

MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF
THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
STATE EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF ILLINOIS

October 10, 2019

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the State Employees' Retirement System of Illinois was held on Thursday, October 10, 2019 at 8:45 a.m. in the System's Springfield office at 2101 S. Veterans Parkway.

Committee Members:

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

Others Present:

Jeff Houch, Assistant Executive Secretary
Kathy Yemm, Manager, Claims Division (Retired)
Eric Glaub, Manager, Claims Division
Karen Brown, Supervisor, Disability Section
Cory Mitchell, Acting Supervisor, Pension and Death Section
Steve Bochenek, System Attorney
Jessica Blood, Recording Secretary
Martin Van Kampen, Claimant
Paul Birvid, Claimant's Associate
Adam Due, Claimant
Michelle Zake, Claimant

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the September 12, 2019 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 Vice-Chairperson Morris, seconded by Executive Secretary Blair and by unanimous vote, the minutes were approved as submitted.

Routine Claims Report

The Routine Claims Report for the month of September 2019 was presented. Following review and discussion, the Routine Claims Report for the period of September 2019, as prepared by staff, was received by the Executive Committee.

Old Business

Cynthia Koester – Re-Appeal for Unreduced Survivor Benefits – Mbr: Donald Koester

At their August 8, 2019 meeting, the Executive Committee denied the appeal of Cynthia Koester, to purchase service credit with SERS to qualify for unreduced survivor's benefits payable from Cook County Pension Fund CCPF.

The committee deferred the case to determine if establishing creditable service with SERS is necessary to qualify a spouse for unreduced survivor's benefits payable from CCPF. It was determined that establishing SERS service credit is necessary to qualify Ms. Koester for unreduced survivor's benefits.

Ms. Koester requested a re-appeal of her case, which was approved by the Committee at their September meeting.

After hearing Ms. Koester present her case via teleconference, the Committee decided to refer the matter to Attorney Bochenek for a recommendation.

Kirk Schoenbein – Appeal to Retire Reciprocally

Kirk Schoenbein is a member of the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF), SERS and JRS, but is not independently vested with JRS.

Mr. Schoenbein retired reciprocally with IMRF effective March 1, 2017 and is deferred with SERS until March 1, 2022 when he reaches age 60. He elected not to retire reciprocally with JRS.

Mr. Schoenbein is appealing that SERS undo his reciprocal pension with IMRF and instead retire reciprocally with JRS.

At their September meeting, the committee deferred a decision on the case pending further research. The case was again deferred pending further research.

Kraig Kotter – Appeal Overpayment

Kraig Kotter received a disability benefit from SERS through June 30, 2019.

During an audit of disability files, it was discovered that Mr. Kotter's time with IMRF was considered to extend his disability benefit through 2022 due to an administrative error. Therefore, an overpayment was created.

Mr. Kotter is requesting that SERS either forgive the overpayment or establish a repayment plan that will not create a hardship for his family.

At their September meeting, the Committee decided to defer Mr. Kotter's case pending further review. After further review, the Committee decided to refer the case to

Attorney Bochenek for a recommendation.

Donna Kirkwood – Appeal Repayment Amount

Donna Kirkwood received a non-occupational disability benefit from SERS. During an audit it was discovered that the half-time ceasing date for her benefit had been miscalculated. It was also determined that Ms. Kirkwood's benefit had not been offset due to a Social Security award for two time periods, causing an overpayment.

Ms. Kirkwood is requesting a reduced payment plan of \$150.00 per month.

After discussing the facts of the case, a motion was made by Executive Secretary Blair to deny Ms. Kirkwood's request and instead offer a reduced payment plan of \$200.00 per month. The motion was seconded by Chairman Iglarsh and all were in favor.

New Business

Martin Van Kampen – Appeal SSA Overpayment – Personal Hearing (Chicago)

Martin Van Kampen has been receiving a non-occupational disability benefit from SERS effective February 2015 through present. He was approved for a retroactive Social Security disability benefit effective July 2017, which created an overpayment. Mr. Van Kampen retired effective May 2019.

Per SERS Board policy, the Overpayment Section is to deduct half the gross of any benefit being paid toward an overpayment owed to SERS. Mr. Van Kampen appealed the overpayment in a personal hearing.

After some discussion, the Committee decided to refer the case to Attorney Bochenek for a recommendation.

Adam Due – Appeal Non-Occupational Disability Denial – Personal Hearing (Springfield)

Adam Due has 9 months of service with the State of Illinois and 26 years of service with SURS. He retired reciprocally with SURS and IMRF in 2016.

