



## **CT TEACHERS' RETIREMENT BOARD**

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“An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer”

[www.ct.gov/trb](http://www.ct.gov/trb)

## **MINUTES**

**September 9, 2020 at 3:00 pm**

The meeting of the Teachers' Retirement Board was called to order at 3:03p.m. by Chairperson, Clare Barnett on Wednesday, September 9, 2020.

### **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Clare Barnett, Chair, Retired Teacher Member  
William Myers, Vice-Chair, Active Teacher Member  
Steven Muench, Active Teacher Member  
William Murray, Retired Teacher Member  
Charles Higgins, Public Member  
Jonathan Johnson, Public Member  
Keith Norton, State Department of Education  
Lisa Mosey, Active Teacher Member  
Stephen McKeever, Active Teacher Member, AFT  
Laurie Martin, Office of the State Treasurer  
Gregory Messner, Office of Policy and Management  
Kathleen Holt, Public Member

### **BOARD MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE:**

### **STAFF PRESENT:**

Helen Sullivan, Administrator  
Charlene Hill, Assistant to the Administrator  
Loc Pho, Fiscal Administrative Manager  
Javiel Resto, IT  
Darlene Perez, TWR  
Amanda Harley, RBO

### **OTHERS PRESENT:**

Karen Nolen, OPM  
Daniel Rhodes, Segal Consulting  
Terry DeMattie, Segal Consulting  
Steve Manning, Segal Consulting  
James Stirling, Stirling Benefits  
Robyn Kaplan-Cho, CEA  
Thomas Bruenn, Retired Teacher  
Paula Schwartz, Retired Teacher

Susan Schmidek, Retired Teacher  
Noreen Scafuri, Retired Teacher  
Edward Messina, President, ARTC  
Walt Ciplinski, Retired Teacher  
Kathleen Hennessey, Retired Teacher  
Bonnie Barnes, Retired Teacher  
Carol Sturges, Retired Teacher  
Margaret Rick, HFT-R  
Daniel Diodato, Retired Teacher  
Jack Rua, Active Teacher  
Rita McDougald-Campbell, Retired Teacher  
Mary Hendrickson, Retired Teacher  
Kenneth Poppe, Retired Teacher  
Fonda Green, Retired Teacher  
Jane Wilson, Retired Teacher  
Paula Bacolini, ARTC, RTHA  
Nancy Valla, Retired Teacher

**Call to Order: Chairperson, Clare Barnett**

**1. Consideration and Approval of the February 19, 2020 and June 24, 2020 Board Meeting Minutes.**

A motion was moved by Bill Murray and seconded by Bill Myers to approve the meeting minutes for February 19, 2020 and June 24, 2020 as amended. All members voted in favor, with one abstention, Charles Higgins due to absence and the motion was passed.

**2. Consideration and Approval of premium changes effective January 1, 2021 for the health benefit programs offered by the TRB presented by Terry DeMattie, Segal Consulting.**

Terry provided information regarding the health insurance premiums effective January 1, 2021. There will be no changes to the plans or benefits. Member monthly premiums are being reduced from \$127.00 to \$125.00 for the Medicare Advantage and from \$239.00 to \$228.00 for the Medicare Supplement. These premiums include vision, hearing and dental.

A motion was moved by Charles Higgins and seconded by Lisa Mosey to approve the health insurance premiums effective January 1, 2021. All members voted in favor and the motion was passed.

**3. Agency Report presented by Helen Sullivan, Administrator.**

**Health Insurance:**

The Express Scripts pharmacy contract is being extended for one year and the Cigna dental contract is being extended for three years. Open enrollment is on schedule. We will be holding 16 open enrollment meetings. Due to Covid-19, the meetings will be virtual. We reached out to our larger retiree groups to try to avoid conflicts in

scheduling as much as possible. We should have the open enrollment materials out to the carriers by the end of September. No additional changes to the materials are being done at this point as the materials were finalized in August. Regarding the guaranteed deliverables for our carriers, we meet with our carriers weekly and they are all well within their guarantees for the agency and their contracts.

