

**SONOMA COUNTY EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION  
RETIREMENT BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday, December 14, 2023  
9:35 a.m.

Presiding: Brian Williams, Chair

Present: Trustees Neil Baker (Alternate Retiree), Travis Balzarini (left at 12:15 p.m.), Chris Coursey (left at 11:31 a.m.), Amos Eaton, Greg Jahn (left at 12:09 p.m.), Erick Roeser, Joe Tambe, Tim Tuscany, and Bob Williamson (Vice Chair); Chief Executive Officer Julie Wyne, Assistant CEO/Chief Legal Counsel Cristina Hess, Member Services Manager Jackie Purter, Finance and Retiree Services Manager Cheryl Enold, Retirement Analyst Rebecca Gay, and Admin Aide Julia Smith; Paul Angelo and Andy Yeung (of Segal); Numerous members of the public, including public commentators: Paul Carrol, Mark Walsh (incoming Retirement Board member), Ed Clites, Shaun Dufosee, and Andre Bercut

Present via

Zoom: Numerous members of the public

Public comments were solicited prior to the meeting by emailing [Rebecca.Gay@sonoma-county.org](mailto:Rebecca.Gay@sonoma-county.org). Members of the public that joined the Zoom meeting via the app or dial in were provided opportunity to submit live public comment for each agenda item after the Board and staff provided their comments.

I. CONSENT CALENDAR

- A. Meeting Minutes – October 19, 2023, Retirement Board
- B. Annual Benefit Payment and Contribution Error Correction Report

**Recommendation:** Approve Consent Calendar items A and B.

A motion was made by Trustee Tuscany, seconded by Trustee Williamson, to approve consent calendar items A and B. The motion carried 9-0-0-0 with voting as follows:

Mr. Balzarini	Aye
Mr. Coursey	Aye
Mr. Eaton	Aye
Mr. Jahn	Aye
Mr. Roeser	Aye
Mr. Tambe	Aye
Mr. Tuscany	Aye
Mr. Williams	Aye
Mr. Williamson	Aye

The Board of Retirement moved into Executive Session and closed the meeting to all attendees that were not necessary for the determination of a disability retirement. Those attendees exited the Board room and/or were placed in the virtual Zoom lobby by the host and neither heard nor observed the meeting. All meeting attendees were re-admitted to the meeting once the Board returned to open session.

## II. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Executive Session. Meeting closed pursuant to Government Code Section 54957(b) to consider the employment status and evaluation of performance of a SCERA member or members as concerns eligibility for a disability retirement.

Disability Committee Chair reported on recommendations made by the Committee at the December 14, 2023, meeting:

### Disability Applications:

1. JESSE SCOTT, Deputy Sheriff II filed 05/27/22 for a service-connected disability retirement.

A motion was made by Trustee Jahn, seconded by Trustee Balzarini, to grant the application of Jesse Scott, Deputy Sheriff II, for a service-connected disability retirement. The motion carried 9-0-0-0 with voting as follows:

Mr. Balzarini	Aye
Mr. Coursey	Aye
Mr. Eaton	Aye
Mr. Jahn	Aye
Mr. Roeser	Aye
Mr. Tambe	Aye
Mr. Tuscany	Aye
Mr. Williams	Aye
Mr. Williamson	Aye

2. HENRI BOUSTANY, Sergeant filed 06/08/23 for a service-connected disability retirement.

A motion was made by Trustee Eaton, seconded by Trustee Balzarini, to grant the application of Henri Boustany, Sergeant, for a service-connected disability retirement. The motion carried 9-0-0-0 with voting as follows:

Mr. Balzarini	Aye
Mr. Coursey	Aye
Mr. Eaton	Aye

Mr. Jahn	Aye
Mr. Roeser	Aye
Mr. Tambe	Aye
Mr. Tuscany	Aye
Mr. Williams	Aye
Mr. Williamson	Aye

