STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT COMMISSION

MARCH 19, 2020 REGULAR MEETING
HELD VIA ZOOM
CONVENE AT 9:00 a.m.

Commission Members Present:
Peter Adomeit       Janet Andrews
Michael Bailey      Sandra Fae Brown Brewton
Karen Buffkin       Michael Carey
Charles Casella     Carl Chisem
Robert D. Coffey    Paul Fortier
Laurie Martin       Karen Nolen
Claude Poulin

Also Present:
Bruce Barth, Robinson & Cole
Natalie Braswell, Retirement Services Division
Cindy Cieslak, Rose Kallor
John Herrington, Retirement Services Division
Colin Newman, Retirement Services Division
Michael Rose, Rose Kallor

Karen Vibert, LSR #00064

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(Proceeding convened at 9:00 a.m.)

MR. ADOMEIT: I'm going to call the meeting to order, and we need -- before I give my report, we need a couple of motions. One is to amend the agenda. You'll notice that we truncated the back of it, the executive session part of it, because we knew this was going to be a trying meeting and I wanted to get it over with as soon as we could.

So, does everyone have the new amended motion that was sent out? I assume they do. I need a motion, please, to amend the agenda to conform with the March 19, 2020 agenda.

MR. POULIN: I make a motion, Mr. Chairman.

MR. ADOMEIT: Yes.

MR. POULIN: I move to amend the agenda to add two new items after Item 21, to accept the June 30, 2019 GASB 67 report. This is Item 22. And the June 30, 2019 report on -- the GASB report for MERS.

MR. ADOMEIT: Okay. Thank you. A second on Claude's motions?

MS. BROWN BREWTON: I second.

MR. ADOMEIT: Now, we have three amendments on the table, and I would call for a vote.
for amending the agenda to conform with the March 19th agenda that was sent out. All in favor say aye. Opposed nay. The ayes have it.

MS. CIESLAK: Real quick, Natalie suggested that we should do a roll call vote.

MR. ADOMEIT: I'm sorry. Say again, please.

MS. BROWN BREWTON: I'm not sure it's practical with this many people. I think we just have to make sure that if anyone is voting no, that we know exactly who is voting no.

MS. CIESLAK: Yes.

MR. CAREY: I agree with you. Is it proper for the Chair to just to ask for nays? That way if he hears them, he will know who they are and can count them and then assume that those who do not speak are yay votes?

MR. ADOMEIT: Yes.

MR. ROSE: I think you can do that. We're also going to have a chance to amend the agenda.

MS. BROWN BREWTON: I think it makes sense just to do the roll call, just so you know everybody who's present.

MS. CIESLAK: I definitely need an attendance list and then we can do a roll call vote.
MR. ADOMEIT: Do you have a --

MS. BROWN BREWTON: I'm not talking about a roll call vote. I'm just talking about an agenda.

MS. CIESLAK: Certainly. I believe the motion has passed unanimously. If there were any nay votes, please speak now.

So, Peter, at this point, would you like to take attendance?

MR. ADOMEIT: We have two more amendments. I only hit the first one. The second amendment was from Claude to amend the agenda to add the report -- to add GASB 67 report from our actuaries. That was Claude's motion. I think we have a second on that.

MS. BROWN BREWTON: I second it.

MR. ADOMEIT: All right. All in favor of that amendment signify by saying aye. Opposed nay. No one in opposition. The ayes have it.

The third amendment by Claude was seconded to add to the agenda the GASB 68 report from the actuaries. All in favor of that amendment say aye. Opposed nay. The ayes have it.

The Chairman's report. I would like to acknowledge and thank everyone who participated in today's meeting, those that helped organize this meeting remotely and for all the work they did to
make sure we could do this, specifically,
John Herrington and Cindy Cieslak and Michael Rose.
If there are others and they did show up beyond the
scene, I can't recognize them. I want to thank them
very much.

I hope everyone stays safe. Some of
you know that I'm married to a physician who works
in the hospital, who has been hospitalized. My
family has sent me up to Maine because we don't want
her to bring home the virus. I'll be working from
Maine for some time and having daily telephone
conversations with my wife.

Okay. That's my report.
John Herrington, division director's report, please.

MR. HERRINGTON: Good morning, everyone.
I would like to echo the sentiments of both Marti
and Peter. These are certainly trying times and
there have been a number of individuals that have
stepped up to really help us work through this in
terms of completing our mission while at the same
time doing all we can to keep our people safe. I've
had a number of telephone conversations with Cindy,
Mike and Peter and I expect that we'll have more in
the coming days so that we can really be prepared
for completing our mission to the extent that we're
out for an extended period of time. Thankfully, in terms of the timing, we are all set.

