

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

STATE EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT COMMISSION

MEDICAL EXAMINING BOARD MEETING

DATE: July 2, 2025

HELD VIA ZOOM

CONVENED AT 9:00 A.M.

Present (Via Zoom):

Sokpoleak So, M.D.

Frank Gerratana, M.D.

Ralph Rosenberg. M.D.

Robert Helfand, Retirement Services Division

Helena Bartolomeo, Retirement Services Division

Alexandra Cipolla, Retirement Services Division.

Patrick Fairbanks, Retirement Services Division.

John Herrington, Retirement Services Division

Robin Kallor, Rose Kallor LLP.

1 (Proceedings began at 00:00 a.m.)

2
3 CHAIRMAN SO: Everybody's in -- okay. The July 2,
4 2025 meeting of the Medical Examining Board is now in session.
5 I, Dr. Sokpoleak So, will be Chairperson.

6 Present include Dr. Frank Gerratana, Dr. Ralph
7 Rosenberg, and myself, Dr. Sokpoleak So.

8 Present from the Office of the State Comptroller,
9 Retirement Services Division are Helena Bartolomeo, Alexandra
10 Cipolla, Patrick Fairbanks, Robert Helfand, and John Herrington.

11 General counsel for the Retirement Commission and
12 Medical Examining Board is Robin Kallor.

13 I motion to go into Executive Session.

14 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, second.

15 CHAIRMAN SO: And for the purposes of discussing
16 individual members' disability and health issues, I request that
17 members of the Retirement Services Division and Counsel be
18 allowed to remain.

19 ATTORNEY KALLOR: Let's redo the motion.

20 CHAIRMAN SO: Motion to go into Executive Session with
21 the provision.

22 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, second.

23 ATTORNEY KALLOR: Why don't you vote.

24 DR. GERRATANA: We need to vote on it.

25 CHAIRMAN SO: Did we get a second? All in favor say

1 aye.

2 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, aye.

3 DR. ROSENBERG: Rosenberg, aye.

4 CHAIRMAN SO: So, aye.

5 ATTORNEY KALLOR: Okay.

6 CHAIRMAN SO: Motion passes. We'll go into Executive
7 Session.

8
9 (Executive Session from 0:00 to 0:00).

10
11 MR. HELFAND: Is everyone here, Robin?

12 ATTORNEY KALLOR: Yes.

13 MR. HELFAND: Okay. Is Jason Harrison here?

14 MR. HARRISON: Yes, I am.

15 MR. HELFAND: Okay. Oh, I'm sorry. Okay. Ladies and
16 gentlemen, my name is Robert Helfand. I'm Assistant Division
17 Director in the Retirement Services Division in the office of
18 the State Comptroller.

19 What's about to happen is -- is a little bit unusual
20 for our public sessions. Most of you, or all of you have been
21 in the waiting room because the doctors deliberated about your
22 case and discuss the facts of your case in what is known as
23 Executive Session.

24 This is something we do under the terms of the Freedom
25 of Information Act in order to make sure that none of the

1 medical information that is part of the record in which the
2 doctors are discussing is shared with the public at large. One
3 of the applicants on today's calendar has asked that the
4 discussion of his case by the Board, the preliminary discussion
5 that is, take place in public. And, that is Mr. Harrison. And
6 since the only issue is the privacy of Mr. Harrison's
7 information, we're going to agree to that request.

8 But before we begin, I want to confirm on the record,
9 Mr. Harrison, you understand that? If this matter is discussed
10 in public session, it means that the doctors may discuss any
11 part of the medical information that is in the records you've
12 submitted. And that information will -- you know, that
13 discussion will be heard by all of the people who are present at
14 today's meeting.

15 The meeting is being recorded, so it will be
16 preserved, and that recording will be a public record. So at
17 any time, anyone will have access to that information.

18 Now, do you understand what I've just explained about
19 the privacy of your medical information?

20 MR. HARRISON: Yes.

21 MR. HELFAND: Okay. And having heard that, do you
22 still wish to have this discussion conducted in the public?

23 MR. HARRISON: Yes.

24 MR. HELFAND: Okay. Well, with that, I will turn to
25 the doctors and allow them to begin their deliberations.

1 MR. HARRISON: Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN SO: We have Dr. Gerratana who's going to be
3 presenting the case.

4 DR. GERRATANA: Yes. Thank you. Jason Harrison is a
5 46-year-old Correction Officer who retired on August 1, 2024
6 with 17 years and 5 months of State service.

7 The Medical Examining Board on April 2, 2025, tabled
8 his request for a service connected disability retirement. They
9 reviewed documents indicating he had a back injury during cell
10 extraction training in July 2012 and another back injury during
11 an inmate restraint in July 2013.

12 They reviewed a disability retirement application
13 medical report from Dr. Bash on July 11, 2024 indicating the
14 applicant's complaints of neck and back pain and having had a
15 C6-7 fusion and a C 5-6 disc replacement.

16 His condition was noted as being precipitated by a
17 motor vehicle accident and a work injury. He then was being
18 treated with medication including meloxicam and tramadol as well
19 as physical therapy and spinal injections, and he was noted to
20 have a guarded prognosis.