3. JESSICA CAMPOS, Courtroom Clerk filed 06/15/23 for a service-connected disability retirement.

A motion was made by Trustee Eaton, seconded by Trustee Balzarini, to grant the application of Jessica Campos, Courtroom Clerk, for a service-connected disability retirement. The motion carried 9-0-0-0 with voting as follows:

Mr. Balzarini	Aye
Mr. Coursey	Aye
Mr. Eaton	Aye
Mr. Jahn	Aye
Mr. Roeser	Aye
Mr. Tambe	Aye
Mr. Tuscany	Aye
Mr. Williams	Aye
Mr. Williamson	Aye

4. STEVEN CARLOZZI, Correctional Deputy II filed 07/18/23 for a service-connected disability retirement.

A motion was made by Trustee Balzarini, seconded by Trustee Williamson, to grant the application of Steven Carlozzi, Correctional Deputy II, for a service-connected disability retirement. The motion carried 9-0-0-0 with voting as follows:

Mr. Balzarini	Aye
Mr. Coursey	Aye
Mr. Eaton	Aye
Mr. Jahn	Aye
Mr. Roeser	Aye
Mr. Tambe	Aye
Mr. Tuscany	Aye
Mr. Williams	Aye
Mr. Williamson	Aye

5. RAFAEL GARCIA, Correctional Deputy II filed 07/18/23 for a service-connected disability retirement.

A motion was made by Trustee Eaton, seconded by Trustee Williamson, to grant the application of Rafael Garcia, Correctional Deputy II, for a service-connected disability retirement. The motion carried 9-0-0-0 with voting as follows:

Mr. Balzarini	Aye
Mr. Coursey	Aye
Mr. Eaton	Aye
Mr. Jahn	Aye
Mr. Roeser	Aye
Mr. Tambe	Aye
Mr. Tuscany	Aye
Mr. Williams	Aye
Mr. Williamson	Aye

Proposed Decision:

BRYAN MCCULLOCH, Deputy Sheriff I filed 09/09/21 for a service-connected disability retirement. On 04/21/22, the Retirement Board denied the application for a service-connected disability retirement.

A motion was made by Trustee Eaton, seconded by Trustee Williamson, to adopt the findings of the Administrative Law Judge and grant the application of Bryan McCulloch, Deputy Sheriff I, for a service-connected disability retirement. The motion carried 9-0-0-0 with voting as follows:

Mr. Balzarini	Aye
Mr. Coursey	Aye
Mr. Eaton	Aye
Mr. Jahn	Aye
Mr. Roeser	Aye
Mr. Tambe	Aye
Mr. Tuscany	Aye
Mr. Williams	Aye
Mr. Williamson	Aye

The Board of Retirement moved out of Executive Session and reopened the meeting to all attendees that were placed in the lobby during the closed session period.

III. EXECUTIVE SESSION REPORT OUT

Chair Williams reported the Board unanimously granted the service-connected disability retirements of Jesse Scott, Deputy Sheriff II; Henri Boustany, Sergeant; Jessica Campos,

Courtroom Clerk; Steven Carlozzi, Correctional Deputy II; and Rafael Garcia, Correctional Deputy II.

By unanimous vote, the Board also adopted the findings of the Administrative Law Judge and granted the application of Bryan McCulloch, Deputy Sheriff I, for a service-connected disability retirement.

IV. REGULAR CALENDAR

A. Audit Committee Recommendations – Scope of 2023 Audit

**Recommendation:** Approve the scope of the 2023 Audit.

A motion was made by Trustee Tambe, seconded by Trustee Balzarini, to approve the scope of the 2023 Audit. The motion carried 9-0-0-0 with voting as follows:

Mr. Balzarini	Aye
Mr. Coursey	Aye
Mr. Eaton	Aye
Mr. Jahn	Aye
Mr. Roeser	Aye
Mr. Tambe	Aye
Mr. Tuscany	Aye
Mr. Williams	Aye
Mr. Williamson	Aye

B. 2024 Budget

Chief Executive Officer Julie Wyne noted that the investment staff salary, due diligence travel costs and legal representation for issues other than those that are investment related which had been previously excluded from the administrative budget were now being included and tested against the unfunded actuarial accrued liability in accordance with Government Code section 31580.2. This largely explains the jump in basis points when applying the expense test between this year and last year's budget.