On my director's report, you will see that there were 149 retirements for the March payroll. We are in a position for all of those individuals to receive their checks and there will be no interruption with their health insurance.

In terms of timing, one of the things that is certainly unfortunate for us is that, as you all know, April 1st tends to be the heaviest month for retirements. So, in terms of technology, we have an evolving but pretty decent plan in terms of getting all of those individuals on the payroll and ensuring no interruption for retirement benefits, but that presupposes that we will receive mail, the mail will be scanned and it will be identified in the system.

One issue that we have come up with from the agencies is that it's difficult for some of the agencies to have individuals complete the paperwork in the normal course. In the normal course of a retirement, the employee comes into HR, signs the retirement paperwork along with the HR personnel. Then we can process with original signatures. There are many individuals that are
either, you know, perhaps quarantined or just
trough an abundance of caution are either unwilling
or unable to come into the office and complete
paperwork. And there are questions in terms of how
much of this can be completed by mail. So, what
we're looking at now would be relaxing our policies
for requiring the original signature, at least to
start the commencement of the retirement paperwork,
and we are working on a policy now. I will confirm
with Cindy on that, but I think that that might be a
point for the Commission to weigh in to the extent
that people have concerns about relying on
electronic signatures as opposed to original
signatures.

I will preface this by saying that I
have looked quickly and I haven't seen an actual
requirement in any statute or pension arbitration
agreement or CBA agreement that requires actual
original signatures, but that certainly has been our
historic practice.

Then the next issue would be in terms
of our long-term plans. We are fine if this is only
going to result in two weeks of closures. I think
we're fine, but what I'm trying to put in place now
would be, you know, plans so that we can fulfill our
mission if we're out of work for six, eight, you
know, weeks, perhaps as much as 12 or beyond. So,
what that requires us to do is to focus on our
priorities. Our priorities are always to process
the retirements, the new retirements, and ensure
that individuals make it to the payroll with no
interruption to health insurance.

The next priority would be dealing
with and triaging issues that arise from the
retirement through our call center, customer service
center, where we're most interested in people where
there has been some disruption or interruption of
their retirement pension checks or direct deposits,
and also any issues with respect to the health
insurance. So, we have a plan in place to triage
those.

Our next priority would be the
disability processing. So, we have an MEB meeting
that's scheduled to go forward tomorrow utilizing
the same technology and we're very interested in
seeing how that works because we would like to
process as many disabilities as possible remotely
going forward so that there aren't people that
otherwise could be approved who have perhaps an
interruption of income or income hasn't commenced,
or perhaps an interruption of health insurance.

So, those are immediate priorities, and we're working through those, but that's basically where we stand as a division now.

MR. ADOMEIT: Okay. John, thank you very much.

Anyone have questions or comments?

MS. BUFFKIN: My apologies. I need to log off for a command call at UConn Health and I will be back on the call if it doesn't last very long and the meeting is still going.

MR. ADOMEIT: Thank you.

MS. CIESLAK: Thank you, Karen. I have you down for attending.

MR. ADOMEIT: Is Sal Luciano here?

MS. CIESLAK: Peter, can I suggest that we take attendance really quickly?

MR. ADOMEIT: Oh, sure. I'm sorry. I thought we did.

MS. CIESLAK: I have a list that I was keeping prior to calling the meeting to order, so I can go through that list, then if I don't say name your name, please speak after I finish the list.

MR. ADOMEIT: This is --

MS. CIESLAK: This is in no particular
order. I have Natalie Braswell, Robert Coffey, Karen Nolen, Mike Rose, Janet Andrews, Fae Brown Brewton, Paul Fortier, Peter Adomeit, John Herrington, Michael Carey, Carl Chisem, Bruce Barth, Laurie Martin. Karen Buffkin just signed off and she will sign back on. Mike Bailey, Charles Casella, Claude Poulin, and I see Colin Newman.

MR. NEWMAN: Just joined.

MS. CIESLAK: Did I not name anyone?

(No response.)

MS. CIESLAK: Thank you.

MR. ADOMEIT: Sal is not here for his usual making of the motions, so I would request we have a substitute. Charlie Casella, would you like to play that role, please?

MR. CASELLA: Hesitatingly, I will.

MR. ADOMEIT: Okay. Thank you much.

MR. CASELLA: You're welcome. So, I would move Item No. 1, the approval of the February minutes.

MR. ADOMEIT: Any second?

MR. CHISEM: Second.

MR. ADOMEIT: Thank you, Carl.

Any discussion? Hearing none, all in
favor say aye. Opposed nay. The ayes have it.

MR. CASELLA: Mr. Chairman, I would move approval of Item No. 2, the Chairman's per diem expenses.