21 The Medical Examining Board at that time referenced an
22 MRI from December 20, 2012, just after his first work injury
23 that demonstrated degenerative spondylosis from L3 to S1 with
24 mild disc bulges and an annular tear at each level.

25 An MRI in May 2013, just before his second work

1 injury, revealed cervical spondylosis with a right lateral disc
2 protrusion.

3 On May 8, 2020, Dr. Bash performed a cervical fusion
4 and a disc replacement.

5 Dr. Awad in November 2022 advised the applicant to
6 perform light duty activities. A functional capacity exam in
7 February 2025 concluded that he was unable to work as a
8 Correction Officer.

9 The Medical Examination Board noted they became aware
10 of his being in a non-work related motor vehicle accident and
11 requested medical records concerning the event before a
12 disability determination could be made.

13 So, as part now of a review of his medical records for
14 today's discussion, we have a first report of injury that
15 indicated he experienced low back pain after cell extraction
16 training in 2012.

17 On July 15, 2013, he was restraining an inmate in his
18 cell who was pepper sprayed and then carried to a shower for
19 decontamination. The application(sic) twisted and slipped in
20 the shower and felt neck and low back pain.

21 A lumbar spine MRI scan in December 2012, just before
22 the event, revealed loss of disc height and desiccation from L-3
23 to L5 and mild to moderate endplate osteophytes. He had mild
24 disc bulges and annular tears at L4-5 and a (Inaudible) disc
25 protrusion at L5-S1.

1 A cervical spine MRI in May 2013, just before the
2 event, revealed disc space narrowing at C5 to C7 and a C5-6 disc
3 osteophyte complex and at C6-7 a right disc protrusion.

4 The physician's workers' comp status report concerning
5 this 2013 work injury indicated that it was a lumbar strain and
6 a cervical and trapezius strain with a history of cervical and
7 lumbar disc disease.

8 He was treated in January of 2014 for low back pain
9 with degenerative disc disease by Dr. Becker. In 2018, he had
10 stable low back pain with L4 to S1 degeneration. In 2019, he
11 was treated with epidural injections and then MRI revealed
12 degenerative disc disease from L4 to S1 with desiccation and
13 moderate disc height loss.

14 Concerning his chronic neck pain, Dr. Adwoa, an IME,
15 commented that his 2013 work injury resulted in cervical
16 radiculitis superimposed on preexisting degenerative disc
17 disease, and he had a lumbar strain superimposed on preexisting
18 lumbar degenerative disc disease.

19 He had a cervical fusion and a disc replacement on May
20 8, 2020. However, in June 2020, he had a rear impact motor
21 vehicle accident that totaled his car. He developed recurrent
22 neck pain after that accident where he had been pain free
23 following his neck surgery. And before the motor vehicle
24 accident, the application indicated that the motor vehicle
25 accident caused some setbacks and re-aggravated other injuries.

1 In 2025 he was rated by Dr. Bash as having a 10%
2 permanent partial disability of the lumbar spine. A functional
3 capacity exam in 2025 stated that he was unable to return -- he
4 was unable to restrain inmates, strip search inmates, or
5 transport inmates through the jail. He could do more sedentary
6 work that would not put him at risk for injury.

7 In addition to these neck and back problems, he had
8 many musculoskeletal surgeries and conditions that don't appear
9 work related. He had the surgical treatment of exercise induced
10 right lower extremity compartment syndrome. He had the surgical
11 repair in 2022 of a distal biceps rupture. There was a complex
12 tear of the left medial meniscus. He had a hip labrum, a tear
13 with arthritis. He had osteoarthritis of the right thumb CMC
14 joint, and a right gastrocnemius lengthening complicated by
15 peroneal nerve injury.

16 His disability is substantially due to his cervical
17 and lumbar spondylosis and degenerative disc disease that
18 predated his work injury and the residuals of injuries from his
19 motor vehicle accident. However, his neck and back impairment
20 is sufficiently severe to prevent him from working as a
21 Correction Officer, thus he qualifies for a non-service
22 connected disability retirement, but not a service connected
23 disability retirement.

24 That concludes my presentation. Is there any
25 discussion?

1 MR. HELFAND: This is Robert Helfand. Mr. Harrison,
2 I've got a couple of questions to follow up on this.

3 Your medical record indicates that you performed some
4 kind of HVAC work. Could you describe that work for the
5 doctors?

6 MR. HARRISON: Yeah. I -- I have my license. And
7 before I got into corrections that's what I was doing.

8 MR. HELFAND: Okay. When was the last time you did
9 that kind of work?

10 MR. HARRISON: I've done minor stuff to help friends
11 out over the -- over the years, but nothing, nothing crazy,
12 nothing serious. Just light duty work that I was -- that was
13 one of my work restrictions.

14 MR. HELFAND: Okay. And did you get paid for any of
15 that work?

16 MR. HARRISON: No. I got reimbursed for whatever
17 materials I had and gas money and stuff like that, but I never
18 -- I was never reimbursed. I never -- I never got -- I never
19 got paid substantial amounts of money for doing that.

20 They were friends. I wasn't out there looking for
21 work in HVAC. My friends knew I did it. They called me when
22 they had an issue, like, they had no heat in the middle of the
23 night, they had me come take a look at what's going on with
24 their stuff, you know? Like, I don't -- I haven't installed or
25 done anything where -- stuff over my head or, you know, any --

1 anything crazy where I'm going to hurt myself because I'm in
2 pain every day, and it takes me two hours every morning to wake
3 up and get out of bed.