### **Retirement Statistics:**

We were down slightly in our number of July retirees however we are up slightly for our number of retirees for September so far. Usually in September we have a lull after July but this year we are seeing an uptick for the month of September.

### **Staffing Update:**

Three people retired in our benefits division, one in April and two in September. Two staff members have also taken promotional opportunities, one in our benefits division and one in our fiscal division. We are making some adjustments due to the reduction in staff, but we have started the recruitment process and expect to have these positions filled shortly.

## **4. Acceptance of the July 2020 COLA increase.**

Chairperson Barnett provided information pertaining to the July COLA increase which is 3% for Pre September 1992 members, 1.5% for Post 1992 members who joined the system prior to July 1, 2007, and 1% for Post 1992 member who joined the system on or after July 1, 2007.

A motion was moved by Bill Myers and seconded by Steve McKeever to approve the July 2020 COLA increase. All members voted in favor and the motion was passed.

## **5. Consideration and Approval of the Administrator's actions regarding:**

- a. Granting of service retirement benefits for the months of June, July, and August 2020.
- b. Survivor benefits for the months of June, July, and August 2020.
- c. Reports & recommendations of the Medical Review Committee regarding applications for Disability Payments as presented to the Medical Review Committee at the June, July, and August 2020 meetings.

A motion was moved by Lisa Mosey and seconded by Bill Murray to approve the granting of service retirement, survivor benefits and applications for a disability allowance for the months of June, July, and August 2020. All members voted in favor and the motion was passed.

## **MATTERS FOR THE BOARD INFORMATION:**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Walt Ciplinski commented on whether board members could be identified at the beginning of the meetings and when voting and if observers could be listed by name in the minutes.

Paula Schwartz asked for clarification on the health insurance statement earlier in the meeting regarding contract extensions.

Paula Bacolini requested to be added to the minutes as an observer and confirmation of no plan changes for Express Scripts and Cigna dental.

Patricia Marcinczyk thanked the board for allowing the public to listen to the meetings. A comment was also made regarding a letter some members received advising them of an additional charge by hospitals for a certain type of visit/service.

Edward Messina, Carol Fisher, Daniel Diodado, Rita McDougald-Campbell, Mary Scafuri and Bonnie Barnes requested to be listed in the minutes as observers.

James Stirling thanked the board for serving and advised that claims continue to trickle in. Most of the claims being received at this time are small adjustments to claims that were previously adjudicated. Claims will continue to be processed through 12/31/2020 at the completion of the contract. It has been a delight working for the TRB for the past 25 years.

Nancy Valla commented that there are no disgruntled retirees in teaching these days, everyone is happy.

**6. Consideration and Approval of a petition for a Declaratory Hearing to be heard by the Board.**

The board entertained a motion which was moved by Bill Myers and seconded by Steve McKeever to approve the petition requesting a declaratory hearing before the board. All members voted in favor and the motion was passed.

At 4:12pm the declaratory hearing began in which the claimant is challenging the validity of the statutes in Chapter 167a\* Teachers' Retirement System 183aa Disability Allowance, 183g Benefit Rates Commencing and ending date and Regulation of Connecticut State Agencies Sec. 10-183I-23 Disability Benefits.

At 4:52pm the board entertained a motion to go into Executive Session. All members voted in favor and the motion was passed.

At 5:23pm the board came out of Executive Session.

The board entertained a motion regarding the declaratory hearing. Based on the board's findings of fact and conclusions of law the motion was moved by Bill Myers and seconded by Steve McKeever to uphold the decision of the appeals committee to deny the appeal. All members voted in favor with one opposed (Steven Muench) and one abstention (Laurie Martin, due to technical difficulties). With more than the requisite number of votes, the motion was passed.

Helen Sullivan welcomed new board member Kathleen Holt, newly appointed to the board by the Governor.

Chairperson Barnett advised the next board meeting scheduled for October 7, 2020 may be rescheduled to later in the month.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

With no other comments or announcements, a motion was moved by Bill Murray and seconded by Bill Myers to adjourn the meeting. All members voted in favor and the motion was passed.

The meeting adjourned at 5:29 p.m.