Commission Members Present:
Peter Adomeit, Chairman
Karen Buffkin, Trustee
Michael Carey, Trustee
Martha Carlson, Deputy Comptroller, Ex Officio Member
Carl Chisem, Trustee
Robert D. Coffey, Trustee
John Flores, General Counsel, Office of the Treasurer, Ex Officio Member
Paul Fortier, Trustee
Sal Luciano, Trustee
Karen Nolan, Trustee
Claude Poulin, Trustee
Angel Quiros, Trustee
Timothy Ryor, Trustee
Mark Sciota, Municipal Liaison

Commission Members Absent:
Janet Andrews, Trustee
Sandra Fae Brown Brewton, Trustee
Michael Bailey, Trustee
Also Present:
Bruce Barth and Alisha Sullivan, tax Counsel to the Commission, Robinson & Cole
Natalie Braswell, General Counsel, Office of the State Comptroller
Cindy Cieslak and Michael Rose, general Counsel to the Commission, Rose Kallor
John Herrington, Director, Retirement Services Division
Colin Newman, Assistant Director, Retirement Services Director
Sueanne Curley
Ellen Lynch & Richard Lynch, counsel for Ms. Curley
MR. ADOMEIT: Well, good morning, everyone. I call the meeting to order. This is the August 20th meeting, by teleconference, of the Connecticut State Employees Retirement Commission. The persons present -- Ms. Cieslak is the one who has the roll, so why don't you give us the names, please.

MS. CIESLAK: Certainly.

Just as a reminder, When you speak, please announce who is speaking so that we have it for the recording.

Persons present include Chairman Peter Adomeit, Trustee Claude Poulin. Trustee Angel Quiros, Trustee Robert Coffey, Trustee Carl Chisem, Trustee Paul Fortier, Trustee Michael Carey, Actuarial Trustee Tim Ryor, Trustee Karen Nolen, Trustee Karen Buffkin, Trustee Sal Luciano, John Flores from the Treasurer's office, Mark Sciota from the Town of Southington, Attorney Natalie Braswell, Attorney Alisha Sullivan, Attorney Bruce Barth, Colin Newman from the Retirement Services Division, John Herrington, Director of the Retirement Services Division, Marti Carlson from the Office the State Comptroller,
Attorney Michael Rose. We also have Attorney Ellen Lynch representing Suanne Curley, who is also in attendance.

Is there anyone that I missed?

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Natalie.

MS. CIESLAK: Attorney Natalie Braswell from the Comptroller's office is here.

All right. I think we're ready to go, Peter.

MR. ADOMEIT: Okay. The Chairman's report. We've had really two big challenges over the last couple of years. We digitized the process and then we had to go to a remote system, and I've just -- I've got to tell you, I am in awe of the ability of the folks that did this. Now, I could do it, but they do it so it works. You're just to be congratulated again. I may sound like a broken record, but I'm not. We are doing our work. We're getting the business done. Just thank you to everyone who's been involved in that.

I'm going to ask the Division director for his report.

MR. HERRINGTON: Good morning, everyone. I circulated the director's report with the numbers for August. As you can see, August was an
abnormally high month. It was the second-highest month over the last 12-month period, but as the Chairman reported, with our kind of agility and technological advances, we were able to easily lead that goal and place everyone on the payroll and continue to reduce our existing backlogs. That is a testament to kind of the flexibility of the staff's hard work in the technological advances.

In terms of another challenge that we are going to embark on in the near future, as many of you may know, DAS is going to a new model where they are centralizing different HR functions, one of which would be retirement. So there's going to be the launch of a new dedicated retirement pod in DAS, and the go-live date for that is August 28th, and there will be a transition of the retirement duties from the line HR workers at the agencies to that centralized pod, with an effective date being November 1st, where those duties will be transitioned to that pod.

That is going to kind of change in, you know, significant ways, the way that we interact with agencies in this pod, and I think there are certainly efficiencies to be had; but, it's going to be kind of a learning process as we kind of recreate...
the wheel going forward, so to speak.

