

MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF
THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
STATE EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF ILLINOIS
January 14, 2016

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the State Employees' Retirement System of Illinois was held on Thursday, January 14, 2016 at 8:30 a.m. in the System's Springfield office at 2101 S. Veterans Parkway.

Committee Members:

Loren Iglarsh, Chairperson
David Morris, Vice Chairperson
Timothy Blair, Executive Secretary

Others Present:

Stephen Bochenek, Attorney
Jeff Houch, Assistant Executive Secretary
Kathy Yemm, Claims Manager
Don Williams, Supervisor, Disability Section
Kerry Walker, Disability Section
Cory Mitchell, Pension and Death Section
Marilyn Rausch (Claimant)
Larry Rausch (Claimant's spouse)
Jim Vainikos (Claimant's attorney)
Jennifer Staley, Recording Secretary

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the December 10, 2015 meeting of the Executive Committee were presented by Chairman Iglarsh for approval. Copies of the minutes were previously mailed to Committee members for review. There being no additions or corrections, on motion by Executive Secretary Blair and seconded by Vice Chairperson Morris, and by unanimous vote, the minutes were approved as submitted.

Routine Claims & Denial Report

The Routine Claims and Denials Report for the month of December, 2015 was presented. Following review and discussion, the Routine Claims and Denials Report for the period of December, 2015, as prepared by staff, was reviewed and received by the Executive Committee.

Old Business

Brenda Sawyer – Temporary Disability - Recommendation

Ms. Sawyer is employed by the Secretary of State as an Administrative Assistant III Case Worker. Ms. Sawyer last worked June 10, 2014 and began a medical leave of absence June 16, 2014. She was expected to be off work for 8 weeks but at this time she is still off work.

Ms. Sawyer filed a workers' compensation claim which was denied on June 20, 2014. She has applied for temporary disability benefits through SERS.

Ms. Sawyer's file was reviewed by Medical Consultant #70. The report received by Medical Consultant #70 advised that the illness is not severe, and she is not considered to be disabled from performing the duties of her job.

Ms. Sawyer was seen by Louis B. Cady, M.D. It is his opinion she has continuously, since June 14, 2014, been unable to perform her position or, in fact, be engaged in any active employment. Given the circumstances, she is not able to perform the duties assigned to her at this time.

Medical Consultant #70 reviewed Dr. Cady's report and opined Ms. Sawyer has been diagnosed with an unusual illness, which may have work implications, but the other symptoms do not prevent the performance of work.

Ms. Sawyer was evaluated on March 31, 2015 by M.A. Park, M.D., at Mayo Clinic. Medical Consultant #70 reviewed Dr. Park's medical records and opined the latest medical data does not support the presence of a disability.

Ms. Brenda Sawyer was present at the May 14, 2015 meeting and gave an in-depth accounting of her illness. She stated she is still undergoing medical testing and depending on the outcome, will see if her condition could be treated or controlled.

After hearing the basis of the appeal at the May 14th Executive Committee, Attorney Reid-Peterson advised she will pass on the information to Attorney Bochenek.

Ms. Sawyer's agency was contacted regarding her working conditions to see if anything could be altered to accommodate her situation in the work environment. At the present time, nothing would be done.

After some discussion by the Executive Committee at its June, 2015 meeting, the case was referred to Attorney Bochenek for a recommendation to present at the July Executive Committee meeting.

At the July, 2015 Executive Committee meeting the Committee determined that since a medical basis, as well as a psychiatric basis, was being asserted as the reason for the disability, the Committee needed to refer this matter to one of the medical consultants for the System for their review and opinion.

At the August and September, 2015 Executive Committee meetings it was noted that no additional medical information had been submitted from the medical consultant. The case was deferred until such information is received.

At the October, 2015 meeting it was noted that there was new medical information on Ms. Sawyer. SERS provided the system attorney with the new medical information for review and referred the matter to the system's attorney for recommendation at the November, 2015 meeting.

The morning of the November Executive Committee meeting the disability supervisor received new information on Ms. Sawyer. The case will be deferred until all new information can be reviewed.

In December, 2015, the case was referred to Steve Bochenek, the system's attorney, for a recommendation.

At the January, 2016 meeting, Attorney Bochenek presented a Recommendation No. 2016-01 for the Committee to deny the appeal of Brenda Sawyer as to request that she is disabled and eligible to receive a disability benefit.

