

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT COMMISSION
MEDICAL EXAMINING BOARD

DATE: May 1, 2026

LOCATION: VIA ZOOM

PRESENT:

Nikolai Lieders, M.D., Chairperson

Michael Gerstenfeld, M.D.

Manny Katsetos, M.D.

OTHERS PRESENT:

Robert Helfand, Retirement Services Division

Patrick Fairbanks, Retirement Services Division

Alexandra Cipolla, Retirement Services Division

Cindy Cieslak, General Counsel, Rose Kallor

1 (Proceedings began at 9:02 a.m.)

2
3 DR. LIEDERS: Good morning. The May 1, 2026
4 meeting of the Medical Examining Board is now in session.
5 I'm Dr. Lieders. I'm going to be chairing this meeting.

6 Present for the Medical Examining Board, Dr.
7 Gerstenfeld and Dr. Katsetos.

8 Present from the Office of the State
9 Comptroller Retirement Services Division are staff
10 members from the Retirement Services Division, Alexandra
11 Cipolla, Patrick Fairbanks and Robert Helfand.

12 Also, General Counsel for the Retirement
13 Commission and Medical Examining Board, Attorney Cindy
14 Cieslak.

15 There are no amendments to the agenda, I
16 believe, so we're going to be going into Executive
17 Session. The public will be excluded from this portion
18 of the meeting. Before we go, I will also ask the
19 members of the State Retirement Services Division and
20 General Counsel to remain with us for the meeting.

21 I make a motion for us to go into Executive
22 Session at this point. Is there a second?

23 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, second.

24 DR. LIEDERS: Is there any discussion? So, all
25 of all in favor say aye.

1 DR. GERSTENFELD: Aye.

2 DR. LIEDERS: Aye -- Lieders, aye.

3 DR. KATSETOS: Katsetos, aye.

4 ANITA VARUNAS: Mr. Riveras(sic)? My name is
5 Anita Varunas. I'm a counsel and friend of Michele
6 Mitchel. This is on the Michele Mitchell hearing,
7 correct?

8 DR. LIEDERS: Well, I'm -- is Cindy there?

9 CINDY CIESLAK: Yep.

10 DR. LIEDERS: I don't know why -- we were not
11 ready to discuss that case yet.

12 ANITA VARUNES: Oh, okay.

13 DR. LIEDERS: We were going to go into
14 Executive Session and I'm not sure why you're still...

15 CINDY CIESLAK: No, we're in the middle --
16 we're in the middle of a vote. This is Cindy Cieslak.
17 We're in the middle of vote. We have Dr. Lieders and Dr.
18 Gerstenfeld --

19 DR. LIEDERS: Oh, okay.

20 CINDY CIESLAK: -- said aye. Dr. Katsetos, are
21 you in favor of going into Executive Session?

22 DR. KATSETOS: Katsetos, aye.

23 CINDY CIESLAK: Thank you. Okay, so the motion
24 passes. What this means for all of the applicants and
25 the members of the public and everyone's counsel: I'll

1 place you in the waiting room. The doctors discuss all
2 of your medical conditions in private because that is
3 confidential and sensitive in nature, and then any
4 individual who is on reconsideration will be permitted to
5 make a statement and they'll be invited into Executive
6 Session individually.

7 After all of the -- after the doctors have
8 reviewed all of the matters, we will reenter public
9 session and you will be able to hear the doctors make
10 their vote on each applicant. Okay? So I'm going to
11 place everyone in the waiting room.

12 This can be a multi-hour process, so if you
13 feel like you're in the waiting room for a long time,
14 that is normal. Please bear with us. Thank you.

15 ANITA VARUNAS: Thank you. Thank you. I'm
16 sorry to interrupt.

17 CINDY CIESLAK: That's okay.

18 ANITA VARUNAS: Thank you.

19 DR. LIEDERS: Are we ready?

20 CINDY CIESLAK: I'm just putting everyone in
21 the waiting room. So just give me a few minutes because
22 we have a lot of people today and I have to do it
23 individually so I don't take all of the doctors out.

24 (Executive Session from 9:03 a.m. to 12:41
25 p.m.)

1 CINDY CIESLAK: Dr. Lieders, you can proceed
2 when you're ready.

3 DR. LIEDERS: Okay, so I want to inform the
4 public that the Board will be making determinations and
5 voting on those determinations, but I would like to
6 remind members that only the final vote will be given
7 today and not the reasons for the vote.