In that regard, we were able to replace a longstanding member of the Retirement Division who retired July 1st. We were able to bring in a new individual who is going to start on August 28th, and is going to serve as the Division's liaison with that new DAS pod. The individual that we've brought, her name is Patricia Meskers. She worked in the Retirement Division for approximately six years in the Retirement Counseling Unit and then left to the Department of Corrections and served in many different HR functions at the Department of Corrections. So, hopefully, with that, you know, combination of experience, she will help us as we work through some of the kinks in establishing this new set of processes for processing retirement paperwork going forward.

The last issue that I wanted to bring to the attention of the Commission would be I do believe that we need to amend the agenda to include an item for the acceptance of the independent auditor's report of the MERS GASB 68 report.

MR. LUCIANO: An amendment requires a two-thirds super-majority vote, so I will make that motion and have that be item 17.
MR. POULIN: what is your motion?

MR. LUCIANO: To amend the agenda to include the first GASB acceptance for item 17. We're modifying the public agenda, so that requires a two-thirds vote in the positive in order to amend.

MS. CIESLAK: For the record, Mr. Luciano has made the motion.

MR. POULIN: Second.

MS. CIESLAK: Second by Mr. Poulin.

MR. ADOMEIT: All in favor say aye.

Opposed nay. It's unanimous. The ayes have it.

Thank you.

MR. LUCIANO: Does that conclude the director's report?

MR. ADOMEIT: I'm not sure. John, do you have more to say?

MR. HERRINGTON: I have nothing more.

MR. ADOMEIT: Marti, do you have anything to say?

MS. CARLSON: Just a quick update. The administration is going to imminently announce that they've entered an agreement with a consulting firm to provide some assistance in heading us towards the 2022 massive retirement surge that is expected. I think it's a good thing because I think we need a
statewide approach to that. The Office of the Comptroller, in particular, will be participating in that at the table as they make decisions and recommendations.

I don't -- you know, clearly, I don't know that we have veto power, but there have been instances over the years that plans or actions have been taken that impact the Comptroller's office and the Core-CT system that are simply unimplementable, so I'm working closely with the COO to make sure that the Core-CT, frankly, is represented in that process.

So, there are significant benchmarks: High-level analysis by October; recommendations and deep analysis after interviews with all of the agencies by December; and a report in January of specific action items that will require legislative approval. Some of the -- some of the action items will include recommendations for IT optimizations, lean projects, cluster analysis, and physical plant efficiencies. My concern -- part of our concern is not only the functional that we participate in, but also the IT optimizations. We have indicated to DAS that, A, as the owner, so to speak, of Core-CT, and, B, as the constitutional office of the State
Comptroller, we have a particular interest in those
IT optimizations as related to our Core-CT systems.

Again, I think it's a good idea that
there's going to be a set of eyes on what we're
looking at. In the executive agency alone, I
believe -- well, at least I think the administration
has analyzed -- I don't know what our latest numbers
are there -- that there are about 9,000 executive
office -- executive agency eligible -- employees
eligible to retire. That's just in the executive
agency. It doesn't include Karen's higher ed at
UConn and it doesn't include the Board of Regents,
Judicial, or Legislative management.

So, there is a lot of planning that
has to be done. John has kept you up to speed on
what we're planning in trying to get ready for the
influx of that, but there is a huge ripple effect in
every way for that. So, I will keep you updated on
how that goes.

MR. ADOMEIT: Thank you, Marti.

MS. BUFFKIN: Can I ask Marti a question,
please?

MR. ADOMEIT: Go ahead, please.

MS. BUFFKIN: MS. Marti, is there a
breakdown in those numbers of people who are
eligible for full retirement than early retirement?

MS. CARLSON: I believe the number, Karen, I gave you was eligible for full retirement. It did not include those who could take the discount.

I also think, sort of in my gut sense, that we may see part of that population go sooner than the June 1, '22 date. It could -- I feel it definitely would be related to the pandemic at the office -- at the office buildings of the non-direct-care workers in the State employee workforce start coming back. If they -- you know, they may just choose to go two years earlier. I mean, if they've been eligible for a few years and it's going to mean a hundred dollars in their pension benefit, I think that we're going to start seeing an uptick in 2021 as we try to reopen.