4 So, like, that's what -- that's what I have to deal
5 with every morning.

6 MR. HELFAND: Yeah. I just wanted to be clear. So,
7 so you weren't employed by any HVAC business?

8 MR. HARRISON: No, not since 2006.

9 MR. HELFAND: Okay. And you didn't run a business of
10 your own?

11 MR. HARRISON: No.

12 MR. HELFAND: Okay.

13 MR. HARRISON: And I can't -- I -- I have -- I don't
14 -- I'm not -- I have my license, but I don't have my
15 contractor's license. I can't run a business.

16 MR. HELFAND: And you've also performed some kind of
17 real estate work. Is that right?

18 MR. HARRISON: Yes. Well -- well, yes. I haven't
19 done real estate since 2018. April of 2018.

20 MR. HELFAND: And what kind of work were you doing
21 then?

22 MR. HARRISON: I was doing -- I was showing -- before
23 then, I was showing houses, and that's it -- and -- but that's
24 it. Like, all -- I don't know -- I mean, real estate entails.

25 MR. HELFAND: Were you working for a real estate

1 broker?

2 MR. HARRISON: Yes.

3 MR. HELFAND: And who was that?

4 MR. HARRISON: Caldwell Banker.

5 MR. HELFAND: Okay. And you haven't done it since
6 2018?

7 MR. HARRISON: No.

8 MR. HELFAND: And you were in a car accident in 2020.
9 Can you describe the nature of the injuries you suffered then?

10 MR. HARRISON: I mean, I -- I was on my way home from
11 a workers' comp physical therapy appointment, which, you know, I
12 put comp paperwork in for it within the year of date of injury
13 'cause I was -- I was having some difficulties. So, I put my
14 comp paperwork in for it, and they denied it. And, you know,
15 they denied my knee injury, they denied my right -- my biceps
16 tear because of what happened to me. But I can't really give
17 you any information because, you know, every -- my civil
18 attorney told me it was a strange sprain, so that's all I --
19 that's all I know. That's all that happened to me. A strange
20 sprain. That's what -- that's what my attorney for my car
21 accident said. Strange --

22 MR. HELFAND: He said you had a "strange" sprain?

23 MR. HARRISON: Yeah. Yep. Yeah.

24 MR. HELFAND: Where was that sprain?

25 MR. HARRISON: My -- my neck and my -- my neck. So

1 like, I -- I -- I think in December of 2020, Dr. Bash wrote --
2 workers' comp wrote into Dr. Bash asking them for information
3 regarding the car accident, and it's in my medical file. It's
4 December 20, I think, around there, of 2020, saying that, you
5 know, Jason's back issues -- he's suffering from -- was -- was
6 pre -- from his work injury, and he did have some -- some issues
7 from the car accident. And also my neck. He says, yes, but
8 obviously, I mean, I had neck fusion from my injuries at work,
9 but then he said that it was a strange sprain, so...

10 MR. HELFAND: Okay. Just to be clear, so in the
11 automobile accident, did you suffer any injuries other than the
12 sprain to your neck?

13 MR. HARRISON: I -- at that time?

14 MR. HELFAND: Yeah.

15 MR. HARRISON: No. But I -- well, my knee -- I hurt
16 my knee.

17 MR. HELFAND: In the accident?

18 MR. HARRISON: Yeah. And then I was having -- I had
19 very tight muscles in my neck after the car accident. I tore my
20 biceps because I couldn't turn my head and open a door, which
21 what happens, somebody calls my name, I went to open the door
22 and turn and I popped my biceps. That -- because of how tight
23 my neck was, but, you know, I guess that all comes back to what
24 I said. You know, it's a strange sprain.

25 MR. HELFAND: Okay. And, the other driver was at

1 fault in this accident, wasn't he?

2 MR. HARRISON: Correct. Yep. I was at a red light on
3 Route 9.

4 MR. HELFAND: And you brought a lawsuit?

5 MR. HARRISON: Yep.

6 MR. HELFAND: And what was the result?

7 MR. HARRISON: It's in appeals because the -- my
8 attorney lied to me and colluded with Travelers to keep
9 documents out of the court system to not pay the state back
10 money from my work injury.

11 MR. HELFAND: Okay.

12 MR. HARRISON: 'Cause I have a \$300,000 dollar lean
13 from workers' comp, and he never found out what the workers'
14 comp lien was. So, now it's in appeal --

15 MR. HELFAND: I'm not going to ask you to elaborate on
16 your --

17 MR. HARRISON: Yeah. Well, that's, what happened.
18 It's in the appeals court right now.

19 MR. HELFAND: Right.

20 MR. HARRISON: I'm trying -- I was like, he tried to
21 fraud the state out of workers' comp money, so --

22 MR. HELFAND: Okay. The last questions I have for you
23 are just about, you know, what kind of recreational activities
24 are you able to participate in now?

25 MR. HARRISON: Not -- not many. I can't really run.

1 I mean, I -- if I do anything, like, I can only do very minimal.
2 I -- I only have -- like, if I'm doing yard work, I can do 2-3
3 hours of yard work, and then I'm shot for the day, you know?
4 And I'm in pain.

