

STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
STATE EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT COMMISSION  
MEDICAL EXAMINING BOARD MEETING

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MAY 3, 2024 MEETING  
HELD VIA ZOOM  
CONVENED AT 9:06 a.m.

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Present (via Zoom):

Dr. Sachin Parekh  
Dr. Nikolai Lieders  
Dr. Mike Gerstenfeld  
Robert Helfand, Retirement Services Division  
Helena Bartolomeo, Retirement Services Division  
William Cassada, Retirement Services Division  
Nabil Waheed, Retirement Services Division  
Cindy Cieslak, Rose Kallor LLP

TRANSCRIPTIONIST: Karin A. Empson

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

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5 MS. CIESLAK: Dr. Parekh, you can proceed  
6 when you're ready.

7 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: Okay. Good morning,  
8 everyone. The May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024 meeting of the Medical  
9 Examining Board is now in session. I, Dr. Sachin  
10 Parekh, will serve as Chairperson. Present are Dr.  
11 Michael Gerstenfeld and Dr. Nikolai Lieders. Present  
12 from the Office of the State Comptroller, Retirement  
13 Services Division, are staff members Robert Helfand,  
14 William Cassada, Nabil Waheed, and Helena Bartolomeo.  
15 General Counsel for the Retirement Commission and  
16 Medical Examining Board is Cindy Cieslak.

17 I make a motion to amend the agenda and-

18 DR. LIEDERS: I second the motion. Oops.

19 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: The motion is to-

20 DR. LIEDERS: Oh, sorry.

21 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: --add Richard Rusiecki  
22 (phonetic) to the list today. Is there a second?

23 DR. LIEDERS: I second, Lieders.

24 MS. CIESLAK: Any further discussion? There  
25 being none, all in favor, say aye.

1 DR. LIEDERS: Aye, Lieders.

2 DR. GERSTENFELD: Aye, Gerstenfeld.

3 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: Aye, Parekh.

4 MS. CIESLAK: The motion passes unanimously.

5 Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: I make a motion to go  
7 into executive session, and request that the members of  
8 the Retirement Services Division and General Counsel  
9 are allowed to remain.

10 DR. LIEDERS: I second it, Lieders.

11 MS. CIESLAK: Any discussion? There being  
12 none, all in favor, say aye.

13 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: Aye, Parekh.

14 DR. LIEDERS: Aye, Lieders.

15 DR. GERSTENFELD: Aye, Gerstenfeld.

16 MS. CIESLAK: The motion passes.

17 All right, for the applicants and the members  
18 of the public here, this is Cindy Cieslak, and we are  
19 going to go into executive session because the doctors  
20 need to discuss your confidential medical information  
21 in private so that it's not shared on a public forum.

22 Those who are on a reconsideration will be  
23 invited in to make a statement to the doctors and the  
24 doctors might have some questions. After the doctors  
25 have reviewed all of the applications, the Medical

1 Examining Board will return to public session, at which  
2 time, everyone who is in the waiting room will be  
3 invited back in for our public session.

4 So I'm going to place everyone in the waiting  
5 room. Sometimes this process does take two to three  
6 hours, so just sit tight in the waiting room, and when  
7 we enter public session, you'll be invited back in.  
8 Thank you.

9 (The Board was in executive session from 9:07  
10 a.m. until 11:50 a.m.)

11 MS. CIESLAK: All right, Dr. Parekh, you can  
12 proceed when you are ready.

13 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: Thank you. The Board  
14 will be making determinations and voting on those  
15 determinations, but would like to remind members that  
16 only the final vote will be given today and not the  
17 reason for the vote. In some instances, there may not  
18 have been enough medical information to make a  
19 determination, or perhaps a non-service-connected  
20 disability is more likely a service-connected  
21 disability. You may seek reconsideration of an initial  
22 denial.

23 You will receive the Board's written  
24 determination within two to four weeks, which will  
25 provide you with that additional information.