**Recommendation:** Adopt the 2024 Budget.

A motion was made by Trustee Tuscany, seconded by Trustee Williamson, to adopt the 2024 Budget. The motion carried 9-0-0-0 with voting as follows:

Mr. Balzarini	Aye
Mr. Coursey	Aye
Mr. Eaton	Aye
Mr. Jahn	Aye
Mr. Roeser	Aye
Mr. Tambe	Aye

Mr. Tuscany        Aye  
Mr. Williams      Aye  
Mr. Williamson    Aye

C.     2024 Board and Committee Meeting Calendar

Ms. Wyne noted that the Disability Committee meeting was removed from November and confirmed that the Board wanted the Investment Committee meeting in November to start at 9:00 a.m.

**Recommendation:** Approve changes to the 2024 Board and Committee Meeting Calendar.

A motion was made by Trustee Jahn, seconded by Trustee Tuscany, to approve changes to the 2024 Board and Committee Meeting Calendar. The motion carried 9-0-0-0 with voting as follows:

Mr. Balzarini      Aye  
Mr. Coursey        Aye  
Mr. Eaton          Aye  
Mr. Jahn            Aye  
Mr. Roeser         Aye  
Mr. Tambe          Aye  
Mr. Tuscany        Aye  
Mr. Williams        Aye  
Mr. Williamson     Aye

D.     COLA and SCERA Reserves Discussion

1.     11-2-2023 Meeting with County representatives

Ms. Wyne summarized the meeting with County representatives indicating that it was a positive meeting with a good outcome for future discussions. She informed the Board that the County Administrator believed that the County Board of Supervisors would be in a better position to discuss the retiree COLA program after the reopener discussions with four of the County's bargaining units but that discussions between the SCERA CEO and the County Administrator should continue.

2.     Interest Crediting and Reserve Policy amendments

Ms. Wyne explained the proposed amendments to the Interest Crediting and Reserve Policy which included crediting interest on all but the member reserve at actual actuarial investment earnings as opposed to the plan's assumed rate of

return, which would negate the need to track interest crediting shortfalls in a Negative Contingency Reserve. She also highlighted returning the Contingency Reserve requirements to 1% from 3%.

Several members of the public voiced support for the proposed changes and added some historical context to the County's ad hoc COLA program.

Some Trustees were concerned about making changes to the Interest Crediting and Reserve Policy without also making changes to the COLA Policy to define the criteria to be used to determine the fiscal health of the Plan prior to recommending a COLA to the Board of Supervisors.

**Recommendation:** Approve amendments to the Interest Crediting and Reserve Policy.

A motion was made by Trustee Balzarini, seconded by Trustee Eaton, to approve amendments to the Interest Crediting and Reserve Policy. The motion failed 4-5-0-0 with voting as follows:

Mr. Balzarini	Aye
Mr. Coursey	Aye
Mr. Eaton	Aye
Mr. Jahn	Nay
Mr. Roeser	Nay
Mr. Tambe	Nay
Mr. Tuscany	Aye
Mr. Williams	Nay
Mr. Williamson	Nay

A motion was made by Trustee Tambe, seconded by Trustee Roeser to approve amendments to the Interest Crediting and Reserve Policy contingent upon defining excess earnings and the considerations for the use of excess earnings in the COLA policy. After discussion the motion was withdrawn.

Trustees requested that the Interest Crediting and Reserve policy be reworked along with the COLA Policy and discussed with the Ad hoc COLA Committee before it is brought back to the Board.

