STATE OF CONNECTICUT

STATE EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT COMMISSION

NOVEMBER 18, 2021 MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM CONVENED AT 9:00 a.m.

Board Members Present (via Zoom):

Peter Adomeit, Chairman Michael Carey, Trustee Martha Carlson, Deputy Comptroller, Ex Officio Member Carl Chisem, Trustee Robert D. Coffey, Trustee John Disette, Trustee John Flores, General Counsel Office of the Treasurer, Ex Officio Member Sal Luciano, Trustee Karen Nolen, Trustee Michael O'Brien, Trustee Claude Poulin, Trustee Angel Quiros, Trustee Mark Sciota, Municipal Liaison Rebecca Simonsen, Trustee Timothy Ryor, Trustee

Absent:

Michael Bailey, Trustee Sandra Fae Brown Brewton, Trustee Karen Buffkin, Trustee

Also present (via Zoom) were:

Bruce Barth, Tax Counsel to the Commission, Robinson & Cole Cindy Cieslak, General Counsel to the Commission, Rose Kallor John Herrington, Director, Retirement Services Division Yamuna Menon, General Counsel/Assistant State Comptroller, Office of the State Comptroller Colin Newman, Assistant Director, Retirement Services Division Michael Rose, General Counsel to the Commission, Rose Kallor

TRANSCRIPTIONIST: Karin A. Empson

(Proceedings commenced at 9:00 a.m.)

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CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Okay, so this is the November 18th monthly meeting of the State Employees Retirement Commission being held remotely.

Cindy, do you have the attendance, please? MS. CIESLAK: Yes. This is Cindy Cieslak. Present today, we have Chairman Peter Adomeit; Trustee Carl Chisem; Trustee Robert Coffey; General Counsel to the Office of the Treasurer and Ex Officio Member of the Retirement Commission, John Flores; Trustee Sal Luciano; Trustee Karen Nolen; Trustee Michael O'Brien; Actuarial Trustee Claude Poulin; Trustee Angel Quiros; Municipal Liaison Mark Sciota; Trustee Rebecca Simonson; Actuarial Trustee Timothy Ryor; Deputy Comptroller and Ex Officio Member Martha Carlson; Tax Counsel to the Commission from Robinson & Cole Bruce Barth' Retirement Services Division Director John Herrington; General Counsel and Assistant State Comptroller Ya Menon; Assistant Director Retirement Services Division Colin Newman; myself, Cindy Cieslak, General Counsel to the Commission from Rose Kallor; and John Disette, Trustee.

CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Okay, thank you very much.

The Chairman's Report, two things. First of all, we have traditionally held a Christmas meeting, like last year, using remote technology, and we hope to do it again this year as well after the regular Commission meeting of December. And it probably should take no more than an hour or two to talk about whatever you want to talk about.

Again, a shoutout to the Division for continuing to reduce backlogs and to efficiently operate. It's been quite impressive.

Okay. I'll turn it over to our Division Director.

MR. HERRINGTON: Thank you, Peter. So before you have the Division Director's report, and that reflects that we certainly are on schedule with our plans and preparation for 2022 to eliminate our backlogs and to release self service to the entire population that are eligible for 2022. We're certainly on track to achieve both of those goals by the end of the year.

And we're also at this point transitioning to a new way of operating where there are going to be more and more cases that we can process. Leveraging technology through group processing, we were able to

process about two dozen cases for the November cycle of using that technology. We hope that we will be able to utilize that technology to process 75 percent of the cases in November, somewhere between 50 and 75 percent depending on the makeup of those cases, and that's all in preparation for us to really leverage this technology in 2022 when the volumes pick up. We would anticipate that January, April, June and July will be our heaviest months, so we really want to test this technology out in advance of January to see where we are.

We already have notifications of over 300 retirements for January. So as you can see, historically, that is a very high number and we're still, you know, six weeks out. So we don't know what that number will ultimately be. But in terms of the disability backlog, that has been our focus. We are very close. I mean, we were nearly a month ahead of schedule where it was possible that we could have eliminated the entire backlog a month early. There still are about 27 cases for us to work through, but we're definitely proud of the efforts that we've made there.