5 MR. HELFAND: So you say you can't run?

6 MR. HARRISON: No. I can't run.

7 MR. HELFAND: Can you lift weights?

8 MR. HARRISON: Not really.

9 MR. HELFAND: Can you ice skate?

10 MR. HARRISON: I can -- I can ice skate, yeah. Well,
11 I mean, like, not, like, anything crazy. I'm not playing ice
12 hockey. I'm, like, you know, skating with my kids.

13 MR. HELFAND: And can you swim?

14 MR. HARRISON: I haven't. I -- the last time I went
15 swimming, it was a couple of years ago, and I had an issue with
16 my muscles in my mid back. Oh, that's another thing. I -- my
17 mid back was a problem too. It's been a problem since the car
18 accident, and it kept spasming up on me.

19 MR. HELFAND: And that was a couple of years ago?

20 MR. HARRISON: Yeah. I haven't really -- I have a
21 membership at the Y that I try to go and do, and when I do go, I
22 try to just sit in the sauna -- the steam sauna, to just -- to
23 try to relax and have my muscles relax. And, you know, I've had
24 substantial physical therapy appointments the last four years.

25 I've had cortisone shots in my neck and my muscles,

1 and all through my mid back and lower back. And then I have had
2 dry needling done. I'm continuing to have dry needling done.
3 I've had like five different types of physical therapy places
4 because I -- I couldn't -- I couldn't -- it wouldn't -- it just
5 wouldn't -- wouldn't let loose, wouldn't relax. My neck
6 wouldn't relax, and my back, and that's what I'm dealt with
7 today, so...

8 MR. HELFAND: Those are all the questions I have.
9 Doctors, do you have any questions?

10 DR. ROSENBERG: This is Dr. Rosenberg. I might have a
11 couple. Mr. Harrison, what keeps you from working right now,
12 doing your job as a correction officer?

13 MR. HARRISON: A couple of things. One, I was told
14 that I could not go back to work because of my injuries. The
15 Workers' Comp Commission doctor told me that I was -- I was not
16 able to go back to work. So, I went through -- I tried to go
17 back to work. I went through the steps, and the Workers' Comp
18 Commission doctor told -- said I could not go back. It should
19 be in there. In the -- in the paperwork.

20 DR. ROSENBERG: I guess that's not really what I'm
21 asking you. I -- I'm not asking you what others have said to
22 you. From your standpoint, what keeps you from being able to do
23 the activities that your job would require?

24 MR. HARRISON: Well, I mean, like I said, I can't -- I
25 can't really run. And I can -- I mean, it's hard for me to -- I

1 mean, I have a hard time doing a push up, you know what I mean?
2 To push myself up off the ground. So, you know, to restrain
3 someone, you know? I wanted to go back to work. I tried to go
4 back to work, you know what I mean? And I've been trying to go
5 back. I don't want to retire. I didn't want to retire, but I
6 was forced to. So, you know, like, I do have ailments and it
7 kills -- it hurts me every day.

8 DR. ROSENBERG: So, you were saying that you had
9 difficulty getting yourself up off the ground. And I think that
10 Mr. Helfand asked you about whether you do weight lifting, and
11 you said no. But you just -- from looking -- you -- looking at
12 you on the screen, you look like a person who is a bodybuilder.
13 Do I have that all completely wrong?

14 MR. HARRISON: Well, no. I'm just a big dude in
15 general.

16 DR. ROSENBERG: You look more than a big -- you don't
17 look like a fat, big dude. You look very --

18 MR. HARRISON: I'd love to -- I mean, I'm on Ozempic.
19 I was -- I was up to 285 pounds. When I -- when I had the neck
20 surgery, I was 220 pounds. And I got it all the way up to 280
21 because I haven't been very active. And I was able to get on
22 Ozempic, and I was able to get down to 230 pounds. And now,
23 with all the stuff that's been going on in my life, I jumped
24 back up to 265 pounds even though I was on Ozempic.

25 Well, like, I have a hard time moving through space.

1 I mean, don't get me wrong, I mean, I know you people feel like
2 -- you know, I may look it, but I don't feel it. You know,
3 look, I mean, I got a big tummy, you know what I mean? That's
4 not like -- that's not -- that's not a healthy man, all right?
5 I'm not muscular. I was muscular earlier in life, but I don't
6 -- I can't work out. You know, I may have said something in
7 depositions that I shouldn't have said because I -- about
8 working out. I mean, no. It's -- I mean, I can't -- and the
9 reason why I said that stuff -- I've been having post -- I got
10 diagnosed with post concussion syndrome and I was having a lot
11 of cognitive issues, so -- since the car accident. And, you
12 know, I mean, I was saying stuff that I -- I should have never
13 said regarding, like, what I was capable of doing and not doing,
14 and they -- Crystal, stop it. And, you know, like, I couldn't
15 come up -- I was saying stuff that I shouldn't have said 'cause
16 I wasn't doing it. I haven't been able to do it, you know? I
17 mean, like I said, I -- like, my neck hurts me on a regular
18 basis, where if you look at me right now, I can turn my head
19 pretty good this way, right? But I can't turn my head this way.
20 It just stops. And I -- like I said, I'm in pain every single
21 day. I go to the chiropractor. I get dry needling every -- I
22 get dry needled twice a week. I just -- I mean -- I have two
23 active boys, 9 and 11 years old that I try to keep up with. I
24 can't. I mean, I grew up -- I grew up without a dad, and I'm
25 sorry, it kills me knowing that I have a hard time playing with

1 my kids.