8 In some instances, there may not have been
9 enough medical information to make a determination, or
10 perhaps a non service connected disability is more likely
11 than a service connected disability.

12 You may seek reconsideration of an initial
13 denial and you will receive the Board's written
14 determination within two to four weeks, which will
15 provide you with that additional information.

16 So, we'll proceed to vote. So I make a motion
17 to approve Angel Aviles' application for service
18 connected disability retirement.

19 CINDY CIESLAK: Is there a second?

20 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, second.

21 CINDY CIESLAK: Any further discussion? There
22 being none, all in favor say aye.

23 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

24 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, aye.

25 DR. KATSETOS: Katsetos, aye.

1 CINDY CIESLAK: The motion passes.

2 DR. LIEDERS: I make a motion to approve Donna
3 Belade's application for service connected disability
4 retirement.

5 CINDY CIESLAK: Is there a second?

6 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, second.

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

9 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

10 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, aye.

11 DR. KATSETOS: Katsetos, aye.

12 CINDY CIESLAK: The motion passes.

13 DR. LIEDERS: I will make a motion to approve
14 Lisa Bennett's application for non service connected
15 disability retirement.

16 CINDY CIESLAK: Is there a second?

17 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, second.

18 CINDY CIESLAK: Any further discussion? This
19 is Cindy Cieslak. Dr. Lieders, I would recommend that
20 you amend your motion so that you make the determination
21 on what you determined for service connected and what you
22 determined for non service connected.

23 DR. LIEDERS: I thought there was an asterisk,
24 it could go either way. Or do I still have to amend?

25 CINDY CIESLAK: Yeah, what we typically do is

1 if you are going to approve the non service but deny the
2 service, the motion would be, I move to deny the service
3 connected disability but approve the non service
4 connected disability.

5 DR. LIEDERS: Oh, I see. I have to be explicit
6 on that. Okay, so I made the motion to say that -- To
7 deny service connected disability retirement for Lisa
8 Bennett but approve non service connected disability
9 retirement. Sorry about that.

10 CINDY CIESLAK: Is there a second?

11 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, second.

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

14 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

15 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, aye.

16 DR. KATSETOS: Katsetos, aye.

17 CINDY CIESLAK: The motion passes.

18 DR. LIEDERS: I make a motion to deny Monica
19 Bishop's application for non service connected disability
20 retirement.

21 CINDY CIESLAK: Is there a second?

22 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, second.

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

25 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

1 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, aye.

2 DR. KATSETOS: Katsetos, aye.

3 CINDY CIESLAK: The motion passes.

4 DR. LIEDERS: I'll make a motion to deny Damany
5 Charlton's application for service connected disability
6 retirement.

7 CINDY CIESLAK: Is there a second?

8 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, second.

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

11 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

12 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, aye.

13 DR. KATSETOS: Katsetos, aye.

14 CINDY CIESLAK: The motion passes.

15 DR. LIEDERS: I make a motion to deny Christina
16 Darling's application for service connected disability
17 retirement.

18 CINDY CIESLAK: Is there a second?

19 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, second.

20 CINDY CIESLAK: Any further discussion? There
21 being none, all in favor say aye.

22 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

23 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, aye.

24 DR. KATSETOS: Katsetos, aye.

25 CINDY CIESLAK: The motion passes.

1 DR. LIEDERS: I'll make a motion to approve
2 Sheldon Davis' application for service connected
3 disability retirement.

4 CINDY CIESLAK: Is there a second?

5 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, second.

6 CINDY CIESLAK: Any further discussion? There
7 being none, all in favor say aye.

8 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

9 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, aye.

10 DR. KATSETOS: Katsetos, aye.

11 CINDY CIESLAK: The motion passes.

12 DR. LIEDERS: I'll make a motion to approve
13 Florence Ehibor-Cole's application for non service
14 connected disability retirement.

15 CINDY CIESLAK: Is there a second?

16 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, second.

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

19 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

20 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, aye.

21 DR. KATSETOS: Katsetos, aye.

22 CINDY CIESLAK: The motion passes.

23 DR. LIEDERS: I make a motion to deny Denise
24 Fortin's application for non service connected disability
25 retirement.

1 CINDY CIESLAK: Is there a second?

2 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, second.

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

5 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

6 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, aye.

7 DR. KATSETOS: Katsetos, aye.

8 CINDY CIESLAK: The motion passes.

9 DR. LIEDERS: I make a motion to approve
10 Desmond Gregor's application for service connected
11 disability retirement.

12 CINDY CIESLAK: Is there a second?

13 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, second.