After some discussion, Chairman Iglarsh moved approval of Recommendation No. 2016-01, seconded by Executive Secretary Blair. All were in favor.

New Business

Cynthia Hogueisson – Half Time Ceasing Date and Overpayment

The system incorrectly calculated Ms. Hogueisson's half time ceasing date as January 9, 2016. We receive the half time ceasing tickler 60 days prior to the half time ceasing. Bob checks these dates and found the system generated an incorrect ceasing date. The correct half time ceasing date was April 30, 2015.

Ms. Hogueisson's benefits were stopped November 1, 2015. This has created an overpayment of \$15,206.25.

During the course of Ms. Hogueisson's disability she was sent an income verification letter that gave a ceasing date of October 31, 2016.

Ms. Hogueisson has been sent a letter explaining how half time ceasing dates are calculated.

Ms. Hogueisson called and was unable to attend her personal hearing. She will be rescheduled for February.

Marilyn Rausch – Termination of Temporary Benefits

Marilyn Rausch has been on our temporary disability benefits since July, 2009. The State Employees' Retirement System requested an independent medical evaluation (IME) with Terry Killian, M.D.

Dr. Killian's report advised there is little objective evidence to support Ms. Rausch's claim.

Ms. Rausch's temporary benefits were ceased as of November 30, 2015. Ms. Rausch, along with her attorney Jim Vainikos, were present for a personal hearing.

After presenting her case, it was determined SERS would need current physical medical information to review for eligibility of reinstating the disability benefit. Attorney Vainikos will provide SERS with more documentation. The case is deferred pending receipt of said information.

Betty Garrison – Denial of Nonoccupational Disability Benefits

Betty Garrison went on a medical leave of absence July 23, 2015. The medical reports were sent to Medical Consultant #63. After reviewing the medical evidence in the file he opined the claimant does not have a medical that prevents her from performing her job with the State of Illinois.

Ms. Garrison was off work from July 23, 2015 through October 15, 2015. Her doctor, Dr. Parks, kept Ms. Garrison off work for the same time period. Ms. Garrison's test was normal.

Betty Garrison is asking that the committee reconsider the staff denial regarding her nonoccupational disability.

After some discussion, a motion was made by Executive Secretary Blair to deny Betty Garrison's request for reconsideration of her denial of benefits, seconded by Chairman Iglarsh. All were in favor.

Kim Skibinski – Reinstatement of Account

This account became eligible for a write-off in June, 2006. Contributions in the amount of \$8,267.83 were written off on June 23, 2006. Ms. Skibinski has provided identifying information and requested a refund.

After some discussion, Chairman Iglarsh motioned to approve the reinstatement of account, seconded by Vice Chairperson Morris. All were in favor.

Paula Camp-Williams – Lower Repayment for Retro SSA Award

Paula Camp-Williams is currently receiving nonoccupational disability benefits from SERS in the monthly gross amount of \$957.00 per month.

Ms. Camp-Williams incurred an overpayment of her disability benefits in the amount of \$20,085.00 due to the approval of retroactive Social Security disability benefits. Ms. Camp-Williams received those benefits as a result of the assistance from Midwest Disability on behalf of SERS.

Ms. Camp-Williams is stating that she is unable to afford the required repayment plan of \$335.00 per month for 60 months (which is the standard maximum) and is requesting a lower repayment schedule.

A repayment contract would be required to cover the monthly installment payment amount and would include terms to cover payroll deductions should she return to work, applying a specific amount from current and future benefits, and deducting for the balance from any lump sum that would be payable to her or her estate or beneficiaries.

Based on Ms. Camp-Williams' retirement account, she has contributions on deposit totaling \$33,336.44 which is greater than the current balance owed.

Vouchering is seeking the guidance of the committee in regard to an acceptable monthly repayment plan for our member, both while on disability and in the event that she applies for pension.

After some discussion, Chairman Iglarsh made a motion to approve Paula Camp-Williams' request for a lower repayment amount and recommended \$200.00 per month, seconded by Executive Secretary Blair. All were in favor. A contract will be drafted to include terms should she return to work or if any lump sum payment should be paid out in the future.

There being no further business to be brought before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

The next meeting of the Executive Committee is scheduled for February 11, 2016, in the Springfield office, with video conferencing in Chicago.

Loren Iglarsh, Chairman

David Morris, Vice Chairperson

Timothy Blair, Executive Secretary