I don't know what --

MR. ADOMEIT: Thank you, Marti.

MS. CARLSON: I don't know what the UConn number is, Karen. I'm assuming that that analysis is going to be part of this effort on the part of the administration to get a handle on it.

MS. BUFFKIN: Got it. Thank you.

MR. ADOMEIT: Okay. Any other questions of Marti? If not, we can move on to new matters.
Sal?

MR. LUCIANO: Motion to approve the minutes.

MR. QUIROS: Second.

MR. ADOMEIT: It's been moved and seconded. All in favor say aye. All opposed nay.

They ayes have it.

MR. LUCIANO: Motion to approve item 2, the chairman's expenses.

MR. QUIROS: Second.

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

MR. LUCIANO: Motion to approve item 3 with Claude abstaining.

MR. QUIROS: Second.

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

MR. POULIN: I abstain.

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

MR. LUCIANO: Motion to accept items 4 and 5.

MR. QUIROS: Second.

MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion? All in favor say aye. Opposed nay.
MR. LUCIANO: Motion to approve items 6 and 7.

MR. QUIROS: Second.

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

MR. LUCIANO: Motion to approve item 8, the disability.

MR. QUIROS: Second.

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

MR. LUCIANO: Motion to approve items 9 and 10.

MR. QUIROS: Second.

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

MR. LUCIANO: Motion to approve item 11.

MR. QUIROS: Second.

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

MR. LUCIANO: Motion to approve item 12.

MR. QUIROS: Second.

MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion?

MR. CAREY: I was wondering if someone from the Division could explain a little bit about item 12, because I was a little unclear, reading...
through the material, what exactly is before us.

MR. NEWMAN: Mr. Sinclair's request for --
is requesting that we -- is requesting that the Commission approve a closure of his application.

His application was denied originally for -- it was denied by the MEB, and he has -- you know, he has a year in which to request reconsideration. Well, Mr. Sinclair came forward and provided the latter, basically requesting that we stop -- that he doesn't want to -- he does not want to continue -- he doesn't want to request a review or reconsideration of the MEB decision. He was asking for a closure of his disability application.

MR. CAREY: I was a little -- I didn't understand why he was referencing some other kind of retirement regarding hazardous duty, and I didn't know what the relationship was between the two, and whether or not that needs to factor into our decision.

MR. NEWMAN: So, he's under the impression that that number of years that he would have -- that he was on the disability would qualify him for additional credit and allow him to receive a hazardous-duty benefit, you know, in culmination with what he -- the amount of service that he left

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with at the time when he separated. He's been -- I believe he's been verbally told. I don't think he has accepted the fact that it will not count as a hazardous duty. It does not count toward hazardous-duty credit. The fact of the matter is that individuals that come off of disability retirement, the period of time that they are on disability counts towards vesting in credit or service for either an early or normal retirement, not hazardous duty.

MR. CAREY: Thanks, Colin. So, if we accept his withdrawal and then he realizes that he's not going to be able to apply for a hazardous-duty retirement, are we going to be back where he's going to say, Oh, wait, I really would like to request reconsideration before the MEB?

MR. NEWMAN: You know, that is a possibility. It's not clear as to whether he just doesn't want to pursue this any further. I mean, rather than what he provided in that letter.

MR. CAREY: Colin, typically, do people send letters requesting withdrawal or are we better served just letting the year lapse and then he's forfeited that right? In other words, are we better served by keeping that year open for him so that in
the event he wants to do that ultimately, we're not
back in the same situation where we have to
reconsider his having withdrawn his request?

MR. NEWMAN: This is not a typical
request. It was very unusual for someone to come
forward and ask for their disability -- basically to
ask that the process with respect to review and
reconsideration be stopped.

You know, the Commission may be
better served just to allow the year to lapse and
then it would be considered that the application was
abandoned.