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

16 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

17 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, aye.

18 DR. KATSETOS: Katsetos, aye.

19 CINDY CIESLAK: The motion passes.

20 DR. LIEDERS: I make a motion to approve Alan
21 Kovacs' application for non service connected disability
22 retirement.

23 CINDY CIESLAK: Is there a second?

24 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, second.

25 CINDY CIESLAK: Any further discussion? There

1 being none, all in favor say aye.

2 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

3 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, aye.

4 DR. KATSETOS: Katsetos, aye.

5 CINDY CIESLAK: The motion passes.

6 DR. LIEDERS: I make a motion to approve Luz
7 Manson's application for service connected disability
8 retirement.

9 CINDY CIESLAK: Is there a second?

10 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, second.

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

13 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

14 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, aye.

15 DR. KATSETOS: Katsetos, aye.

16 CINDY CIESLAK: The motion passes.

17 DR. LIEDERS: I make a motion to table Dwayne
18 McBride's application for service connected disability
19 retirement.

20 CINDY CIESLAK: Is there a second?

21 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, second.

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

24 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

25 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, aye.

1 DR. KATSETOS: Katsetos, aye.

2 CINDY CIESLAK: The motion passes.

3 DR. LIEDERS: I make a motion to approve Andrea
4 Micalizzi's application for non service connected
5 disability retirement.

6 CINDY CIESLAK: Is there a second?

7 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, second.

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

10 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

11 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, aye.

12 DR. KATSETOS: Katsetos, aye.

13 CINDY CIESLAK: The motion passes.

14 DR. LIEDERS: I make a motion to deny Michele
15 Mitchell's application for service connected disability
16 retirement, but I would like to say that the Board will
17 look favorably upon a non service connected disability
18 retirement.

19 CINDY CIESLAK: Is there a second?

20 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, second.

21 CINDY CIESLAK: Any further discussion? There
22 being none, all in favor say aye.

23 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

24 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, aye.

25 DR. KATSETOS: Katsetos, abstain.

1 CINDY CIESLAK: The motion passes 2 to 0 with
2 one abstention.

3 DR. LIEDERS: I will make a motion to approve
4 Kathy Noon's application for non service connected
5 disability retirement.

6 CINDY CIESLAK: Is there a second?

7 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, second.

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

10 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

11 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, aye.

12 DR. KATSETOS: Katsetos, aye.

13 CINDY CIESLAK: The motion passes.

14 CINDY CIESLAK: Is there a second?

15 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, second.

16 CINDY CIESLAK: Any further discussion? There
17 being none, all in favor say aye.

18 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

19 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, aye.

20 DR. KATSETOS: Katsetos, aye.

21 CINDY CIESLAK: The motion passes.

22 DR. LIEDERS: I'll make a motion to deny Thomas
23 O'Brien's application for service connected disability
24 retirement.

25 CINDY CIESLAK: Is there a second?

1 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, second.

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

4 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

5 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, aye.

6 DR. KATSETOS: Katsetos, aye.

7 CINDY CIESLAK: The motion passes.

8 DR. LIEDERS: I make a motion to approve Angela
9 Piela's application for non service connected disability
10 retirement.

11 CINDY CIESLAK: Is there a second?

12 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, second.

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

15 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

16 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, aye.

17 DR. KATSETOS: Katsetos, aye.

18 CINDY CIESLAK: The motion passes.

19 DR. LIEDERS: I'll make a motion to approve
20 Terri-Ann Rago's application for non service connected
21 disability retirement.

22 CINDY CIESLAK: Is there a second?

23 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, second.

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

1 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

2 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, aye.

3 DR. KATSETOS: Katsetos, aye.

4 CINDY CIESLAK: The motion passes.

5 DR. LIEDERS: I'll make a motion to deny Keith
6 Severence's application for service connected disability
7 retirement, however, the Board will look favorably upon a
8 non service connected disability retirement.

9 CINDY CIESLAK: Is there a second?

10 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, second.

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

13 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

14 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, aye.

15 DR. KATSETOS: Katsetos, aye.

16 CINDY CIESLAK: The motion passes.

17 DR. LIEDERS: I'll make a motion to approve
18 Kimberly Stewart's application for non service connected
19 disability retirement.

20 CINDY CIESLAK: Is there a second?

21 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, second.

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

24 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

25 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, aye.

1 DR. KATSETOS: Katsetos, aye.

2 CINDY CIESLAK: The motion passes.

3 DR. LIEDERS: I make a motion to deny Joel
4 Torres' application for service connected disability
5 retirement.

6 CINDY CIESLAK: Is there a second?

7 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, second.

