

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

Thursday, May 23, 2024  
9:25 a.m.

Presiding: Brian Williams, Chair (left at 9:36 a.m.) then Bob Williamson, Vice Chair – from 9:36 a.m. to adjournment

Present: Trustees Neil Baker (Alternate Retiree), Chris Coursey (left at 10:53 a.m.), Amos Eaton, Greg Jahn, Erick Roeser, Joe Tambe, and Mark Walsh; Chief Executive Officer Julie Wyne, Assistant CEO/Chief Legal Counsel Cristina Hess, Member Services Manager Jackie Purter, Retirement Analyst Rebecca Gay, and Administrative Aide Julia Smith; Gordon Baumbacher, MD

Absent: Trustee Travis Balzarini

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. Retirement Board Meeting Minutes – April 18, 2024
- B. Retirement Board Actuarial Meeting Minutes – May 2, 2024
- C. Deferred Member Death Benefits

**Recommendation:** Approve Consent Calendar items A through C.

A motion was made by Trustee Tambe, seconded by Trustee Williamson, to approve Consent Calendar items A through C. The motion carried 8-0-0-1 with voting as follows:

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

The Board moved item IV. A., "Presentation of Board Resolution honoring Gordon Baumbacher, M.D." to respect Dr. Baumbacher's time while attending the meeting in person.

On the occasion of Dr. Baumbacher's announced retirement, Chair Williams read the Resolution language which expressed the Board and staff's admiration and appreciation for Dr. Baumbacher's twenty-four years of excellent service as a SCERA contracted physician rendering opinions on some of SCERA's most complicated psychiatric disability applications. Dr. Baumbacher expressed his appreciation for the long relationship, interesting and challenging disability matters, his respect for SCERA staff, in particular Member Services Manager Jackie Purter, and the difficult job the Board has in managing the pension system.

A motion was made by Trustee Tambe, seconded by Trustee Eaton, to approve Resolution #169, honoring Dr. Gordon Baumbacher. The motion carried 8-0-0-1 with voting as follows:

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

The Board of Retirement moved into Executive Session and closed the meeting to all attendees who were not necessary for the determination of a disability retirement or a discussion with Counsel regarding significant exposure to litigation. Those attendees physically exited the Board room and/or were placed in the virtual Zoom lobby by the host and neither heard nor saw the meeting. All meeting attendees were re-admitted to the meeting when the Board returned to open session.

## II. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. 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 Vice Chair reported on recommendations made by the Committee at the May 23, 2024, meeting:

### Disability Applications:

1. JAMIE PERCY, Sergeant filed 07/20/23 for a service connected disability retirement.

A motion was made by Trustee Tambe, seconded by Trustee Jahn, to grant the application of Jamie Percy, Sergeant, for a service connected disability retirement. The motion carried 7-0-0-2 with voting as follows:

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

2. MICHAEL DIETRICK, Deputy Sheriff II filed 09/14/23 for a service connected disability retirement.

A motion was made by Trustee Jahn, seconded by Trustee Coursey, to deny the application of Michael Dietrick, Deputy Sheriff II, for a service connected disability retirement. The motion carried 6-1-0-2 with voting as follows:

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

3. JUSTIN FOSTER, Animal Control Officer II filed 01/03/24 for a non-service connected disability retirement.

A motion was made by Trustee Tambe, seconded by Trustee Jahn, to grant the application of Justin Foster, Animal Control Officer II, for a non-service connected disability retirement. The motion carried 7-0-0-2 with voting as follows:

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

Mr. Williams      Absent  
Mr. Williamson    Aye

Proposed Decision:

CHRISTOPHER HERMAN, Park Ranger I filed 12/02/22 for a service connected disability retirement. Consideration under Government Code sections 31724 (date allowance becomes effective) and 31725.65 (reemployment plan) is requested. On 06/22/23, the Retirement Board denied the application for a service connected disability retirement.

A motion was made by Trustee Tambe, seconded by Trustee Jahn, to adopt the Hearing Officer's recommendation to grant a service connected disability retirement to Christopher Herman, Park Ranger I, with consideration under Government Code section 31725.65 and deny the request for an earlier effective date under Government Code section 31724. The motion carried 7-0-0-2 with voting as follows:

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

- B. Executive Session. Meeting closed pursuant to Government Code section 54956.9(d)(2), to confer with Counsel regarding significant exposure to litigation. Number of potential cases – one.

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

III. EXECUTIVE SESSION REPORT OUT

- A. Vice Chair Williamson reported the Board unanimously granted the service connected disability retirement application of Jamie Percy, Sergeant. The Board unanimously granted the non-service connected disability retirement application of Justin Foster, Animal Control Officer II, and the Board denied the service connected disability retirement application of Michael Dietrick, Deputy Sheriff II, with a vote of 6-1-0-2. The Board unanimously adopted the Hearing Officer's recommendation to grant a service connected disability retirement to Christopher Herman, Park Ranger I, with consideration under Government Code section 31725.65 and denied the request for an earlier effective date under Government Code section 31724.