MR. CAREY: I guess I would suggest, then,
that we recommend to the Division that they
acknowledge Mr. Sinclair's letter, say, Thank you,
duly noted, we are going to keep the record open for
a year from -- you know, provide that end date --
and, you know, Let us know if you have any
questions.

MR. NEWMAN: Okay.

MR. CAREY: I know we've got a motion on
the table. I'm interested to know what some of the
other trustees think.

MR. HERRINGTON: I'm just interested in
what we do with the last sentence of his request.
So, this is a letter dated May 15th of 2020, and he's saying to please accept this as notice to begin the hazardous-duty retirement process once my disability application is closed with the Commission. I think that that's something that we would need to address in any response.

MR. LUCIANO: If somebody wants to withdraw their application, how are we going to say no?

MS. BUFFKIN: May I follow on that?

MR. LUCIANO: Please, somebody.

MR. ADOMEIT: Go ahead.

MS. BUFFKIN: Are we required to answer that? If somebody withdraws -- does it require our approval if somebody decides to withdraw their application? I don't think it does.

MR. LUCIANO: I agree.

MR. ROSE: Mr. Chairman, can I just interject?

MR. ADOMEIT: Mike, go ahead.

MR. ROSE: I was sort of waiting for Michael to finish.

I think once a person tells us that they're no longer interested in something, I think all we have -- all you have is (indistinguishable)
so that's just withdrawal and then look at what the
next step is. The Division, (indistinguishable.)

MR. LUCIANO: I think if he wants to
withdraw, we let him withdraw. I don't think we do
anything to look like we're blocking him on anything
else. If he does something else and tries to come
in another way, well, then we'll look at it by the
rules, right?

MR. ADOMEIT: Is there any further
discussion from the trustees?

Hearing nothing, it looks like we're
going to have to change the motion, if that's the
sense of the Commission, from approving the request
to simply acknowledging receipt of his request.

MS. BUFFKIN: My question also would be:

Does that need a vote? I mean, if it's just
alerting the Commission, you know, as a fun fact,
then, you know, then causing a vote.

MR. LUCIANO: To Marti's point, can we
just accept his letter and just go on to -- just
accept it and allow him to withdraw? If the
seconder would remove the second, I'll amend the
motion.

MR. ADOMEIT: Who was the seconder?

MS. CIESLAK: Mr. Quiros.
MR. QUIROS: Second.

MR. LUCIANO: With that removal, then, I'd like to amend -- well, I'd like to make a new motion that we accept his letter. We accept item 12, which would just allow him to withdraw.

MR. QUIROS: Second.

MR. ADOMEIT: Is there any further discussion? All in favor say aye. Opposed nay.

The ayes have it. Thank you very much.

MR. LUCIANO: Motion to approve items 13 and 14.

MR. QUIROS: Second.

MR. ADOMEIT: Any discussion?

MR. COFFEY: Mr. Chairman, I have just a technical correction on item 14. The sheet in our packet notes that Judge DiPentima is retiring as chief justice. She's actually retiring as the chief judge of the Appellate Court. Just a technical correction.

MR. ADOMEIT: Thank you, Bob. So we would need a motion, then, to make that correction.

MR. COFFEY: so moved.

MR. LUCIANO: Second.

MR. ADOMEIT: Any further discussion? All in favor say aye. Opposed nay. They ayes have it.
MR. LUCIANO: Motion to move items 13 and 14.

MR. QUIROS: Second.

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

MR. LUCIANO: Motion to move items -- motion to move item 15.

MR. QUIROS: Second.

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

MR. LUCIANO: For item 16, we have Suanne Curley, who wishes to address the Board. I'd like to have her come in so that we can hear her concerns.

MR. ADOMEIT: Thank you, Sal. Who is going to speak first, please? Because we need to have a record.

MS. CURLEY: Okay. I'm Sueanne Curley. I was a paraprofessional from 1998 to 2002. Then I got a statement that showed my retirement contributions, plus interest, right away in 2002. So, every year I was getting statements, and then when I went to go and get my money taken out in 2019, they denied me my interest. They just said they made a mistake.
I'm upset about it. I feel like I waited 17 years, and they just said it was a mistake.