2 DR. ROSENBERG: Can I ask you one more question?

3 MR. HARRISON: Go ahead.

4 DR. ROSENBERG: The Ozempic, is it covered by your
5 insurance?

6 MR. HARRISON: Yes, it is. 'Cause I -- I had -- I had
7 a couple of things. My blood work, I had high cholesterol and
8 high blood pressure. And, so, I qualified to get on Ozempic.

9 DR. ROSENBERG: Are you a diabetic?

10 MR. HARRISON: No.

11 DR. ROSENBERG: Okay. Thank you.

12 MR. HARRISON: Yep.

13 DR. ROSENBERG: I wish you good luck by the way.

14 MR. HARRISON: All right. Thank you very much.

15 MR. HELFAND: All right. If the doctors have no
16 further questions --

17 DR. GERRATANA: Actually, this is Dr. Gerratana. And
18 Mr. Harrison, I have a few questions for you.

19 MR. HARRISON: Go ahead.

20 DR. GERRATANA: 'Cause, you heard me describe sort of
21 some of the non neck and back problems that you have.

22 MR. HARRISON: Correct.

23 DR. GERRATANA: I'd like to know, now, how they're
24 still affecting you, if at all, but before that, you mentioned
25 your mid back pain.

1 MR. HARRISON: Yes. Correct.

2 DR. GERRATANA: And you said it was from the accident.
3 Was that the auto accident or your work injury?

4 MR. HARRISON: Well, the car accident, which is a
5 Workers' Comp claim, you know what I mean, so it is a work
6 accident 'cause it's technically a accident -- 'cause I get paid
7 to go to physical therapy from workers' comp. So they own you
8 from comp to your appointment and back, so.

9 DR. GERRATANA: But the actual --

10 MR. HARRISON: -- yeah. The car accident -- yes.

11 DR. GERRATANA: Gave you some new mid back pain?

12 MR. HARRISON: Yes. Yep.

13 DR. GERRATANA: Okay, good. That's fine. And then
14 you, you had a gastrocnemius lengthening that was complicated by
15 the peroneal nerve injury.

16 MR. HARRISON: Correct.

17 DR. GERRATANA: Now, has that caused you to have some
18 weakness or numbness in your leg?

19 MR. HARRISON: At this point, no. I -- it's a lot --
20 it's a lot better. I mean, it comes and goes. I -- I don't
21 really have any weaknesses anymore. It -- but, you know, I get
22 some dry needling in it once in a while, and it seems to, like,
23 wake up the nerve a little bit.

24 DR. GERRATANA: Okay.

25 MR. HARRISON: Because it is -- it is dead. But, I

1 can walk, I can -- I can do any -- but, like, just at the touch
2 of it, it's like -- it's numb a little bit, you know what I
3 mean? On the side from, like, my mid calf down.

4 DR. GERRATANA: And then you had that compartment
5 syndrome that they released, and there was mention of your
6 having some weakness of your ankle and foot dorsiflexion?

7 MR. HARRISON: Yeah, so what happened was I had a --

8 DR. GERRATANA: (Inaudible) of that?

9 MR. HARRISON: I had -- no. Well, I got -- when I got
10 -- I had that -- the gastroc thing, they -- they messed up my
11 nerve somehow, and, either the nerve block messed it up or the
12 doctor messed it up and it caused a partial foot drop and --

13 DR. GERRATANA: Do you still have a partial foot drop?

14 MR. HARRISON: No, it's fine.

15 DR. GERRATANA: Okay. And then you had a medial
16 meniscus tear?

17 MR. HARRISON: In my left knee. Yeah.

18 DR. GERRATANA: And do you limp at all because of
19 that?

20 MR. HARRISON: Yes, I do. I -- I did have -- out of
21 my own pocket, I went and spent \$3500 to get a plasma PRP
22 injection in it. I mean, I had an option to get surgery on it
23 or the PRP, and I elected to do PRP. But I feel like it's --
24 for the past five years it's been pretty good, but it's been
25 bothering me the last few months.

1 DR. GERRATANA: And you had a right distal biceps
2 tendon rupture?

3 MR. HARRISON: Left.

4 DR. GERRATANA: Left. Does that bother your arm with
5 regards to (inaudible).

6 MR. HARRISON: Yeah. I mean, it does -- it does
7 depending on what I -- when I do it. It definitely does bother
8 me here and there.

9 DR. GERRATANA: Okay. And you had a hip problem with
10 a labrum tear and arthritis?

11 MR. HARRISON: Yes.

12 DR. GERRATANA: Does the hip bother you at all?

13 MR. HARRISON: Yes, it does.

14 DR. GERRATANA: In what way?

15 MR. HARRISON: Walking, I'll turn the wrong way I'll
16 get a sharp pain in it.

17 DR. GERRATANA: So when you were at work, if you were
18 running or running up and down stairs, would your hip bother you
19 a little bit?

