STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT COMMISSION

JUNE 18, 2020 MEETING
HELD VIA ZOOM
CONVENED AT 9:00 a.m.

Commission Members Present:
Peter Adomeit, Chairman
Janet Andrews, Trustee
Sandra Fae Brown Brewton, Trustee
Michael Bailey, Trustee
Michael Carey, Trustee
Martha Carlson, Deputy Comptroller, Ex Officio Member
Carl Chisem, Trustee
Robert D. Coffey, Trustee
Karen Nolen, Trustee
Claude Poulin, Trustee
Angel Quiros, Trustee
Timothy Ryor, Trustee
Mark Sciota, Municipal liaison

Also Present:
Bruce Barth, Robinson & Cole
Natalie Braswell, Retirement Services Division
Cindy Cieslak, General Counsel, Rose Kallor
Colin Newman, Retirement Services Division
John Garrett, Cavanaugh MacDonald Consulting
John Herrington, Retirement services Division
Ed Koebel, Cavanaugh MacDonald Consulting
Colin Newman, Retirement Services Division
Michael Rose, General Counsel, Rose Kallor
Alisha Sullivan, Robinson & Cole

Karen Vibert, LSR #00064

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(Proceeding commenced at 8:59 a.m.)

MR. ADOMEIT: There are several things to do right off the bat before we move into the agenda. We have a new member of the Commission -- appointed by the governor -- who is an actuary. His name is Tim Ryor, and you see him on your screen. My first task is to swear him in so he will be an official voting member.

So, Tim, if you could please raise your right hand.

(Whereupon, Mr. Ryor was sworn in by the chair, as trustee of SERC.)

MR. ADOMEIT: Welcome aboard.

Okay. Next is we have to have attendance of the people who are here. Cindy, could you please help us by reading off the attendance, please.

MS. CIESLAK: Certainly. I have Peter Adomeit, I have myself, Cindy Cieslak, Tim Ryor, Karen Nolen, Sal Luciano.

MR. LUCIANO: Here.

MS. CIESLAK: Michael Bailey.

MR. BAILEY: Here.

MS. CIESLAK: Carl Chisem.

MR. CHISEM: Here.
MS. CIESLAK: John Herrington, Michael Carey.

MR. CAREY: Here.

MS. CIESLAK: Paul Fortier.

MR. FORTIER: Here.

MS. CIESLAK: John Flores.

MR. FLORES: Here.

MS. CIESLAK: Sandra Fae Brown Brewton.

MS. BROWN BREWTON: Here.

MS. CIESLAK: Michael Rose, Bob Coffey.

MR. COFFEY: Here.

MS. CIESLAK: Bruce Barth.

MR. BARTH: Here.

MS. CIESLAK: John Garrett.

MR. GARRETT: Here.


MR. KOEBEL: Here.

MS. CIESLAK: Mark Sciota.

MR. SCIOTA: Here.

MS. CIESLAK: Janet Andrews, Angel Quiros.

MR. QUIROS: Here.

MS. CIESLAK: Is there anybody that I missed? Okay. I think that is everyone.
MR. ADOMEIT: Before moving into the agenda, we need to amend it to accept the Connecticut Probate Judges and Employees Retirement System report from the actuaries as of 12-31-19, and we need someone who would make that motion, please.

MR. BAILEY: So moved.

MR. CHISEM: Second.

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

MR. LUCIANO: Peter, may I make a point of personal privilege?

MR. ADOMEIT: Go ahead.

MR. LUCIANO: I would just like to acknowledge the passing of Charlie Casella. He was a long-time trustee and he sat right next to me. He certainly was a person who you never had to worry that he wouldn't read every single word of the reports that came out.

If we could have a moment of silence. We're going to miss him tremendously.

MR. ADOMEIT: Thank you very much, Sal.

MULTIPLE VOICES: Thank you, Sal. Thank you very much, Sal.

MR. ADOMEIT: Moving on now to the chairman's report, which basically is just -- was
1 just taken care of by Sal.