In terms of our efforts to educate the population, since our last meeting, we've held a number

of webinars and we've circulated information to the populations that are eligible to retire by 2022. We still are, you know, exploring ways to provide additional information to the relevant populations.

One thing that I would say that we were somewhat surprised with is that there has been, you know, a pretty significant level of engagement with respect to the webinars, but there hasn't really been an increase in traffic to our call center with 2022-related questions. So I'm not certain what that means.

I mean, I guess, one way to look at it is that we've done such a great job in providing information that no one has any questions. I doubt that's actually the answer however. So we're going to continue to work with agencies and perhaps with some of the union representatives here to see, you know, what kind of weak spots we have in terms of educating the population and to come up with as many opportunities as possible to disseminate the correct information to the widest population.

But that's where we are for this month's report.

CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Thank you, John. Okay, any questions of John (inaudible)?

MR. FLORES: Yeah, John, I just want to

mention, congratulations on getting rid of that

disability backlog. That's a great job. My only

question is what are you going to do with all of your

extra time now?

MR. HERRINGTON: Right, yeah, I mean, so that - I'm very happy because, I mean, we certainly have deployed, you know, some of our strongest resources on that project, and, you know, because of where we are now, I'm able to redeploy them, you know, to some of our, you know, work for 2022.

So, yeah, there's definitely a lot of work to go around, but we really are kind of shifting our focus in earnest to 2022 this month.

MR. FLORES: Great job.

CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Thank you, John. Thank you, John.

Marty, do you have anything to report on, please? You're on mute. You're on mute. Can you unmute yourself, Marty?

MS. CARLSON: Yep, got it. So, you know, in addition to what John is saying, you know, clearly, there's not only an external impact for us of retirements coming in. We also have an internal impact of the number of OSC employees who are also retiring.

And those retirements aren't necessarily in - the ones

that we're worried about are not necessarily in the Retirement Division. Our entire staff has some interaction with retirement in some way or another, including, you know, payroll, Mark Casone's (phonetic) unit.

So we continue to develop out and build out our rapid response team. We're going to be crosstraining employees in other divisions that have baseline knowledge in Core CT to help through the surge. You know, as I think John has explained, we have this sort of bell curve coming that it makes no sense to staff up with more hires, permanent hires, because at the end of, you know, September, October, November, you know, things will calm down a little bit.

So our approach is we're working with OPM to build out a list of TWR's, not only including our folks who are going to retire, you know, January 1, April 1, July 1, but also of HR personnel — or benefits personnel that have knowledge of the retirement system statewide. I'm working directly with Melissa McCaw on that. As you can imagine, that will be a huge hit to our PS line, but I've been assured by OPM that they think they would have sufficient funds in the reserve for salary account to cover those TWR's because, you know, we are refilling retirees as quickly as we can to

our baseline and what we need, and then the TWR's would be additional in that higher bell curve to help.

so, you know, so that's where we are. I mean, I think we're pretty confident. Everybody's scared of the numbers that might come in, but as John said, while the numbers are increasing, so is our technology increasing to be able to deal with those numbers. So we continue to be concerned about the pod over at DAS. You know, we're just good at it, and we've got the technology, and there's some training needs over there, but we also continue to work with them side by side to try to increase their ability for volume, you know, in processing retirements.

The one thing I would say to labor on this side is that it would be really helpful if - I don't know, Sal. You know, it might be even a good idea for us to have a meeting with, you know, some group of labor leaders, even - what we would like to hear is even - particularly for corrections, if they think they're going to retire, it's really helpful to us to know that now, because John's staff can be cleaning up data, as we know. We have, I don't know, thousands of potentials. We don't think thousands are going to retire, so if we just had an email of, I intend to retire. I just received one this morning from someone

actually on John's staff, I think, that I intend to retire on July 1. It doesn't - it's not locked in. It doesn't - you know, you can always rescind that - they can always rescind that letter, but it would be really helpful if we had a better idea on what the volume is going to be.

John, I don't know if you agree with that. I hope you do.