20 MR. HARRISON: Yeah. I mean, in early -- I had -- so
21 what happened was -- when I hurt my back in 2012 and 2013, Dr.
22 Becker said, you know, you have some issues, but also, like, it
23 might be coming from your hip also. So he referred me to Dr.
24 Christopher Lena to have it looked at. And then comp approved
25 the appointment, and I went and saw Dr. Lena.

1 In 2015 I had labrum surgery, and then -- and it was
2 good for a good couple of years, and it started bothering me
3 again in 2017-ish, '18-ish. And then I -- I went and got
4 another MRI done in 2018, I think, and it showed that the labrum
5 was torn more, I think it said, or it was -- it showed an
6 increased tear in the labrum and, you know, and it was still
7 bothering me after that. I think he gave me a couple of
8 cortisone shots, and then, you know, over the -- over the couple
9 of years, you know, I -- I was hurt in -- from the car accident
10 in 2021-'22. I tried to go back to see the doctor, and I --
11 they wouldn't let me see him because it was over a year. So, I
12 had to go back through comp to go see someone, and then I tried
13 to get my workers' comp attorney to help me out, but it wasn't
14 really getting anywhere, and I was suffering from a lot of other
15 stuff mentally, physically. So, I went on my own to go see
16 another doctor about my hip and I got a cortisone shot, I think,
17 in 2022 to, to try to help me. And then --

18 DR. GERRATANA: Okay. Not to interrupt, but
19 basically, you're saying you had a hip arthroscopy for the torn
20 labrum. You had some hip arthritis, and you still have some
21 ongoing injections and a little bit of discomfort or stiffness
22 in your hip?

23 MR. HARRISON: Yeah.

24 DR. GERRATANA: Is that accurate?

25 MR. HARRISON: Yeah. Arthritis -- I don't -- I don't

1 know. I don't remember the arthritis -- when I first got it
2 injured, when I first found it was torn, I don't think I had
3 arthritis. And it -- obviously, you know, the more I use it,
4 the more, you know, I -- the other thing is the reason why I was
5 trying to get on Ozempic because I was trying to get this weight
6 off of me so I'd be able to, A, try to get back to work, and B,
7 you know, try to get stronger so, like, my body can handle, you
8 know, me being 46 and being with kids. I have two boys. You
9 know, it -- it's hard. They're very athletic boys. And I --
10 like I said before, you know, it just -- it just slowly got
11 worse. And it never -- from 2018 after -- in 2018, when I went
12 back and saw Dr. Lena, they -- he -- you know, like I said, it
13 was -- it was starting to bother me again. And, and it was --
14 it's been bothering me since 2018. You know, like I said, I
15 tried to go and have it looked at earlier, but I just would --
16 like I said, they wouldn't let me go and see -- see the doc --
17 the doctor wouldn't let me come and let me see him unless I get
18 an appointment from comp, and I asked my attorney at the time,
19 and the -- nothing really got done. And then I tried to -- and
20 when I finally got the appointment to go see him in 2023 of -- I
21 think it was September, they took another MRI showing it, you
22 know, my labrum was getting worse, and I had other issues going
23 on in there too. But my arthritis is only due to -- I don't
24 know. I thought it was due to -- because of the fact that my
25 labrum was torn.

1 DR. GERRATANA: Right. And that's fine. And then
2 lastly, it was mentioned that you have arthritis in your right
3 thumb. Has that caused you any problem --

4 MR. HARRISON: Right thumb?

5 DR. GERRATANA: -- in your pulling?

6 MR. HARRISON: Right thumb? I don't think it was my
7 right thumb. I don't know. I had surgery on my left thumb. I
8 had a -- that I -- I hurt -- I put -- I hurt it a while ago and
9 then I had cyst in there. I mean, I don't know if you can see
10 the scar, but that's the scar. I had a cyst in there. When he
11 was in there, he saw that my tendon wasn't doing well and he
12 fixed my tendon while he removed the cyst, and it's been better
13 ever since.

14 DR. GERRATANA: You're good. Thanks. Thanks for the
15 -- that explanation.

16 MR. HARRISON: Yep.

17 DR. GERRATANA: That's a more complete picture of your
18 condition. I have no other questions.

19 MR. HARRISON: All right. Thank you.

20 MR. HELFAND: All right. If the doctors have no
21 further questions, then we can proceed to the portion of the
22 public session where the doctors vote on the various
23 applications that are on today's agenda.

24 CHAIRMAN SO: Okay. We have to make a final decision
25 on Mr. Harrison first, correct?

1 MR. HELFAND: Well, you can vote on it now or later in
2 the session.

3 CHAIRMAN SO: Okay. Dr. Gerratana, in your
4 presentation, you said it's nonservice, correct?

5 DR. GERRATANA: Right. I think he could qualify -- we
6 heard about, you know, previously, neck and back problems, also
7 other upper and lower musculoskeletal conditions that affect his
8 activities, so, I think because of that, he does not qualify for
9 a service connected disability retirement, but would qualify for
10 a non-service connected retirement.