MS. BROWN BREWTON: Second.

MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? All in favor say aye. Opposed nay. The ayes have it.

MR. CASELLA: Move Item 3, approval of State Employee Retirement Commission Union Trustee's travel expenses.

MR. CHISEM: Second.

MR. POULIN: I abstain.

MR. ADOMEIT: All in favor say aye. Opposed nay. The ayes have it.

MR. CASELLA: Move approval of Items 4 through 6, the invoices from Robinson & Cole and Rose Kallor.

MR. CHISEM: Second.

MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? All in favor say aye. Opposed nay. The ayes have it, unanimous.

MR. CASELLA: Move approval of Items 7 through 9, the Connecticut State Employees Retirement System Service retirements, voluntary pending retirements and the systems disability.
retirements for the month of February.

MR. FORTIER: Second.

MR. ADOMEIT: All in favor say aye.

Excuse me. Any discussion? Sorry about that. Is there any discussion? Once again, all in favor say aye. Opposed nay. No opposed. The ayes have it.

MR. CASELLA: Move approval of Items 10 and 11, the MERS regular retirements and disability retirements.

MR. CHISEM: Second.

MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? All in favor say aye. Opposed nay. The ayes have it.

MR. CASELLA: Move approval of Item 12, Municipal Retirement System disability retirement denials.

MR. CHISEM: Second.

MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor say aye. Opposed nay. Unanimous. The ayes have it.

MR. CASELLA: Move approval of Item No. 13, Commission Requests approval and acceptance of recommendation of medical examining board for continued entitlements, tabled and denials.

MR. CHISEM: Second.

MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
none, all in favor say aye. Opposed nay.

Unanimous, the ayes have it.

MR. CASELLA: Move approval of Item No. 14, Continued Entitlement Improvements -- Approvals.

MR. CHISEM: Second.

MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? All in favor say aye. Opposed nay. Unanimous, the ayes have it.

MR. CASELLA: Move approval of Item 15, request to discontinue disability applications due to one-year deadline.

MR. CHISEM: Second.

MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor say aye.

MS. CIESLAK: Bob said in the chat that he does want to discuss 15, but it appears we can -- I wanted to give Bob the opportunity.

MR. ADOMEIT: It appears what? I'm sorry.

MS. CIESLAK: Bob wrote in the chat that he wanted to discuss No. 15 and he would like to table James Senich.

MR. ADOMEIT: I see it on my screen now.

MS. CIESLAK: Okay.

MR. COFFEY: I amend the motion to table
the one item.

MR. CHISEM: I'll second it.

MR. ADOMEIT: All in favor of the motion
to table that one item signify by saying aye.
Opposed nay. Unanimous, the ayes have it.

MR. CASELLA: Have we moved item 15 in
total, Cindy, or not?

MS. CIESLAK: Not yet.

MR. ADOMEIT: Thank you, Charlie.

All in favor of item 15, as amended,
signify by saying aye. Opposed nay. Unanimous, the
ayes have it.

MR. CASELLA: Move approval of Items 16,
the Connecticut judges and family support
magistrates and probate judges retirements.

MR. CHISEM: Second.

MS. BROWN BREWTON: Second.

MR. ADOMEIT: Carl was in there first.

You got that, Cindy?

MS. CIESLAK: I have it.

MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? All in
favor say aye. Opposed nay. The ayes have it,
unanimous.

MR. CASELLA: Move approval of Item 18,
probate judges expenses for the pay period January
through February.

MR. ADOMEIT: Is it just me or was the last one 16 or 17?

MR. CASELLA: The last one was 16 and 17.

MR. ADOMEIT: Oh, I'm sorry. Thank you. It's been moved. Carl, did you second it?

MR. CHISEM: I will second it.

MR. ADOMEIT: Thank you. Any discussion?

All in favor say aye. Opposed nay. Unanimous the ayes have it.

MR. CASELLA: Move approval of Item No. 19, acceptance of the Montville Firefighters into MERS.

MS. BROWN BREWTON: Second.

MR. ADOMEIT: Thank you. Any discussion?

MR. BARTH: The only comment I have is wouldn't it be the Town of Montville and the Firefighters Association group as a member, as opposed to the Firefighters Association itself can't join MERS.

MS. BROWN BREWTON: That would be accurate. The letter from CavMac says that it is the Town Montville.

MR. ADOMEIT: All right. So, maybe we
should amend the motion to say approval of the Town Montville Firefighters.

MS. BROWN BREWTON: Yes.

MR. ADOMEIT: Okay.

MR. CASELLA: So moved.

MR. CHISEM: Second.

MS. BROWN BREWTON: Second.

