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STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT COMMISSION
MEDICAL EXAMINING BOARD
DATE: January 9, 2026
LOCATION: VIA ZOOM

Present:

Dr. Lynn Rudich

Dr. Sohrab Zahedi

Dr. Rita Ohene

Robert Helfand, Retirement Services Division

Patrick Fairbanks, Retirement Services Division

Alexandra Cipolla, Retirement Services Division

Cindy Cieslak, Rose Kallor, LLP

1 (Proceedings commenced at 9:04 a.m.)

2

3 CINDY CIESLAK: Doctor Rudich, you can proceed
4 when you're ready.

5 DR. RUDICH: Okay. The January 9, 2026 meeting
6 of the Medical Examining Board is now in session.
7 I'm Dr. Lynn Rudich, Chairperson.

8 We also have Dr. Sohrab Zahedi and Dr. Rita
9 Ohene.

10 With us present from the Office of the State
11 Comptroller, Retirement Services Division are staff
12 members Alexandra Cipolla, Patrick Fairbanks and
13 Robert Helfand.

14 We also have the General Counsel for the
15 Retirement Commission and Medical Examining Board,
16 Cindy Cieslak.

17 I make a motion to go into Executive Session,
18 but I request that the members of the Retirement
19 Services Division and General Counsel be allowed to
20 stay. Is there a second?

21 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, second.

22 DR. RUDICH: Any discussion? All in favor say
23 aye. Rudich, aye.

24 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, aye.

25 DR. OHENE: Ohene, aye.

1 DR. RUDICH: Motion passes.

2 CINDY CIESLAK: This is Cindy Cieslak. For the
3 applicants and members of the public, I'm going to
4 place you back in the waiting room.

5 The doctors go into Executive Session to
6 discuss the applicants' medical information which is
7 private and confidential. Anyone who is on
8 reconsideration will be invited in for their
9 individual case, and then when we reenter public
10 session, everyone will be back in if you are still
11 in the waiting room. Thank you.

12 (Executive Session from 9:05 a.m. to 11:11
13 a.m.)

14 DR. RUDICH: Okay. The Board will be making
15 determinations and voting on those determinations,
16 but would like to remind members that only the final
17 vote will be given today and not the reasons for the
18 vote.

19 In some instances there may not have been
20 enough medical information to make a determination,
21 or perhaps a non-service-connected disability is
22 more likely than a service-connected disability.

23 You may seek a reconsideration of an initial
24 denial. You'll receive the Board's written
25 determination within two to four weeks which will

1 provide you with that additional information.

2 I make a motion to approve the non-service-
3 connected disability retirement of Marilette
4 Benjamin.

5 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, second.

6 DR. RUDICH: Any discussion? All in favor say
7 aye. Rudich, aye.

8 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, aye.

9 DR. RUDICH: Dr. Ohene?

10 DR. OHENE: Ohene, aye. Can you hear me?

11 DR. RUDICH: Yes. Motion passes.

12 I make a motion to deny the service-connected
13 disability of Maria Colon, but the Board would
14 approve non-service-connected disability retirement.

15 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, second.

16 DR. RUDICH: Any discussion? All in favor say
17 aye. Rudich, aye.

18 DR. OHENE: Ohene, aye.

19 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, aye.

20 DR. RUDICH: Motion passes.

21 I make a motion to table the non-service-
22 connected disability retirement of Nathaniel Cotton.

23 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, second.

24 DR. RUDICH: Any discussion? All in favor say
25 aye. Rudich, aye.

1 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, aye.

2 DR. OHENE: Ohene, aye.

3 DR. RUDICH: Motion passes.

4 I make a motion to deny service-connected
5 disability retirement, but approve non-service-
6 connected disability retirement of Janice Harrison.

7 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, second.

8 DR. RUDICH: Any discussion? All in favor say
9 aye. Rudich, aye.

10 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, aye.

11 DR. OHENE: Ohene, aye.

12 DR. RUDICH: Motion passes.

13 I make a motion to table the non-service-
14 connected disability retirement of Lauren Kimbro.

15 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, second.

16 DR. RUDICH: Any discussion? All in favor say
17 aye. Rudich, aye.

18 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, aye.

19 DR. OHENE: Ohene, aye.

20 DR. RUDICH: Motion passes.

21 I make a motion to deny the service-connected
22 disability retirement of Cynthia O'Rourke.

23 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, second.