11 MR. HELFAND: Do you want to move to approve the
12 application for a non-service connected disability?

13 MR. FAIRBANKS: Before you do that though, he didn't,
14 you know, it -- it's --

15 ATTORNEY KALLOR: Right.

16 MR. FAIRBANKS: -- important to note that he only
17 applied for a service connected --

18 CHAIRMAN SO: Okay.

19 ATTORNEY KALLOR: So you can look favorably.

20 MR. FAIRBANKS: You can look favorable on non-service,
21 but --

22 MR. HELFAND: All right. So in that case, you would
23 move to deny the application for a service connected disability?

24 DR. ROSENBERG: Maybe I'll just chime in here a little
25 bit as well as far as my thought.

1 Actually, before the applicant spoke, I was inclined
2 to approve for a service connected disability, but I think after
3 hearing all of the information, I am not so inclined and would
4 agree to look favorably on a non-service connected disability
5 based on the additional information that's been supplied today.

6 MR. HELFAND: Yeah. So, we need a motion and a vote.

7 DR. ROSENBERG: Well, I think the motion vote comes
8 when we do everybody's, right?

9 MR. HELFAND: Right.

10 CHAIRMAN SO: So right now, the application, as it
11 stands, deny service. We could say -- we could look favorably
12 for non-service.

13 DR. ROSENBERG: I would be -- I would be in favor of
14 that.

15 CHAIRMAN SO: Okay.

16 DR. GERRATANA: I agree.

17 CHAIRMAN SO: All right. So we'll go to the rest of
18 our public session.

19 DR. ROSENBERG: May I -- can I just ask a question?
20 He's got enough years of service in there, is there a
21 disadvantage for non-service connected disability for the
22 applicant versus service connected disability?

23 MR. FAIRBANKS: Mathematically it's the same benefit.

24 MR. HELFAND: The State will pay an identical benefit
25 regardless of whether the finding is service connected or

1 non-service connected.

2 DR. ROSENBERG: Thank you for clarifying for me.

3 CHAIRMAN SO: Okay, we'll proceed.

4 The Board will be making determinations and voting on
5 those determinations, but would like to remind members that only
6 the final vote will be given today and not the reasons for the
7 vote.

8 In some instances, there may not have been enough
9 medical information to make a determination or perhaps a
10 non-service connected disability is more likely than a service
11 connected disability. You may seek reconsideration of an
12 initial denial. You will receive the Board's written
13 determination within 2 to 4 weeks, which will provide you with
14 that additional information. I'm going to go through the list.

15 I motion to table Cathleen Adamczyk's application for
16 service connected disability retirement on reconsideration.

17 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, second.

18 CHAIRMAN SO: Okay. Is there a second?

19 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, second.

20 CHAIRMAN SO: Is there any discussion? All in favor,
21 say aye.

22 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, aye.

23 DR. ROSENBERG: Rosenberg, aye.

24 CHAIRMAN SO: So, aye. Motion passes.

25 Okay. I motion to approve non-service connected

1 disability retirement application from Keyshaun Assing. Is
2 there a second?

3 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, second.

4 CHAIRMAN SO: Is there any discussion? All in favor,
5 say aye.

6 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, aye.

7 DR. ROSENBERG: Rosenberg, aye.

8 CHAIRMAN SO: So, aye. The motion passes.

9 I motion to deny service connected application request
10 from Sandra Crowell. Is there a second?

11 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, second.

12 CHAIRMAN SO: Is there any discussion? All in favor,
13 say, aye.

14 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, aye.

15 DR. ROSENBERG: Rosenberg, aye.

16 CHAIRMAN SO: So, aye.

17 I motion to deny Robert Durgy's application for
18 non-service connected disability retirement. Is there a second?

19 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, second.

20 CHAIRMAN SO: Is there any discussion? All in favor,
21 say, aye.

22 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, aye.

23 DR. ROSENBERG: Rosenberg, aye.

24 CHAIRMAN SO: So, aye. The motion passes.

25 I motion to table Krystyna Dzierlatka's application

1 for service connected disability retirement, is there a second?

2 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, second.

3 CHAIRMAN SO: Is there any discussion? All in favor,
4 say aye.

5 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, aye.

6 DR. ROSENBERG: Rosenberg, aye.

7 CHAIRMAN SO: So, aye. Motion passes.

8 I motion to deny service connected retirement
9 application of Scott Ferguson, but will look favorably for
10 non-service connection. Is there a second?

11 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, second.

12 CHAIRMAN SO: Is there any discussion? All in favor,
13 say aye.

14 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, aye.

15 DR. ROSENBERG: Rosenberg, aye.

16 CHAIRMAN SO: So, aye. The motion passes.

17 I motion to table Alessandro Ferrari's application for
18 service connection disability retirement. Is there a second?

19 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, second.

20 CHAIRMAN SO: Is there any discussion? All in favor,
21 say aye.

22 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, aye.

23 DR. ROSENBERG: Rosenberg, aye.

24 CHAIRMAN SO: So, aye. The motion passes.

25 I motion to table Lillian Garcia's application for

1 service connection disability retirement. Is there a second?

2 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, second.

3 CHAIRMAN SO: Is there any discussion? All in favor,
4 say aye.

5 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, aye.

6 DR. ROSENBERG: Rosenberg, aye.

7 CHAIRMAN SO: So, aye. The motion passes.

8 I motion to deny service -- deny Jason Harrison's
9 application for service connection, but will look favorably for
10 non-service connection. Is there a second?

11 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, second.