MR. ADOMEIT: I'll give that to Fae. It was her idea. Actually, it was Bruce's.

All right. Moved and seconded. Any further discussion? Hearing none, all in favor say aye. Opposed nay. Unanimous, the ayes have it.


MR. FORTIER: Second.

MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? All in favor say aye. Opposed nay. Unanimous, the ayes have it.

MR. CASELLA: Move approval of Item 21, the recommendations from the purchase of service and related matters subcommittee for the meeting held on March 5, 2020.

MS. BROWN BREWTON: Second.

MR. ADOMEIT: Thank you. Any discussion?
MR. NEWMAN: Just saying, as Charlie pointed out, there was a typo on item No. 3 where it says, "The subcommittee unanimously recommends approval of Ms. Mangs," it should say, "Ms. Spak."

On the top line -- the top line of item No. 3.

MS. BROWN BREWTON: It says, "Christine Spak."

MR. NEWMAN: Right, but if you read it, it says, "The subcommittee unanimously recommends the approval of Ms. Mangs."

MS. BROWN BREWTON: Right.

MR. NEWMAN: It should read, "Ms. Spak."

MS. BROWN BREWTON: Ms. Spak?

MR. NEWMAN: Right, Ms. Spak.

MR. ADOMEIT: Is there a motion to correct the typo, please?

MR. HERRINGTON: Is that the typo or is Christine Spak the --

MR. HERRINGTON: Oh, Christine Spak is the item itself. The typo is the name.

SPEAKER: Gotcha.

MR. ADOMEIT: Is there a second? Is there a motion, first of all?

MR. CASELLA: I'll move it.

MR. ADOMEIT: Okay. Thank you.
MR. CASELLA: Move acceptance of the correction of the typo.

MR. ADOMEIT: Is there a second?

MR. FORTIER: Second.

MR. ADOMEIT: Thank you, Paul.

Any further discussion? All in favor of the motion as amended signify by saying aye. Opposed may. The ayes have it.

MR. POULIN: Move approval of item 22. I move to accept GASB 67 reports for MERS.

MR. BAILEY: Second.

MR. ADOMEIT: Thank you. Any discussion?

All in favor signify by saying aye. Opposed nay. Is there a nay? Hearing none, the ayes have it.

MR. POULIN: Item 23. I move to accept the June report of 2019, the GASB 68 report for MERS.

MR. BAILEY: Second.

MR. ADOMEIT: Thank you. Any discussion?

Hearing none, all in favor say aye. Opposed nay. The ayes have it, unanimous.

MR. CASELLA: Mr. Chairman, if it's appropriate, I move that we go into executive session to discuss Item 1, the VCP status update.

MR. ADOMEIT: Thank you, Charlie.

Is there a second?
MR. CAREY: Didn't we change the agenda so there is only one item in executive session? The Rizzio petition?

MR. CASELLA: Did we? I'm sorry. I missed that. Is that correct, Mr. Chairman?

MR. ADOMEIT: Cindy?

MS. CIESLAK: Yes. The agenda only lists for the declaratory ruling.

MR. ADOMEIT: So that the Roberts is a typo, then.

Okay. So, that's the motion.

Rizzio, executive session. Any further discussion?

MS. CIESLAK: I don't believe there was a second, Mr. Chairman.

MR. BAILEY: Second.

MR. ADOMEIT: Thank you, Mike.

Any further discussion? All in favor say aye. Opposed nay. Unanimous, the ayes have it.

(Whereupon, the Commission went into executive session.)

MR. ADOMEIT: We're now out and we need a motion.

MR. CASELLA: Move that we accept the recommendation of the legal personnel subcommittee to grant reconsideration to Mr. Rizzio.
MR. CAREY: Second.

MR. ADOMEIT: Any further discussion?

Hearing none, all in favor say aye. Opposed nay.

Hearing none, the ayes have it. That completes the agenda.

MS. BROWN BREWTON: I move we adjourn.

MR. CASELLA: Second.

MR. ADOMEIT: Moved and seconded to adjourn. All in favor say aye. Opposed nay. The ayes have it. Thank you, everyone. This was a successful experiment. I appreciate it.

(Meeting concluded.)
STATE OF CONNECTICUT:  
: ss: Bristol

COUNTY OF HARTFORD:

I, Karen Vibert, LSR No. 00064, a Notary Public for the State of Connecticut, do hereby certify that the preceding pages are an accurate transcription of the Connecticut State Employees Retirement Commission regular meeting held electronically via Zoom, convening at 9:00 a.m., on March 19, 2020.

Dated at Bristol, Connecticut,
this 24th day of April, 2020.

__________________________
Karen Vibert, Notary Public

My commission expires: 08/31/2024.

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