2 I just want to emphasize his words.

3 Charlie was a wonderful man and a great personal
friend of mine. The friendship grew over three
years, and he was a kind person, but principled, and
he will be greatly missed.

7 So much now for the chairman's
report. The trustee director's administrative and
secretary reports. We'll start with the division
director's report.

11 MR. HERRINGTON: We'll start with the
director's report that I circulated.

13 As you will see, we continue to make
a great deal of progress with respect to the
disability backlogs with the emphasis on the
scheduling of disability initial applications. We
are working through the first and easiest
population, those who had packages that were fully
in order, and we made a great deal of progress with
those. We're reaching a point now where, you know,
many of the applications that are pending now are
applications where we continue to await additional
medical documentation. But in terms of all of our
priorities for 2020, across the board, our
priorities have been to, you know, eliminate our
backlogs. To the extent that we're making progress, I would say on this first point, this is probably our greatest success and this hasn't really been disrupted based on the -- in the working group remotely. So this is a great success and we continue to work forward with that.

It also was a light month in terms of normal audits. We completed 140 normal audits, so we were able to work through some of the pending backlogs, but again, that's something that is a bit difficult for us to keep in place, our initial plans with working remotely, but we continue to work through that process, and hopefully we will eliminate this backlog by the end of the year as initially planned at the beginning of the year. I'm not certain whether we will hit that goal, but we certainly will make a great deal of progress towards that goal.

In terms of additional work that we worked on this past month, a great deal of our efforts have been directed towards implementing the VCP, the Voluntary Correction Program, where we would be able to adjust pensions based on our application of either the 415 limit or the 401-A limit. We are very close to issuing a memo that's
documenting our actual implementation. I expect that those communications should be complete by the end of this week, and as soon as that is finalized, we will circulate all of those materials to this body.

We've identified the groups that are entitled to increases to their pensions, and there are also two individuals that we identified that will have their pensions reduced, respectively, and we are working towards implementing those changes with this June payroll and some may slide into the July payroll.

Another issue that we worked through would be -- we've had a plan in place to shift towards something called self-service, where individual members would have access to the pension module where people could run their own figures remotely without any direct involvement with the division. That's something that was one of our priorities going forward, but that's kind of been accelerated with COVID issues in the sense that we are unable to work with people in terms of in-person counseling, so we are reevaluating that model. We're working on online materials and workshops, essentially webinars that we would be able to
disseminate to the relevant populations but perhaps what's most important to this population is access to the self-service, so we continue to make strides towards releasing that. We will release that on a rolling basis to agencies. That was another initiative that we started in the beginning of the year that was put on hold when we all left the building, but we're starting back up with this process.

We are -- you know, going into this next month, we are working with CAVMAC to hold the actuarial census information for the SERS valuation. That continues to be a work in progress, but I think we have a good plan to make some improvements in that process this year. We continue to also work -- we're right now in the midst of the GASB 68 accounting audit with the outside vendor at this point. That should be resolved towards the end of this month.

MR. ADOMEIT: Okay. Thank you, John. Does anybody have any questions or comments? Hearing none -- Marti frequently raises her hand.

MS. CARLSON: I would just echo what John is saying and also to just say again -- and I know
I've said it month after month -- the remarkable level of production that the Retirement Division has been working, and actually, the entire agency. I would also note that there are -- you know, there are members at this table, obviously, that have direct-care workers. They've been doing extraordinary work at very dangerous levels. Yesterday on the unified command call, I wanted to recognize everybody, every state employee, the entire workforce that's been working behind the COVID curtain to keep the state open, to keep the roads clean and the parks clean and the bills paid, and it's been an extraordinary experience.

