



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
WORKERS' COMPENSATION ADVISORY BOARD

21 Oak Street, Hartford, CT 06106

Phone: (860) 493-1500

Fax: (860) 247-1361

Minutes

A meeting of the Workers' Compensation Commission Advisory Board was held on June 21, 2021 at 21 Oak Street, Hartford. The meeting convened at 10:10 a.m. with the following Board Members present: Chairman Michael Riley, presiding; Rocco Calo, Gregory Nokes, Michael Dimenstein and Karen Welch. The following members were excused: David Lucas and Ross Hollander

Present from the Workers' Compensation Commission was Chairman Stephen Morelli and Richard Eighme.

1. Opening Remarks

Chairman Riley opened the meeting and thanked everyone for being in attendance.

2. Chairman's Update

Chairman Morelli explained that WCC were now open to the public as of June 2, 2021 and hearings would return to in-person on July 1, 2021.

Chairman Morelli provided an update on the computer system project and new Middletown lease which has been approved. He also provided details on agency personnel matters and filling positions amongst the increase in recent and upcoming retirements.

Chairman Morelli discussed the budget and other legislation. He explained that:

The budget implementer bill, [SB 1202](#), effective July 1, 2021:

- Establishes under the workers' compensation act, **the Essential Workers COVID-19 Assistance Program** to provide benefits for lost wages, out-of-pocket medical expenses, and burial expenses to qualifying essential employees who could not work due to contracting COVID-19. This program is administered by the Comptroller's office.
- Expands **31-290a** benefits to also prohibit employers from (1) disciplining employees for filing a claim or exercising their rights and (2) deliberately misinforming or dissuading them from filing a claim for workers' compensation benefits or, starting October 1, 2021, a claim for benefits from the Connecticut Essential Workers COVID-19 Assistance Program.
- Increases the worker's compensation benefit for **burial expenses** from \$4,000 to \$12,000, with future annual adjustments for inflation.

[SB 907](#), the Commission's bill, effective October 1, 2021, makes various minor and technical changes including that commissioners will now be retitled as Administrative Law Judges and the advisory board is now required to meet less frequently.

[SB 660](#), effective upon passage, expands PTSD (now referred to as PTSI) benefits for post-traumatic stress injuries (PTSI) to cover (1) emergency medical services (EMS) personnel; (2) all Department of Correction (DOC) employees; (3) telecommunicators (i.e., 9-1-1 emergency dispatchers); and (4) under certain circumstances related to COVID-19, health care providers. These benefits were already made available to police officers, parole officers and firefighters under Public Act 19-17.

3. Other Business

Chairman Morelli stated that the only commissioner up for renomination is Brenda Jannotta and that a public hearing would need to be scheduled later this fall.

Chairman Riley discussed board membership and filling vacant positions. He also discussed the possibility of having the workers' compensation fraud unit present at a future meeting.

4. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 A.M.