MR. HERRINGTON: Right, yeah. In terms of the numbers, you know, we have approximately 12,000 that are eligible. If I knew today which 6,000 were eligible, you know, I would really have no concerns whatsoever in our ability to work those through, particularly if those are going in April and July. It's just a question of working through those.

We're attempting to anticipate some of the problems. The problems that we tend to deal with are, you know, related to that DOC population, and other hazardous duty populations where people may have worked for the State for 20 years, but due to leaves of absence without pay perhaps, some issues with worker's compensation, they won't satisfy on the retirement date the actual 20 years without some additional transactions completing a service purchase.

So that's a population that we've identified

there's work to be done on those. We're trying to get ahead of that and contact those individuals so that we can start those transactions now. But that's going to take some time and, you know, if there are people in that population that know that they are going to retire, we - you know, I'm extremely confident that we have identified at least, you know, 95 to 97 percent of this population, but for any number of reasons, if there's complexity in someone's record, they might not get pulled into our numbers. So, you know, it would be easier for us if we knew someone that wasn't showing up in our queries now that was intending to retire and we could identify and resolve those issues earlier.

The other thing that I would say across the board, something that, you know, is very important in that small fraction of cases that it matters is the 90-day protection clause. So it's in, you know, just about every State employee's interest to submit that retirement paperwork, you know, 90 days in advance of their anticipated retirement date so that they can lock in that survivor protection. So for all of those reasons, yeah, I would say it's best for us to get that advance notice.

To the extent, I mean, that there are individuals that I've heard that there's concerns

about, you know, whether and to what extent there may be a delay in the commencement of retirement benefits, and/or health insurance benefits, you know, as I sit here today, if someone is retiring in July and we get their package in April, there should be no problems whatsoever. If however, we get a retirement packet in, you know, June, you know, 25th, you know, it's difficult to say, you know, whether there would be, you know, a smooth transition into retirement.

One of the things that could, you know, kind of trip things up would be even if someone has provided ample notice, they may or may not have provided the required documentation with respect to birth certificates, marriage certificates, and that takes some time for us to work through. That's always a struggle for us to work through the last month - or the last week of any retirement, but if we're dealing with thousands of people, you know, that's another issue that we would like to kind of deal with on the front end. So just one more reason why I think it would be, you know, beneficial for all involved if people gave, you know, at least the 90 days' notice.

MR. LUCIANO: Okay, you oversold it, but yes, I'm happy to help.

MS. CARLSON: We never know, Sal. We never

know.

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Just to close out, I just want to put an 3 exclamation point on the fact that all of this technology, all of this backlog cleanup, and everything else that's going on has been largely done in a pandemic with - on remote. So it is an extraordinary 6 7 achievement on the part of the staff at the Comptroller's Office, because all normal business had to get done too. So I just want to put an exclamation point on that. Does that make you feel sorry for us? 10 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Thank you, Marty. Very, 12 very impressive.

Okay, moving on to new matters.

May I have two points of MR. LUCIANO: personal privilege?

> CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Sure, go ahead.

MR. LUCIANO: The first is I want to thank the Comptroller again. I may have done this last month, but it can't be overstated. There were 34 million dollars that would have gone by the wayside for people who got Covid before we even knew what Covid was, the bus drivers and grocery store clerks, et cetera. This money would be for if they have problems with long Covid. And when nobody was willing to take this program up, Kevin Lembo did so, knowing how short-

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staffed he was, but knowing how important it was to not
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     let those workers go by the wayside. We called them
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     heroes, and he stepped up and said, yeah, they are
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     heroes, and put this program in place. It'll be in
     place in a couple months. And so I want to thank him
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     for that.
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                And the second is that I will not be
     available next month. I will be seeing grandchildren
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     in England for all of the month. So I won't be
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     ignoring you next month. I'm doing something that I've
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     been wanting to do for a long time now.
                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Congratulations, Sal. And
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     thank you very much.
                MR. LUCIANO: I'd like to make a motion that
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     we accept the October minutes.
                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: I'll need a second.
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                MR. CHISEM: Chisem, second.
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                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Okay. Any discussion?
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     Hearing none, all in favor, say aye, or raise your
     hand.
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                UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.
                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay, or raise
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     your hand. The ayes have it.
                MR. LUCIANO: I'd like to make a motion to
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approve the Chair's per diem.