We seem to have turned a corner. We have a very low -- one and a half percent positive -- rate on all the asymptomatic testing being done in the state, which is unbelievable, and, as the governor says, it's in large part due to the residents of Connecticut paying attention to the science when they're told that they need to socially distance and wear masks. So we're working hard. As John said, we've stabilized so well in full production that in all divisions we are looking at our new projects, we're heading for 2022, we know that. We're also heading for the cloud with the
entire enterprise system as you guys know is
Core-CT, which is probably a two-and-a-half to
three-year project and very expensive, but we need
to do that. And, you know, we just look forward to
at some point having some normalcy. I can tell you
that all agencies are beginning to look at their
plans for a gradual reopening, as we are, and we'll
keep you guys posted on a monthly basis as to what
we're up to, but for all intents and purposes, we
have 270 of 277 working remotely in full production
and that will remain that way for the foreseeable
future. End of report.

MR. ROSE: Is there a motion to accept the
director's report?

MR. LUCIANO: Motion to accept the
director's report.

MR. FORTIER: Second.

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

MR. LUCIANO: Motion to move item 1, the
minutes.

MR. CHISEM: Second.

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

MR. LUCIANO: Motion to move item 2,
chairman's per diem.

MR. BROWN BREWTON: Second.

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

MR. LUCIANO: Motion to move item 3 Claude's per diem with Claude abstaining.

MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? All in favor say aye.

MR. POULIN: I abstain.

MR. ADOMEIT: Opposed nay. The ayes have it.

MR. LUCIANO: Motion to accept the invoices from Robinson & Cole.

MR. CHISEM: Second.

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

MS. CIESLAK: I apologize. I was on mute for item No. 3. I think there are a couple people who attempted to second it. Who seconded item No. 3?

MR. BAILEY: It doesn't matter.

MS. CIESLAK: Okay. I'll put Bailey.

Thank you very much.

MR. LUCIANO: Motion to accept item 5, the invoices from Rose Kallor.
MR. CHISEM: Second.

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

MR. LUCIANO: Motion to approve items 6 and 7.

MR. CHISEM: Second.

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

MR. LUCIANO: Motion to approve items 8 and 9.

MR. CHISEM: Second.

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

MR. LUCIANO: Motion to approve items 10 and 11.

MR. CHISEM: Second.

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

MR. LUCIANO: Motion to approve item 12.

MR. BAILEY: Second.

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

MR. LUCIANO: Motion to accept items 13 and 14, recommendations by the Medical Examining Board.
MR. BROWN BREWTON: Second.

MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion?

MR. BROWN BREWTON: Yes. I have a question with respect to the case involving Robert Adkins. It said that he requested a postponement of the MEB making a decision at that time, and so the decision is to continue his disability retirement until -- I don't know until when -- before it comes back before the MEB. And I was just hearing this because I'd not seen that before, where an individual had requested that they're before the Board, it doesn't happen overnight that you get to the Board, and then at that time says, Well, put off making your decision until later. How does that work?

MR. NEWMAN: That request for a tabling came in basically 24 hours before the -- 24 hours before the meeting, and so for situations like that, a requested postponement came in before the meeting. It still went before the Board, but they didn't adjudicate. What it also means is that we're just going to place --

(Technical difficulties.)

MS. CIESLAK: I think Colin might have drifted off. He's still on, but I don't hear any
audio. Colin, if you come back --

MR. NEWMAN: Can you hear me?

MS. CIESLAK: There you go. Go ahead.

MR. NEWMAN: Sorry. So the request for the postponement came from the member about 24 hours prior to the meeting occurring. In situations like that, we still have the case on the agenda. What the Board will do is they won't review it but they'll just table it to the next available meeting, the difference being when the Board itself tables an item because of lack of documentation or they're looking for additional information, when the board --

(technical difficulties.)

MR. NEWMAN: -- they get like 60 days. In this case, because the person requested the postponement just before the meeting, they're not going to get the 60 days. They'll just be placed on the next available meeting.

MR. BROWN BREWTON: How far are we scheduled out now with the MEB?

MR. NEWMAN: Right now -- well, for like initials, we're looking at -- we're scheduled, I believe, into October of this year, but this was a -- this particular case was for a 24-month continued entitlement -- a 24-month continued entitlement case.
We probably have the next meeting coming up either the end of July or the first week in August, the first -- or the first week in August, at which point, this particular case will be placed back on that agenda.