MR. ADOMEIT: Very good. Thank you. Are there any further statements you wish to make?

MS. CURLEY: I did continue to get my statements right up to -- like they mailed them out to me right when I finished my fifth year of being a paraprofessional. In 2002, July, I got my first statement. I got 10 percent interest. Then I kept on getting the statements. I kept them. And there was a point I had to call in because they stopped mailing them to me. I kept on getting those. Then I had to go to my board of ed to get them. Then they just said, No, you don't get anything.

MR. ADOMEIT: All right. Is there anything further you need to tell us?

MR. LYNCH: Attorney Lynch. I represent Ms. Curley. Just to wrap things up, she basically was told there was --

MR. ADOMEIT: Could you identify yourself, who's speaking, please?

MR. LYNCH: Attorney Richard Lynch, her attorney.

MR. ADOMEIT: Thank you very much.
MR. LYNCH: How are you?

MR. ADOMEIT: Good, thank you.

MR. LYNCH: Thank you. To the Board, she relied on the statements and conversations she had with the Board to leave her money in there. She was told there was no reason to remove the money, that it was earning good interest, and she was receiving the regular statements confirming the interest earned. We believe she relied on these assurances, these statements. And the fact that she did work five years there, she should be paid her interest as promised and as confirmed by not only the statements, but also from the individuals there telling her that the interest was being earned and her money was safe. Thank you.

MR. ADOMEIT: Okay. I don't know whether we have your contact information or not, so could you -- do we have the attorney's contact information?

MR. LYNCH: I know you have my daughter's. I work with my daughter and you have her information, which is the same as my information.

MR. ADOMEIT: Thank you very much.

MS. CURLEY: I spoke to so many people there and no one gave me an answer. They just said,
Nope, you don't get interest. I have statements showing that my money made interest right up to 2016. I took my money out in 2019, so I really believe I should get interest right up to when I took the money out.

MR. ADOMEIT: Thank you very much.

MS. CURLEY: I just think they're not being fair to someone who worked for a school system. That's my stance. I really think it was wrong.

MR. ADOMEIT: Thank you very much. Sal?

MR. LUCIANO: You said that people told you that you would collect interest. Do you have names of those people?

MS. CURLEY: First of all, I got a statement right from the Connecticut Municipal -- the very first one, and it showed how much money I put in for my retirement and I got 10 percent from 2002. So then the statements were coming to me. When they stopped coming, I called the office. I talked to -- her name was Debra Purvis, and I had to request these statements. Then I got them and she said, It's okay to leave your money in there. You're making 5 percent interest right now. Where can you make it? I said thank you and I continued
doing that. I was getting statements.

MR. ADOMEIT: Excuse me. Let me interrupt you for a second. Can you spell the name of the person you just mentioned, please?

MS. CURLEY: Okay. Debra, P-U-R-V-I-S, and she was a secretary there.

MR. ADOMEIT: Thank you very much.

MS. CURLEY: Then I stopped getting those statements. They said I had to go to my board of ed. That's where they were going to go. So I tracked it down to my board of ed and I got a statement for 2016. I went directly down there.

They found my statements there.

And so then -- you know, at times they told me I was vested and wait until I'm 55. So, I had my money in there, was making interest.

Then I decided to take it out. When I took it out, Rudy Nelson said, You will get the money that you put into it, but you will not get any interest. And I'm like, What?

MR. ADOMEIT: Excuse me. Can I interrupt you for a second? You identify who Rudy is, please?

MS. CURLEY: Let's see. John Herrington would know, because I went from Rudy to Katie Balut, and they sent me to John Herrington. That's when I
talked to lawyers.

MR. ADOMEIT: Please, could you spell the names of the persons you just mentioned. Please.

MS. CURLEY: Mr. Rudy Nelson. R-U-D-Y. Nelson, N-E-L-S-O-N. And he told me it was a mistake.

MR. ADOMEIT: The name of the other individual you mentioned, please?

MS. CURLEY: I said, Who can I talk to higher than him, and he told me to talk to Katie Balut.