Mr. Due was denied a non-occupational disability benefit due to not having 18 months of creditable service with SERS. It was also determined that his 26 years of service credit with SURS had already been used due to his retirement in 2016, making him ineligible to receive a SERS disability benefit. Mr. Due appealed the denial of his disability application in a personal hearing.

After reviewing the facts of the case, the Committee decided to refer the matter to Attorney Bochenek for a recommendation.

Candyce Sharp – Appeal Non-Occupational Disability Denial – Personal Hearing (Chicago)

Candyce Sharp received a non-occupational disability benefit from SERS from April 5, 2019 through April 30, 2019. After inquiring as to why her benefit had stopped, Ms. Sharp was told that additional medical documentation was needed to support an extension of her benefit.

Ms. Sharp's Disability Specialist submitted all the medical documentation available to a SERS medical consultant, who determined there was insufficient evidence to support an extension of Ms. Sharp's disability benefit. Ms. Sharp is appealing the denial of her non-occupational disability extension.

Ms. Sharp did not appear before the Committee and her case was deferred.

Beth LeGrant – Appeal SSA Overpayment

Beth LeGrant began receiving a disability benefit from SERS effective February 2017. She reached the age for SSA retirement eligibility in January 2019. Ms. LeGrant continued to receive a disability benefit, which created an overpayment with SERS. Ms. LeGrant is appealing the overpayment.

After reviewing the facts of the case and some discussion, the Committee decided to defer the matter pending further review.

Sherri Northern – Appeal Repayment Amount

Sherri Northern was approved for a non-occupational disability benefit from SERS effective November 2017. She was approved for a retroactive Social Security disability benefit effective April 2018, which created an overpayment.

Per SERS Board policy, the Overpayment Section is to deduct half the gross of any benefit being paid toward an overpayment owed to SERS. Ms. Northern is appealing the amount of her repayment.

After some discussion, a motion was made by Executive Secretary Blair to deny Ms. Northern's request. The motion was seconded by Chairman Iglarsh and all were in favor.

Trevor Planck – Appeal Repayment Amount

Trevor Planck was approved for a non-occupational disability benefit from SERS effective January 2018. He was approved for a retroactive Social Security disability benefit effective March 2019, which created an overpayment.

Per SERS Board policy, the Overpayment Section is to deduct half the gross of any benefit being paid toward an overpayment owed to SERS. Mr. Planck is appealing the

amount of his repayment.

After reviewing the case, a motion was made by Executive Secretary Blair to deny Mr. Planck's request. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairperson Morris and all were in favor.

Becky McEmery – Appeal Repayment Amount

Becky McEmery began receiving a survivor benefit in August 2005. It was discovered in June 2019 that the minor children who were previously in Ms. McEmery's care had not been since May 2018, creating an overpayment of survivor benefits.

As stated in SERS Board policy, the Overpayment Section is to deduct half the gross of any benefit being paid toward an overpayment owed to SERS. Ms. McEmery is requesting a lower repayment amount.

After some discussion, a motion was made by Chairman Iglarsh to approve Ms. McEmery's request and offer a repayment amount of \$150.00 per month. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairperson Morris and all were in favor.

Jay Caturia – Reinstatement of Account

Jay Caturia's account became eligible for write-off in June 2017. Contributions and creditable service were subsequently written off. Mr. Caturia has supplied SERS with a new address and proper identification.

The Pension and Death Section is requesting the Executive Committee approve the reinstatement of this account so Mr. Caturia can retire reciprocally with MEABF.

After brief discussion, a motion was made by Chairman Iglarsh to approve the reinstatement of Mr. Caturia's account. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairperson Morris and all were in favor.

Alma & Amber James, Margo Caradine – Appeal to Split Death Benefit Equally

Mark James, an active State employee, died in July 2019. A death benefit is payable to his survivors.

A beneficiary form dated August 21, 2003 showing his beneficiaries as #1. Alma James, #2. Amber James and #3. Margo Caradine is the only form that was in his file. However, on September 20, 2004, beneficiaries were updated electronically to show all dependents receiving an equal share.

Ms. James, Ms. James and Ms. Caradine are requesting to split the death benefit equally.

After some discussion, a motion was made by Chairman Iglarsh to approve the request

to equally split the death benefit. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairperson Morris and all were in favor.

Jon Luchsinger – Appeal to Retire Independently

Jon Luchsinger retired reciprocally with IMRF and SERS in July 2019. Mr. Luchsinger is over the maximum amount allowed between both systems, so both systems must proportionally reduce their benefit.

Mr. Luchsinger is requesting to retire independently.