### 3. COLA Policy Discussion

In light of the Board's decision for staff to work with the Ad hoc COLA Committee on revisions to the Interest Crediting and Reserve Policy and the COLA Policy, this discussion was moot.

i. COLA Policy Amendments

**Recommendation:** Approve amendments to the COLA Policy.

ii. Future COLA Policy Amendment Discussion Points

4. COLA Cost Studies

E. Election Procedure Policy Review

Ms. Wyne highlighted the proposed amendments to the Election Procedure Policy. Trustees discussed the candidate statement at length weighing concerns over SCERA including campaign messaging on the ballots versus allowing a candidate to describe why they are qualified to be a SCERA Trustee. In the end Trustees felt comfortable allowing political and group affiliations and statements about past or future Board actions. In addition, Trustees requested that the deadline language stating that the deadlines will be prior to a holiday be changed to following a holiday.

**Recommendation:** Approve amendments to the Election Procedure Policy.

A motion was made by Trustee Jahn, seconded by Trustee Balzarini, to approve amendments to the Election Procedure Policy with the changes noted above. The motion carried 7-0-0-2 with voting as follows:

Mr. Balzarini	Aye
Mr. Coursey	Absent
Mr. Eaton	Aye
Mr. Jahn	Aye
Mr. Roeser	Aye
Mr. Tambe	Absent
Mr. Tuscany	Aye
Mr. Williams	Aye
Mr. Williamson	Aye

F. 2024 Committee Assignment Discussion

Trustees were comfortable with the Committees they were currently assigned to with the replacement of Trustee Tuscany with Trustee Walsh on the Administrative-Benefits Committee.

G. Communications

1. Service Retirements

2. Reciprocal Service-Connected Disability Benefit – James Bellamy



3. Reciprocal Nonservice-Connected Disability Benefit – Tawnya Stansell
4. Election Results
5. PEPR Compensation Limits for 2024

V. Trustee/Staff Training & Conferences

Notify Julia Smith if you plan to attend any future event. Please note, if out of state travel to attend a conference is not approved in the Budget separate approval from the Board must be obtained prior to attending the conference.

- A. SACRS Fall Conference, November 7 to 10, 2023, Omni Rancho Las Palmas Resort & Spa, Rancho Mirage, CA. Chair Williams reported that the SACRS Conference opened with Stephanie Murphy, a former U.S. House of Representatives Member, who discussed her bipartisan efforts in Congress and her family's immigration to America. Additional topics were an FBI agent's discussion of cybersecurity and Artificial Intelligence, investing in Africa, and a contrarian view on gas and oil.
- B. CALAPRS General Assembly, March 2 to 5, 2024, Omni Rancho Las Palmas Resort & Spa, Rancho Mirage, CA. Chair Williams will be attending.
- C. SACRS Spring Conference, May 7 to 10, 2024, Hilton Santa Barbara Beachfront Resort, Santa Barbara, CA.

VI. GENERAL DISCUSSION ITEMS

Opportunity was given to advise the Board of new matters and for Trustees to ask questions for clarification, provide information to staff, request staff to report back on a matter or direct staff to place a matter on a subsequent agenda.

Trustee Eaton reported dissatisfaction with the NASDAQ BoardVantage platform, used by SCERA to disperse e-files to Trustees for Board and Committee meetings. Mr. Eaton listed several problematic issues, which staff noted for follow-up with the NASDAQ Support Team, to find resolution or improvements for end users.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Opportunity was given for public comment on non-agenda items within the jurisdiction of the Retirement Board.

There were no public comments.

VIII. NOTICE OF NEXT MEETINGS

All meetings are held at SCERA in the Board Room at 433 Aviation Boulevard, Suite 100, Santa Rosa, CA, and broadcast via Zoom unless otherwise noted.

Disability Committee  
January 18, 2024  
8:30 a.m.

Retirement Board  
January 18, 2024  
9:00 a.m.

Investment Committee  
January 25, 2024  
9:30 a.m.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 12:25 p.m.

X. APPROVAL

The above minutes from the December 14, 2023, Retirement Board meeting were approved at the Retirement Board meeting on January 18, 2024.

BRIAN WILLIAMS, CHAIR