MR. BROWN BREWTON: Okay.

MR. NEWMAN: When someone makes that request, it's just a -- it's a one-time thing. We don't allow them to postpone it again.

MR. BROWN BREWTON: Okay. Thank you.

MR. ADOMEIT: Okay. All set. Any further discussion? Sal?

MR. ROSE: Did we finish the motion to accept?

MR. BROWN BREWTON: We've just got to take the vote.

MR. ADOMEIT: We do. I'm sorry. I did call not call the motion.

All in favor say aye. All opposed nay. The ayes have it.

MR. LUCIANO: Motion to approve items 15, 16 and 17.

MR. CHISEM: Second.

MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? All in favor say aye. Opposed nay. The ayes have it.
1 MR. LUCIANO: Motion to approve item 18,
2 the appointment of Dr. Marianne Wudarsky on the MEB.
3 MR. CHISEM: Second.
4 MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? All in
5 favor say aye. Opposed nay. The ayes have it.
6 MR. LUCIANO: The next one is the -- we
7 amended the agenda to include item 19. I hope I'm
8 doing this right. Claude, you can correct me if I'm
9 wrong.
10 MR. POULIN: Move to accept the Probate
11 Judges and Employees Retirement System, Actuarial
12 report dated December 31, 2019.
13 MR. BAILEY: Second.
14 MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? All in
15 favor say aye. Opposed nay. The ayes have it.
16 MR. LUCIANO: That concludes the agenda
17 items. I would now like to make a motion that we go
18 into executive session for the purpose of discussing
19 Hartford Housing Authority.
20 MR. BROWN BREWTON: Second.
21 MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? All in
22 favor say aye. Opposed nay. The ayes have it.
23 MS. CIESLAK: Before we completely leave
24 succession, Sal, is your motion to invite legal
25 counsel, John Garrett, John Herrington,
Colin Newman, Natalie Braswell and Ed Koebel?

MR. LUCIANO: It is, because they have either expertise or the ability to help us with our determination.

MS. CIESLAK: Thank you.

(The Commission was in executive session from 9:30 a.m. until 10:04 a.m.)

MR. LUCIANO: I would like to make a motion that we remand Linda Cicarella back to the MEB to the filter of the Workers' Comp language as it relates to CMERS.

MR. BROWN BREWTON: Second.

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

MR. COFFEY: Bob Coffey --

MR. ADOMEIT: Yes, Bob?

MR. COFFEY: Mr. Chairman, I have a motion with regard to the Dawn Lapan matter, but before so, I would also like to raise a point of personal privilege. I just want to echo everything that's been said about Charlie here this morning, and also note that he was just an invaluable member of our legal and personnel subcommittee, not to mention all the other subcommittees that he was involved in:
Purchasing, overpayments, actuarial subcommittee. He did a tremendous amount of work for the Commission, and was a good friend and I will miss him. That said, I would like to make a motion that we grant the request to reconsider the Lapan matter and refer it to the purchasing subcommittee.

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

MR. LUCIANO: I'd like to make a motion that would he remand Jacqueline Lawrence back to the MEB so that they can consider -- so that they can address and/or consider both injuries including the -- her work injury in 2013.

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

MR. LUCIANO: A motion to adjourn is in order. So moved.

MR. COFFEY: Before we do that, Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a motion that we authorize Commission counsel to draft a declaratory
ruling in the Grzeszczyk matter.

MR. LUCIANO: Second.

MR. ADOMEIT: Is there any discussion?

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

The ayes have it. Thank you, Fae.

MR. LUCIANO: Motion to adjourn.

MR. BROWN BREWTON: Second.

MR. ADOMEIT: All in favor say aye.

Opposed nay. The ayes have it. Hey, thank you all very much. Wonderful meeting.

(Concluded at 10:49 a.m.)
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 June 18, 2020.


Karen Vibert, Notary Public
My commission expires: 08/31/2024.