1           The Board votes to approve service-connected  
2           disability for Kathleen Anderson.

3           DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, second.

4           MS. CIESLAK: Any further discussion? There  
5           being none, all in favor, say aye.

6           CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: Aye.

7           DR. LIEDERS: Aye.

8           DR. GERSTENFELD: Aye.

9           MS. CIESLAK: The motion passes.

10          CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: The Board votes to deny  
11          service-connected disability, but approve non-service-  
12          connected disability for James Antignani.

13          DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, second.

14          MS. CIESLAK: Any further discussion? There  
15          being none, all in favor, say aye.

16          CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: Aye.

17          DR. LIEDERS: Aye.

18          DR. GERSTENFELD: Aye.

19          MS. CIESLAK: It's unanimous; the motion  
20          passes.

21          CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: The Board votes to table  
22          the decision for service-connected disability for  
23          Matthew Blair.

24          DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, second.

25          MS. CIESLAK: Any further discussion? There

1 being none, all in favor, say aye.

2 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: Aye.

3 DR. LIEDERS: Aye, Lieders.

4 DR. GERSTENFELD: Aye.

5 MS. CIESLAK: It's unanimous; the motion  
6 passes.

7 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: The Board votes to deny  
8 service-connected disability retirement, but approve  
9 non-service-connected disability retirement for Casilda  
10 De Los Santos.

11 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, second.

12 MS. CIESLAK: Any further discussion? There  
13 being none, all in favor, say aye.

14 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: Aye.

15 DR. LIEDERS: Aye, Lieders.

16 DR. GERSTENFELD: Aye.

17 MS. CIESLAK: It's unanimous; the motion  
18 passes.

19 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: The Board votes to deny  
20 non-service-connected disability retirement for  
21 Kathleen Fletcher.

22 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders seconds.

23 MS. CIESLAK: Any further discussion? There  
24 being none, all in favor, say aye.

25 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: Aye.

1 DR. GERSTENFELD: Aye.

2 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

3 MS. CIESLAK: It's unanimous; the motion  
4 passes.

5 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: The Board votes to  
6 approve service-connected disability retirement for  
7 Daphne Gooden.

8 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, second.

9 MS. CIESLAK: Any further discussion? There  
10 being none, all in favor, say aye.

11 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: Aye.

12 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

13 MS. CIESLAK: Any opposed, say nay. The  
14 motion passes. Dr. Gerstenfeld, I didn't hear your  
15 vote on that one.

16 DR. GERSTENFELD: Aye.

17 MS. CIESLAK: Okay. The motion passes  
18 unanimously. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: The Board votes to  
20 approve non-service-connected disability retirement for  
21 Denese Gordon.

22 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, second.

23 MS. CIESLAK: Any further discussion? There  
24 being none, all in favor, say aye.

25 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: Aye.

1 DR. LIEDERS: Aye, Lieders.

2 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, aye.

3 MS. CIESLAK: The motion passes unanimously.

4 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: The Board votes to deny  
5 service-connected disability retirement for Shontel  
6 Harris.

7 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, second.

8 MS. CIESLAK: Any further discussion? There  
9 being none, all in favor, say aye.

10 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: Aye.

11 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

12 DR. GERSTENFELD: Aye.

13 MS. CIESLAK: The motion passes unanimously.

14 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: The Board votes to  
15 approve service-connected disability retirement for  
16 Persio Martinez.

17 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, second.

18 MS. CIESLAK: Any further discussion? There  
19 being none, all in favor, say aye.

20 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: Aye.

21 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

22 DR. GERSTENFELD: Aye.

23 MS. CIESLAK: The motion passes unanimously.

24 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: The Board votes to deny  
25 service-connected disability, but look favorably upon



1 non-service-connected disability for Kwasi McCall.

2 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, second.

3 MS. CIESLAK: Any further discussion? There  
4 being none, all in favor, say aye.

5 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: Aye.

6 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

7 DR. GERSTENFELD: Aye.

8 MS. CIESLAK: The motion passes unanimously.

9 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: The Board votes to deny  
10 service-connected disability retirement for Orlando  
11 Ramirez, Jr.

12 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, second.

13 MS. CIESLAK: Any further discussion? There  
14 being none, all in favor, say aye.

15 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: Aye.