After reviewing the facts of the case, a motion was made by Vice-Chairperson Morris to approve Mr. Luchsinger request to retire independently. The motion was seconded by Chairman Iglarsh and all were in favor.

Michelle Zake – Public Act 100-611 – Personal Hearing (Springfield)

Michelle Zake is eligible for the service credit upgrade provided by Public Act 100-611 and will be receiving back wages as a result. Ms. Zake is currently receiving a non-occupational disability benefit from SERS.

Ms. Zake was billed for the employee contribution arrearage associated with the miscoding related to the period she was shifted from the alternative formula to the regular formula. She signed an agreement to have a portion of the contribution arrearage paid from the back wages she received. Upon repaying the balance due to SERS, Ms. Zake will be eligible for retroactive benefit payments, as well as a prospective adjustment to her benefit.

Ms. Zake is requesting that the amount of retroactive benefits she will receive be used to cover the remainder of the arrearage.

After discussing the case, a motion was made by Vice-Chairperson Morris to approve Ms. Zake's request. The motion was seconded by Chairman Iglarsh and all were in favor.

Daniel Stinnett – Appeal Repayment Amount

Daniel Stinnett received a SERS temporary disability benefit from July 2014 through March 2015. SERS received notification from the Department of Human Services that Mr. Stinnett would be receiving full wages and service credits for the period of October 30, 2014 through June 30, 2016 due to the outcome of a grievance. This created an overpayment of benefits from SERS.

Per SERS Board policy, the Overpayment Section is to deduct half the gross of any benefit being paid toward an overpayment owed to SERS. Mr. Stinnett is requesting a lower repayment amount of \$250.00 per month.

After reviewing the facts of the case, a motion was made by Vice-Chairperson Morris to approve Mr. Stinnett's request. The motion was seconded by Chairman Iglarsh and all were in favor.

Gregory Redd – Appeal Repayment Amount

Gregory Redd was approved for a non-occupational disability benefit effective June 2016 through November 2016. His benefit was then converted to a temporary occupational benefit through July 2018. Workers' Compensation terminated his TTD benefit on November 30, 2017, which created an overpayment of SERS benefits.

Per SERS Board policy, the Overpayment Section is to deduct half the gross of any benefit being paid toward an overpayment owed to SERS. Mr. Redd is requesting a lower repayment amount of \$200.00 per month.

After review and discussion, a motion was made by Executive Secretary Blair to deny Mr. Redd's request and instead offer a reduced repayment amount of \$750.00 per month. The motion was seconded by Chairman Iglarsh and all were in favor.

William Fleischli – Appeal to Purchase Military Time after Retirement

William Fleischli is retired from the State and recently inquired to see whether his National Guard service was included in his service credit history. He was informed that he had not purchased that time before leaving payroll and that statute prohibits such purchase once an employee leaves payroll.

Mr. Fleischli states that he was not informed of the option to purchase his National Guard service time and is appealing to be allowed to purchase it.

After reviewing the facts of the case, a motion was made by Chairman Iglarsh to deny Mr. Fleischli's request. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairperson Morris and all were in favor.

Add-on: Alexander Kolar – Reinstatement of Account

Alexander Kolar's account was written off in June 2005. Mr. Kolar has recently contacted SERS to request a termination refund of his contributions.

The Claims Division is requesting that the Committee approve reinstatement of Mr. Kolar's account so a termination refund can be processed.

After brief discussion, a motion was made by Executive Secretary Blair to approve the request. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairperson Morris and all were in favor.

Add-on: David Crockett – Request Reinstatement of Account

According to SERS records, David Crockett received a refund of his contributions in

December 1992. Mr. Crockett does not recall receiving the refund and according to the Office of the Comptroller, the warrant issued for his refund was voided on December 11, 1992.

SERS is requesting a reinstatement of Mr. Crockett's account so that a refund may be processed upon receipt of an application.

After reviewing the documentation submitted, a motion was made by Chairman Iglarsh to approve the request. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairperson Morris and all were in favor.

Add-on: Margaret Bonzyck, David Sharp, Terry Hart – Request Correction of Pension Payment Amounts

Executive Secretary Blair presented corrected pension payment amounts for Margaret Bonzyck, David Sharp and Terry Hart for the Committee's approval.

After brief discussion, a motion was made by Executive Secretary Blair to approve the correction of the pension payment amounts. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairperson Morris and all were in favor.

There being no further business to be brought before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 1:22 p.m.

The next meeting of the Executive Committee is scheduled for November 14, 2019, in the Springfield office, with video conferencing in Chicago.

Loren Iglarsh, Chairman

David Morris, Vice-Chairperson

Timothy Blair, Executive Secretary