate Judges and Employees Retirement Fund
4 personnel expenses for October 2023.

5 MR. LUCIANO: Sal Luciano, 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: Mr. Chairman, I move that the
10 commission address the request from Christina Darling
11 that the commission review and reconsider its October
12 2022 denial of the request to transfer from ARP to SERS
13 Tier IIA and purchase her prior state service.

14 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: All right. Mr. Zimmerman
15 is here. All in favor of doing this, say aye or raise
16 your hand. Opposed, nay or raise your hand. It's
17 unanimous.

18 Attorney Zimmerman, you have the floor.

19 MS. CIESLAK: Mr. Chairman?

20 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Yeah.

21 MS. CIESLAK: I apologize for the
22 interruption. For the record, can I confirm that
23 Trustee Luciano seconded that motion?

24 MR. LUCIANO: Okay.

25 MS. CIESLAK: Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Attorney Zimmerlin?

2 MR. ZIMBERLIN: Oh, yes. Russell Zimmerlin
3 for Christina Darling. I'm going to place the camera
4 on her while I give my presentation because she's here
5 for questions if there are any at the end.

6 Christina worked at UCONN while her working
7 career ended due to injury in March of 2012, however
8 she had been inactive and in and out of work from 2007
9 to 2010. While working, Christina was in the ARP
10 program. On November 18th, 2018, Christina both mailed
11 and faxed the CO-944a to the RSD. The eFax
12 confirmation submittal sheet confirms that two pages
13 were sent to the Retirement Services on November 18th,
14 2018.

15 This commission previously denied Christina's
16 request for a transfer, however it did not have the
17 benefit of the eFax confirmation document that was sent
18 before this meeting. On November 18th, 2018, Christina
19 also emailed the RSD confirmation about her intent to
20 submit the CO-944a opt-in form. This email was
21 accompanied by an automatic response of receipt from
22 the Retirement Services Division. Following the
23 submission, Christina was under the impression that she
24 had successfully opted into the SERS program and wasn't
25 aware of any problems.

1 Following Christina's pursuit of SERS
2 retirement options, she realized that her paperwork has
3 not been processed. And that brings us here today, and
4 that's basically the overall summary. If there's any
5 questions for me or for Christina, please feel free to
6 ask.

7 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Are there any questions?

8 MR. CAREY: Mr. Chairman, this is Mike Carey.
9 I do have a question that I would address to Attorney
10 Zimberlin and to Ms. Darling. I'm just - I want to
11 make sure that I understand what is before us. Is it a
12 request to transfer to SERS and then that ends, or is
13 that - is there an additional request along with that?
14 I'm seeing something in the writeup about a disability
15 retirement and I'm interested to hear about how that
16 plays or theoretically would play into a decision here.

17 MR. ZIMBERLIN: Well, if she was placed into
18 SERS retirement, she'd have all the options available
19 for her, including filing for the disability
20 retirement. Her career was ended in 2007, I believe,
21 which is the date of her injury. And she was out on
22 the (inaudible) long-term disability for a while, so we
23 would probably be pursuing disability retirement.

24 That's not before this commission today.
25 We're just trying to opt-in as of today.

1 MR. CAREY: Thank you for that clarification.
2 I have no other questions.

3 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Cindy, do you have any
4 questions or comments?

5 MS. CIESLAK: This is Cindy Cieslak. With
6 respect to Ms. Darling's request, I do not at this
7 time. I will note for the record that Trustee Karen
8 Buffkin has joined us.

9 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Okay. All right. So how
10 do you wish to proceed at this point? Well, do you
11 want to take it under advisement? Mr. Carey?

12 MR. CAREY: Mr. Chairman, I think it would
13 behoove the commission to table the matter for this
14 meeting in order for us to be briefed on any legal
15 aspects or any legal positions from our attorneys
16 before we render any decisions, and I would be prepared
17 to make that tabling motion.

18 MR. LUCIANO: Sal Luciano, second.

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

21 MR. LUCIANO: Aye.

22 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay or raise your
23 hand. The ayes have it.

24 Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr.
25 Zimberlin.

1 MR. ZIMBERLIN: Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Okay.

3 MR. BAILEY: Mr. Chairman, this is—

4 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: We need a motion to go
5 into executive session. I'm sorry.

6 MR. BAILEY: Mr. Chairman, this is Michael
7 Bailey. I move that we suspend the regular meeting and
8 go into executive session for the purpose of discussing
9 Items 1 through 3 on the executive session agenda, and
10 if you would add the invitees to that meeting, I'd
11 appreciate that.

12 MR. LUCIANO: Sal Luciano, second.

13 MS. CIESLAK: This is Cindy Cieslak. The
14 individuals to whom Trustee Bailey is referring include
15 Bruce Barth, Cindy Cieslak, Robert Helfand, John
16 Herrington, Virginia McGarrity, Yam Menon, Colin
17 Newman, Michael Rose, and Ben Sedrowski.

18 MR. LUCIANO: That sounds good.

19 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Okay.

20 MS. CIESLAK: Mr. Chairman, if there is no
21 further discussion, you can call the motion.

22 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Okay. All in favor, say
23 aye.

24 MR. LUCIANO: Aye.

25 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay. The ayes

1 have it. You'll have to put people back in the waiting
2 room now, Cindy?

3 MS. CIESLAK: Yes. All right, anyone who was
4 not invited into executive session, I'm going to place
5 you in the waiting room. You'll be reentered upon the
6 commission entering public session again. Thank you.

7 (The Commission was in executive session from
8 9:17 a.m. until 9:27 a.m.)

9 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Okay, we need a motion on
10 Latoya Maia.

11 MR. LUCIANO: This is Sal Luciano. I'd like
12 to make a motion that the service-connected disability
13 appeal be denied for - and I think it's important to
14 state the reason, that we cannot substitute our
15 judgment for that of the Medical Examining Board.

16 MR. BAILEY: Bailey, second.

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

19 MR. LUCIANO: Aye.

20 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay or raise your
21 hand. The ayes have it; it's unanimous.

22 The last item on the agenda is adjournment.

23 MR. LUCIANO: Sal Luciano, so moved.

24 MR. BAILEY: Bailey, second.

25 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: All in favor, say aye or

1 raise your hand.

2 MR. LUCIANO: Aye.

3 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay or raise your
4 hand. It's unanimous; the ayes have it. Thank you all
5 very much.

6 MS. BUFFKIN: Happy Thanksgiving, everybody.

7 MR. LUCIANO: Happy Thanksgiving.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible)

9 MS. NOLEN: Happy Thanksgiving.

10 MR. NEWMAN: Happy Thanksgiving.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you. Happy
12 Thanksgiving.

13 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Yeah, and we did it in 28
14 minutes.

15 MR. CAREY: We'll all give thanks for that.

16 (Adjourned at 9:28 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 9:03 a.m. on November 16, 2023.

Karin A. Empson

Karin A. Empson

12/01/2023

Date