MR. ADOMEIT: Can you spell that name, please?

MS. CURLEY: Katie. The last name B-A-L-U-T, and she didn't give me any information.

MR. ADOMEIT: Okay.

MS. CURLEY: Then I wrote a letter to John Herrington.

MR. ADOMEIT: Okay. We know how to spell John Herrington.

MR. LUCIANO: Can I ask you why you took the money out in '19?

MS. CURLEY: Because I was of age. I felt -- I really felt like I was vested, and the secretary told me, you know, You can take it out
when you're 55, and I thought let me go and get it
now that I'm -- I was probably a little over 55 at
that time, and so that's when I took it out.

MR. LUCIANO: Thank you very much.

MR. ADOMEIT: Anything further from any of
the commissioners?

Thank you for coming. Thank you for
your statement. We appreciate it very much.

MS. CURLEY: I appreciate someone
listening because I felt I was not being heard at
all and no one's -- I have all the documentation to
show that I got interest, and I would like --

MR. ADOMEIT: Ma'am, you're being
repetitious right now.

MS. CURLEY: Okay.

MR. ADOMEIT: Okay. Thank you very much.

I appreciate it.

MS. CURLEY: Thank you.

MR. ADOMEIT: Bye now.

MS. CURLEY: Bye now.

MR. ADOMEIT: Sal?

MR. LUCIANO: Okay. Thank you very much.

I guess we will take this under deliberation. In
the meantime, we're going to move to item 17, which
is to accept the MERS GASB report.
MR. POULIN: We had the --

MR. ADOMEIT: Is there a second, please?

MR. QUIROS: Second.

MR. ADOMEIT: Thank you, Claude?

MR. POULIN: We had the meeting yesterday
of the actual subcommittee and after having reviewed
the MERS independent auditor's report for the year
ending June 30, 2019.

The purpose of the report is to make
sure that the schedule of allocations, of the
employer allocations is accurate, and the net
pension liability is also accurate. I had an
interview with the auditors before they finalized
their report two weeks ago, and we have a clean bill
of health, so that it's -- it was a clean audit.
There were no misstatements and no substantial
misstatement of facts. So, that's why we recommend
to accept the report.

MR. ADOMEIT: Okay. Thank you, Claude.

Is there a motion to accept the
report?

MR. LUCIANO: I'll make that motion.

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

Opposed nay. They ayes have it.
Executive session, Sal?

MR. LUCIANO: Motion to go into executive session regarding the VCP status update.

MR. QUIROS: Second.

MR. ADOMEIT: All in favor say aye.

Opposed nay. They ayes have it.

MR. HERRINGTON: Peter, you have to invite various people in.

MR. ADOMEIT: Cindy, do you have the roll call there?

MS. CIESLAK: If the trustees so desire, I recommend that you invite in Cindy Cieslak, Natalie Braswell, Alisha Sullivan, Bruce Barth, Colin Newman, John Herrington and Michael Rose.

MR. ADOMEIT: Okay. They're so invited. Does that require a motion, Cindy?

MS. CIESLAK: No. You're inviting us in.

MR. ADOMEIT: You've been invited in.

Okay. Thank you very much.

(The Commission was in executive session from 9:44 a.m. until 10:28 a.m.)

MR. LUCIANO: I guess I'd like to table item 16 until next month when we have the documentation and reports in front of us.

MR. QUIROS: Second.
MR. ADOMEIT: All in favor say. Opposed nay. They ayes have it. Thank you, Sal.

MR. LUCIANO: I don't believe there were any votes in executive session. Am I wrong? That need to be taken?

MR. ADOMEIT: I believe you're correct.

MR. LUCIANO: So I guess a motion to adjourn is in order.

MR. QUIROS: Second.

MR. ADOMEIT: All in favor say aye.

Opposed nay. They ayes have it.

(Concluded at 10:28 a.m.)
STATE OF CONNECTICUT:

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 August 20, 2020.

Dated at Bristol, Connecticut, this 14th of September, 2020.

_________________________

Karen Vibert, Notary Public

My commission expires: 08/31/2024.