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CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
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     none, all in favor, say aye, or raise your hand.
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                UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.
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                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay, or raise
     your hand. The ayes have it.
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               MS. CIESLAK: This is Cindy. Mr. Chisem, did
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     you second that motion?
                MR. CHISEM: Yes.
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                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Yes.
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               MS. CIESLAK: Thank you.
                MR. LUCIANO: I'd like to make a motion that
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     we approve the union trustee expenses, with Claude
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     abstaining.
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               MR. CHISEM: Chisem, second.
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                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
     none, all in favor, say aye, or raise your hand.
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                UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.
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                MR. POULIN: Abstain.
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                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay, or raise
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     your hand. The ayes have it.
                MR. LUCIANO: I'd like to make a motion that
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     we approve the State Employers Actuary with Tim
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     abstaining, their expenses.
                MR. CHISEM: Chisem, second.
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                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
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     none, all in favor, say aye.
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                UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.
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                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay. The ayes
     have it.
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                MR. LUCIANO: I'd like to make a motion that
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     we accept the invoices from our counsels, Items 5 and
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                MR. CHISEM: Chisem, second.
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                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
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     none, all in favor, say aye.
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                UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.
                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay. The ayes
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     have it.
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                MR. LUCIANO: I'd like to make a motion that
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     we approve Items 7 and 8, the approval of Connecticut
     State Employees Retirement System service retirements
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     and the voluntary pending retirements.
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                MR. CHISEM: Chisem, second.
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                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
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     none, all in favor, say aye, or raise your hand.
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                UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.
                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay, or raise
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     your hand. The ayes have it.
                MR. LUCIANO: I'd like to make a motion that
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     we approve Item 9, the disability retirements for State
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     Employees.
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                MR. CHISEM: Chisem, second.
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                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
     none, all in favor, say aye, or raise your hand.
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                UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.
                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay, or raise
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     your hand. The ayes have it.
                MR. LUCIANO: I'd like to make a motion that
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     we approve Item 10, the municipal retirements.
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                MR. CHISEM: Chisem, second.
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                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
     none, all in favor, say aye, or raise your hand.
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                UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.
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                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay, or raise
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     your hand. The ayes have it.
                MR. LUCIANO: I'd like to make a motion that
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     we approve the municipality disability retirements.
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                MR. CHISEM: Chisem, second.
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                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
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     none, all in favor, say aye, or raise your hand.
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                UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.
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                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay, or raise
     your hand. The ayes have it.
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                MR. LUCIANO: I'd like to make a motion that
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     we approve the municipal disability denials.
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               MR. CHISEM:
                             Chisem, second.
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                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
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     none, all in favor, say aye, or raise your hand.
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                UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.
                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay, or raise
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     your hand. The ayes have it.
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               MR. LUCIANO: I'd like to make a motion that
     we accept the MEB recommendations, Items 13 and 14.
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               MR. CHISEM: Chisem, second.
                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
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     none, all in favor, say aye, or raise your hand.
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                UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.
                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay, or raise
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     your hand. The ayes have it.
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               MR. LUCIANO: I'd like to make a motion that
     we get approval of the Retirement System Division
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     request to discontinue the disability applications due
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     to the one-year deadline associated with the right to
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     ask for a reconsideration of the Medical Examining
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     Board denial, Item 15.
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               MR. CHISEM: Chisem, second.
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                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
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     none, all in favor, say aye, or raise your hand.
                UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.
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                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay, or raise
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1 your hand. The ayes have it. 2 MR. LUCIANO: I'd like to make a motion that we approve Items 16 and 17 related to the Connecticut 3 4 Probate Judges and Family Support Magistrates. MR. CHISEM: Chisem, second. 5 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing 6 none, all in favor, say aye, or raise your hand. 7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye. 8 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay, or raise 9 your hand. The ayes have it. 10 MR. LUCIANO: I'd like to make a motion that 11 12 we request approval of the Probate Judges and Employees Retirement Fund personnel expenses for the pay period 13 September 10^{th} , 2021 through October 7^{th} , 2021, Item 18. 14 15 MR. CHISEM: Chisem, second. CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Excuse 16 me. All in favor, say aye, or raise your hand. 17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye. 18 19 CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay, or raise 20 your hand. The ayes have it. 21 MR. LUCIANO: At this point, I'd like to make 22 a motion that we go into executive session with all of 23 the trustees plus the usual suspects that will be able to provide us information. 24

MR. CHISEM: Chisem, second.