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

10 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

11 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, aye.

12 DR. KATSETOS: Katsetos, aye.

13 CINDY CIESLAK: The motion passes.

14 DR. LIEDERS: I'll make a motion to deny
15 service connected disability application of John Tryjada,
16 however, the Board will approve non service connected
17 disability retirement.

18 CINDY CIESLAK: Is there a second?

19 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, second.

20 CINDY CIESLAK: Any further discussion? There
21 being none, all in favor say aye.

22 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

23 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, aye.

24 DR. KATSETOS: Katsetos, aye.

25 CINDY CIESLAK: The motion passes.

1 DR. LIEDERS: I'll make a motion to approve
2 William Tuttle's application for non service connected
3 disability retirement.

4 CINDY CIESLAK: Is there a second?

5 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, second.

6 CINDY CIESLAK: Any further discussion? There
7 being none, all in favor say aye.

8 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

9 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, aye.

10 DR. KATSETOS: Katsetos, aye.

11 CINDY CIESLAK: The motion passes.

12 DR. LIEDERS: I make a motion to deny Michell
13 Waterman's application for service connected disability
14 retirement.

15 CINDY CIESLAK: Is there a second?

16 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, second.

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

19 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

20 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, aye.

21 DR. KATSETOS: Katsetos, aye.

22 CINDY CIESLAK: The motion passes.

23 DR. LIEDERS: I'll make a motion to approve the
24 following names; this is for continuation of entitlements
25 according to the August 6, 2015 Memorandum of

1 Understanding between the State of Connecticut and CBAC.
2 I'm making a motion to approve these names: Marilette
3 Benjamin, Crystal Jones, Mary McCarthy, Frank Moore, and
4 Ray Rodriguez.

5 CINDY CIESLAK: Is there a second?

6 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, second.

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

9 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

10 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, aye.

11 DR. KATSETOS: Katsetos, aye.

12 CINDY CIESLAK: The motion passes.

13 DR. LIEDERS: Well, there being no further
14 business to transact, I make a motion to end today's
15 meeting.

16 CINDY CIESLAK: Is there a second?

17 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, second.

18 DR. LIEDERS: Adjourn the meeting actually.

19 CINDY CIESLAK: Dr. Gerstenfeld, did you second
20 that?

21 DR. GERSTENFELD: Yes, Gerstenfeld, second.

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

24 DR. LIEDERS: Lieders, aye.

25 DR. GERSTENFELD: Gerstenfeld, aye.

1 DR. KATSETOS: Katsetos, aye.

2 CINDY CIESLAK: The motion passes. That
3 concludes our meeting. Thank you, everyone. I hope
4 everyone enjoys their weekend.

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6 (Meeting adjourned at 12:54 p.m.)

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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

I, Wendy Malitsky, do hereby certify that the foregoing is, to the best of my skill and ability, a true and accurate transcript of the State Employees' Retirement Commission, Medical Examining Board held on May 1, 2026.



Wendy Malitsky, Notary Public

My Commission Expires March 31, 2030

0	4	amendments	7:14,15,16,24
0 13:1	4 20:2	2:15	7:25 8:1,2,10
1	5	andrea 12:3	8:11,12,13,21
1 1:4 2:3 20:1,5	5 20:3	angel 5:17	8:22,23,24 9:7
10 20:10	6	angela 14:8	9:8,9,10,18,19
11 20:11	6 17:25 20:4	anita 3:4,5,12	9:20,21 10:4,5
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13 20:13	8	applicant 4:10	11:4,12,13,14
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17 20:17	9:02 2:1	7:19 8:5,16 9:2	13:9,10,11,12
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19 20:19	a	10:21 11:7,18	14:3,4,5,6,14
2	a.m. 2:1 4:24	12:4,15 13:4	14:15,16,17,25
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20 20:20	able 4:9	15:6,18 16:4	15:14,15,23,24
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21 20:21	additional 5:15	11:6 12:3 13:3	17:19,20,21
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23 20:23	adjourned 19:6	16:16 17:1,23	18:24,25 19:1
24 20:24	agenda 2:15	18:2	b
25 20:25	alan 10:20	asterisk 6:23	bear 4:14
3	alexandra 1:13	attorney 2:13	began 2:1
3 20:2	2:10	august 17:25	belade's 6:3
31 20:11	amend 6:20,24	aviles 5:17	believe 2:16
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