24 DR. RUDICH: Any discussion? All in favor say
25 aye. Rudich, aye.

1 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, aye.

2 DR. OHENE: Ohene, aye.

3 DR. RUDICH: Motion passes.

4 I make a motion to approve the service-
5 connected disability retirement of Orrette Salmon.

6 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, second.

7 DR. RUDICH: Any discussion? All in favor say
8 aye. Rudich, aye.

9 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, aye.

10 DR. OHENE: Ohene, aye.

11 DR. RUDICH: Motion passes.

12 I make a motion to approve the non-service-
13 connected disability retirement of John Street.

14 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, second.

15 DR. RUDICH: Any discussion? All in favor say
16 aye. Rudich, aye.

17 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, aye.

18 DR. OHENE: Ohene, aye.

19 DR. RUDICH: Motion passes.

20 I make a motion to deny the non-service-
21 connected disability retirement of Sandra Tapia.

22 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, second.

23 DR. RUDICH: Any discussion? All in favor say
24 aye. Rudich, aye.

25 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, aye.

1 DR. OHENE: Ohene, aye.

2 DR. RUDICH: Motion passes.

3 I make a motion to approve the non-service-
4 connected disability retirement of Mario Rodrigues.

5 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, second.

6 DR. RUDICH: Any discussion? All in favor say
7 aye. Rudich, aye.

8 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, aye.

9 DR. OHENE: Ohene, aye.

10 DR. RUDICH: Motion passes.

11 I make a motion to approve the continued
12 entitlement to non-service-connected disability
13 retirement of James Antignani.

14 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, second.

15 DR. RUDICH: Any discussion? All in favor say
16 aye. Rudich, aye.

17 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, aye.

18 DR. OHENE: Ohene, aye.

19 DR. RUDICH: Motion passes.

20 I make a motion to table the continued
21 entitlement to non-service-connected disability
22 retirement of Kevin Delaney.

23 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, second.

24 DR. RUDICH: Any discussion? All in favor say
25 aye. Rudich, aye.

1 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, aye.

2 DR. OHENE: Ohene, abstain.

3 DR. RUDICH: Motion passes.

4 I make a motion to approve continued
5 entitlement to service the disability retirement of
6 Roberto Gomez.

7 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, second.

8 DR. RUDICH: Any discussion? All in favor say
9 aye. Rudich, aye.

10 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, aye.

11 DR. OHENE: Ohene, (no audible response).

12 DR. RUDICH: Motion passes.

13 I make a motion to approve the continued
14 entitlement to non-service-connected disability
15 retirement of Dawn Higginson.

16 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, second.

17 DR. RUDICH: Any discussion? All in favor say
18 aye. Rudich, aye.

19 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, aye.

20 DR. OHENE: Ohene, aye.

21 DR. RUDICH: Motion passes.

22 I make a motion to approve the continued
23 entitlement to service-connected disability
24 retirement of Jonathan Ley.

25 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, second.

1 DR. RUDICH: Any discussion? All in favor say
2 aye. Rudich, aye.

3 DR. OHENE: Ohene, aye.

4 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, aye.

5 DR. RUDICH: Motion passes.

6 I make a motion to table a continued
7 entitlement to non-service-connected disability
8 retirement of Deana Nott.

9 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, second.

10 DR. RUDICH: Any discussion? All in favor say
11 aye. Rudich, aye.

12 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, aye.

13 DR. OHENE: Ohene, aye.

14 DR. RUDICH: Motion passes.

15 I make a motion to approve continued
16 entitlement to non-service-connected disability
17 retirement of Stephen Phipps.

18 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, second.

19 DR. RUDICH: Any discussion? All in favor say
20 aye. Rudich, aye.

21 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, aye.

22 DR. OHENE: Ohene, aye.

23 DR. RUDICH: Motion passes.

24 I make a motion to approve continued
25 entitlement to non-service-connected disability

1 retirement of Melody Pribesh.

2 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, second.

3 DR. RUDICH: Any discussion? All in favor say
4 aye.

5 DR. ZAHEDI: Zahedi, aye.

6 DR. RUDICH: Rudich, aye.

7 DR. OHENE: Ohene, aye.

8 DR. RUDICH: Motion passes. Thank you.

9 CINDY CIESLAK: Thank you everyone.

10 (Meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.)

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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

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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

Wendy Malitsky

Wendy Malitsky, Notary Public

My Commission Expires March 31, 2030