16 DR. LIEDERS: Aye, Lieders.

17 DR. GERSTENFELD: Aye.

18 MS. CIESLAK: The motion passes unanimously.

19 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: The Board votes to  
20 approve service-connected disability retirement for  
21 Linda Renfro.

22 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, second.

23 MS. CIESLAK: Any further discussion? There  
24 being none, all in favor, say aye.

25 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: Aye.

1 DR. LIEDERS: Aye, Lieders.

2 DR. GERSTENFELD: Aye.

3 MS. CIESLAK: The motion passes unanimously.

4 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: The Board votes to  
5 approve service-connected disability retirement for  
6 Nathan Robinson.

7 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, second.

8 MS. CIESLAK: Any further discussion? There  
9 being none, all in favor, say aye.

10 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: Aye.

11 DR. GERSTENFELD: Aye.

12 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

13 MS. CIESLAK: The motion passes unanimously.

14 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: The Board votes to deny  
15 non-service-connected disability retirement for Nydia  
16 Romero.

17 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, second.

18 MS. CIESLAK: Any further discussion? There  
19 being none, all in favor, say aye.

20 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: Aye.

21 DR. LIEDERS: Aye, Lieders.

22 DR. GERSTENFELD: Aye.

23 MS. CIESLAK: The motion passes unanimously.

24 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: The Board votes to  
25 approve service-connected disability retirement for

1 Julio Ruiz.

2 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, second.

3 MS. CIESLAK: Any further discussion? There  
4 being none, all in favor, say aye.

5 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: Aye.

6 DR. LIEDERS: Aye, Lieders.

7 DR. GERSTENFELD: Aye.

8 MS. CIESLAK: The motion passes unanimously.

9 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: The Board votes to  
10 approve service-connected disability retirement for  
11 Frederick Smith.

12 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, second.

13 MS. CIESLAK: Any further discussion? There  
14 being none, all in favor, say aye.

15 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: Aye.

16 DR. LIEDERS: Aye, Lieders.

17 DR. GERSTENFELD: Aye.

18 MS. CIESLAK: The motion passes unanimously.

19 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: The Board votes to  
20 approve non-service-connected disability retirement for  
21 Natalie Smith-Crockett.

22 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, second.

23 MS. CIESLAK: Any further discussion? There  
24 being none, all in favor, say aye.

25 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: Aye.

1 DR. LIEDERS: Aye, Lieders.

2 DR. GERSTENFELD: Aye, Gerstenfeld.

3 MS. CIESLAK: The motion passes unanimously.

4 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: The Board votes to  
5 approve non-service-connected disability retirement for  
6 Stephen Sullivan.

7 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, second.

8 MS. CIESLAK: Any further discussion? There  
9 being none, all in favor, say aye.

10 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: Aye.

11 DR. LIEDERS: Aye, Lieders.

12 DR. GERSTENFELD: Aye.

13 MS. CIESLAK: The motion passes unanimously.

14 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: The Board votes to  
15 approve non-service-connected disability retirement for  
16 Richard Rusiecki.

17 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, second.

18 MS. CIESLAK: Any further discussion? There  
19 being none, all in favor, say aye.

20 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: Aye.

21 DR. LIEDERS: Aye, Lieders.

22 DR. GERSTENFELD: Aye.

23 MS. CIESLAK: The motion passes unanimously.

24 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: I make a motion to  
25 adjourn the meeting.

1 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, second.

2 MS. CIESLAK: All in favor, say aye.

3 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: Aye.

4 DR. LIEDERS: Aye, Lieders.

5 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, aye.

6 MS. CIESLAK: The motion passed unanimously.

7 We are adjourned. Thank you, everyone.

8 DR. LIEDERS: Thank you.

9 DR. GERSTENFELD: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON PAREKH: Thank you.

11 (Adjourned at 11:59 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, Medical Examining Board meeting  
held electronically via Zoom, conducted at 9:06 a.m. on  
May 3, 2024.

Karin A. Empson

Karin A. Empson

05/20/2024

Date