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                MS. CIESLAK: And for purposes of that
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     motion, I will - well, before that, I will note that
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     Michael Carey, Trustee, has joined us, and Michael
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     Rose, General Counsel from Rose Kallor, has also joined
     us. And for the motion, in addition to the trustees,
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     those who are invited in will include Bruce Barth,
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     Cindy Cieslak, John Herrington, Ya Menon, Colin Newman,
     and Michael Rose.
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                MR. LUCIANO: Thank you for that. And this
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     is regarding the judges' pension matters written legal
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     opinion.
                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Okay, thank you. Any
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     discussion? All in favor, say aye, or raise your hand.
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                UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.
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                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay, or raise
     your hand. The ayes have it.
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                (The Commission was in executive session from
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     9:24 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.)
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                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Now, my notes reflect we
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     need three motions, one on Mr. Trapanese.
                MR. COFFEY: Mr. Chairman, this is Bob.
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     move that the Commission express its sincere
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     appreciation and respect for Mr. Trapanese's service to
     our country, but that we deny his request because, and
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only because, there is no new or additional information

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     that has been presented to warrant reconsideration.
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                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Thank you, Bob. Is there
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     a second?
               MR. LUCIANO: Sal Luciano.
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                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Was that Sal?
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               MR. LUCIANO: Yeah.
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                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Yeah. All in favor, say
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     aye, or raise - any discussion, first of all. I'm
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     sorry. Hearing none, all in favor, say aye, or raise
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     your hand.
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                UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.
                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay, or raise
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     your hand. The ayes have it.
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               MR. LUCIANO: We need a motion on Item 4 now.
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                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Mr. Cicarella.
               MR. COFFEY: Mr. Chairman, this is Bob. I
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     move that the Commission remand Mr. Cicarella's matter
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     to the MEB for further review.
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               MR. LUCIANO: Sal Luciano, second.
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                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
     none, all in favor, say aye, or raise your hand.
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                UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.
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                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay, or raise
     your hand. The ayes have it.
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                Butler, Mr. Butler, we need a motion, please.
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MR. LUCIANO: Item 5.
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                MR. COFFEY: Mr. Chairman, this is Bob. I
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     would move that the Commission schedule a hearing to
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     determine whether the tolling of the time limit in his
     matter is appropriate, just that a hearing be held to
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     determine the appropriateness of tolling the time.
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                MR. LUCIANO: Sal Luciano, second.
                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Any discussion? Hearing
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     none, all in favor, say aye, or raise your hand.
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                UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.
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                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay, or raise
     your hand. The ayes have it.
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                My notes show that's the only three motions
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     we need.
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                MR. LUCIANO: I'd like to say happy
     Thanksgiving, everybody. And I move to adjourn.
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                MR. COFFEY: Bob, second.
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                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Okay. Bob - who was the
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     second, please?
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                MR. CHISEM: Chisem, Carl.
                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Okay, Carl. There you go.
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     All in favor, say aye, or raise your hand.
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                UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Aye.
                CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Opposed, nay, or raise
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     your hand. The ayes have it.
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                  MR. LUCIANO: Be safe, everyone.
                  CHAIRMAN ADOMEIT: Have a nice Thanksgiving.
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                  (Adjourned at 10:02 a.m.)
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5	I, Karin A. Empson, do hereby
6	certify that the preceding pages are an accurate
7	transcription of the Connecticut State Employees
8	Retirement Commission meeting held electronically via
9	Zoom, conducted at 9:00 a.m. on November 18, 2021.
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18	Karin A. Empson
19	Karin A. Empson
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21	12/20/2021
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