12 CHAIRMAN SO: Is there any discussion? All in favor,
13 say aye.

14 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, aye.

15 DR. ROSENBERG: Rosenberg, aye.

16 CHAIRMAN SO: So, aye. The motion passes.

17 I motion to deny John Julianelle's application for
18 service connection on reconsideration. Is there a second?

19 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, second.

20 CHAIRMAN SO: Is there any discussion? All in favor,
21 say aye.

22 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, aye.

23 DR. ROSENBERG: Rosenberg, aye.

24 CHAIRMAN SO: So, aye. The motion passes.

25 I motion to approve Sean Keane's application for

1 non-service connected disability retirement. Is there a second?

2 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, second.

3 CHAIRMAN SO: Is there any discussion? All in favor,
4 say aye.

5 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, aye.

6 DR. ROSENBERG: Rosenberg, aye.

7 CHAIRMAN SO: So, aye. The motion passes.

8 I motion to table Marc Kemp's service connected
9 disability retirement application. Is there a second?

10 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, second.

11 CHAIRMAN SO: Is there any discussion? All in favor,
12 say aye.

13 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, aye.

14 DR. ROSENBERG: Rosenberg, aye.

15 CHAIRMAN SO: So, aye. The motion passes.

16 I motion to deny Everton Lobban's application for
17 non-service connected disability retirement. Is there a second?

18 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, second.

19 CHAIRMAN SO: Is there any discussion? All in favor,
20 say aye.

21 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, aye.

22 DR. ROSENBERG: Rosenberg, aye.

23 CHAIRMAN SO: So, aye. The motion passes.

24 I motion to approve Sylvia Malcolm's application for
25 service connected disability retirement. Is there a second?

1 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, second.

2 CHAIRMAN SO: Is there any discussion? All in favor,
3 say aye.

4 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, aye.

5 DR. ROSENBERG: Rosenberg, aye.

6 CHAIRMAN SO: So, aye. The motion passes.

7 I motion to deny Scott McKenna's application for
8 non-service connected disability retirement. Is there a second?

9 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, second.

10 CHAIRMAN SO: Is there any discussion? All in favor,
11 say aye.

12 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, aye.

13 DR. ROSENBERG: Rosenberg, aye.

14 CHAIRMAN SO: So, aye. The motion passes.

15 I motion to deny Joshua Mendez's application for
16 service connection disability retirement on reconsideration. Is
17 there a second?

18 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, second.

19 CHAIRMAN SO: Is there any discussion? All in favor,
20 say aye.

21 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, aye.

22 DR. ROSENBERG: Rosenberg, aye.

23 CHAIRMAN SO: So, aye. The motion passes.

24 I motion to deny Nydia Romero's application for
25 non-service connection on reconsideration. Is there a second?

1 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, second.

2 CHAIRMAN SO: Is there any discussion? All in favor,
3 say aye.

4 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, aye.

5 DR. ROSENBERG: Rosenberg, aye.

6 CHAIRMAN SO: So, aye. The motion passes.

7 I motion to deny service connection of Jennifer
8 Tartaglia, however, we'll look favorably for non-service
9 connection. Is there a second?

10 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, second.

11 CHAIRMAN SO: Is there any discussion? All in favor,
12 say aye.

13 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, aye.

14 DR. ROSENBERG: Rosenberg, aye.

15 CHAIRMAN SO: So, aye. The motion passes.

16 I motion to deny Jennifer Torres' application for
17 service connected disability retirement. Is there a second?

18 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, second.

19 CHAIRMAN SO: Is there any discussion? All in favor,
20 say aye.

21 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, aye.

22 DR. ROSENBERG: Rosenberg, aye.

23 CHAIRMAN SO: So, aye. The motion passes.

24 I motion to -- I motion to table Christine Tubiak's
25 application for non-service connected disability retirement. Is

1 there a second?

2 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, second.

3 CHAIRMAN SO: Is there any discussion? All in favor,
4 say aye.

5 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, aye.

6 DR. ROSENBERG: Rosenberg, aye.

7 CHAIRMAN SO: So, aye. The motion passes.

8 I motion to deny Lois Villa's application for service
9 connected disability retirement. Is there a second?

10 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, second.

11 CHAIRMAN SO: Is there any discussion? All in favor,
12 say aye.

13 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, aye.

14 DR. ROSENBERG: Rosenberg, aye.

15 CHAIRMAN SO: So, aye. The motion passes.

16 This completes our public session. I motion to
17 adjourn the meeting. Is there a second?

18 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, second.

19 CHAIRMAN SO: All in favor, say aye.

20 DR. GERRATANA: Gerratana, aye.

21 DR. ROSENBERG: Rosenberg, aye.

22 CHAIRMAN SO: So, aye. All right, so --

23 MR. HELFAND: Just a moment --

24 CHAIRMAN SO: So we'll talk a little bit, maybe
25 after --

1 MR. HELFAND: Yeah. Just wait a moment while Robin --
2 (Adjourned at 00:00 a.m.)
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CERTIFICATE

I certify that this document is a true and accurate description of the proceedings obtained from the recorded meeting of the State of Connecticut State Employees' Retirement Commission, Medical Examining Board on July 2, 2025 to the best of my ability.

Wendy Malitsky

Wendy Malitsky

My Commission Expires
March 31, 2030