- B. Vice Chair Williamson stated that the Board voted unanimously to approve a Promissory Note and settlement of overpaid retirement benefits with no interest charges through a payment plan. The Board conditioned the approval of the payment plan without interest on obtaining a signature on the Promissory Note by June 30, 2024, and if not signed by that date, gave discretion to the Chief Legal Counsel to take any action necessary to collect the full amount with interest.

#### IV. REGULAR CALENDAR

- B. Electronic Board Material Delivery Discussion

Department Analyst Rebecca Gay and Asst. CEO/Chief Legal Counsel Cristina Hess addressed mobile device options available to the Trustees and possible legal ramifications that accompany them. Ms. Gay discussed why historically iPads were provided to Trustees by SCERA, noting that while there have been advances and changes in IT resources, the iPad continues to be the most secure and flexible device for Trustees. Ms. Gay acknowledged that many Trustees utilize a device provided by another County department or their own personal device and agreed that this is appropriate and within the bounds of SCERA's policy.

Ms. Hess reminded the Board that all work that Trustees and staff engage in on behalf of SCERA is public business and therefore potentially discoverable under Public Records Act requests, litigation, discovery and subpoena processes. She encouraged Trustees to utilize SCERA provided resources to conduct SCERA related business. She noted that Trustees may use their own devices but suggested they limit their SCERA related business to SCERA provided applications like Outlook and NASDAQ, because any place where information relating to SCERA business is stored could be subject to disclosure.

Ms. Gay and Ms. Hess pointed out that both the County and SCERA's policies require that all SCERA related emails must be received and sent through the County email system. Ms. Hess explained this requirement exists for Public Records Act requests, discovery requests, cyber security concerns and to help prevent fraud. Ms. Wyne noted that SCERA has annual cyber security insurance interviews that are in depth and look for vulnerabilities, which, if found, could increase SCERA's premium or risk our coverage. Trustees expressed concerns with accessing their County email server. Ms. Gay noted she is willing, along with County Information Systems Department (ISD) support, to help Trustees utilize the County email system. To further support the Trustees, Ms. Gay created and provided stickers for the Trustees to place on their iPads and personal devices which contained contact information for ISD support.

- C. Mobile Device Policy

**Recommendation:** Approve amendments to the Mobile Device Policy

Ms. Hess presented the proposed amendments to the Mobile Device Policy, focusing on the addition of language pertaining to the ownership of data on all mobile devices. Ms. Gay shared that some of the edits to the policy were due to a change in the County Staff

Development Fund Reimbursement Program. Trustees expressed their desire for more time to review the policy.

A motion was made by Trustee Walsh, seconded by Trustee Williamson, to defer this policy to the June 20, 2024, Board meeting to allow Trustees additional time to consider proposed amendments. The motion carried 6-0-0-3 with voting as follows:

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

D. Communications

1. Service Retirements
2. Tergesen, Anne, The Wall Street Journal, "Retire at 65? It's More Like 62", April 25, 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 Spring Conference, May 7 to 10, 2024, Hilton Santa Barbara Beachfront Resort, Santa Barbara, CA. Trustees Baker, Eaton, Walsh, Williams, and Williamson attended and reported that the conference overall was excellent, particularly its focus on CERL systems. Jeffrey Gundlach's presentation was centered on the federal government's mounting problems in refinancing its debt if interest rates remain high, which is looming in three to five years from now. Gundlach says the street is predicting that everyone will have to feel the pain, with cuts to entitlement programs and higher tax rates, which disproportionately hurts working class and lower income individuals. The CIO panel with Chris Ailman from CalSTRS and the CIO for the Getty Trust was excellent, as was the actuary session with Paul Angelo and Todd Tauzer where Segal indicated that they use Artificial Intelligence to evaluate fiduciary policies, discussed the 80% funded myth and measuring excess or surplus earnings of a plan. The history of SACRS was illuminating, showing how far the CERL plans have evolved from the days when they were administered by the County Treasurers. Trustees recommend attending these conferences.
- B. NCPERS Annual Conference & Exhibition, May 19 to 22, 2024, Seattle, WA. Trustee Walsh attended and reported that the sessions were broken out into relatively short

segments, and it was hard to develop a cohesive plan to decide which ones to attend. Trustee Walsh preferred the SACRS Conference format with longer sessions, not as many concurrent options and the focus on CERL plans.

- C. Ethics Training – Ashley Dunning, Nossaman, June 10, 2024, in the SCERA Board Room. First session 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Second session at 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Please register with Rebecca Gay.
- D. SACRS Public Pension Investment Management Program, July 14 to 17, 2024, UC Berkeley Haas School of Business, Berkeley, CA. Trustee Walsh is attending.
- E. IFM Global Infrastructure Fund Annual General Meeting, October 28 to 30, 2024, Four Seasons Hotel, Las Vegas, NV.

#### 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.

There were no general discussion items.

#### 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.

Investment Committee

May 30, 2024

8:30 a.m.

Audit Committee

June 13, 2024

9:00 a.m.

Disability Committee

June 20, 2024

8:30 a.m.

Retirement Board  
June 20, 2024  
9:00 a.m.

Investment Committee  
June 27, 2024  
9:00 a.m.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to conduct, the meeting adjourned at 11:19 a.m.

X. APPROVAL

The above minutes from the May 23, 2024, Retirement Board meeting were approved at the Retirement Board meeting on June 20, 2024.

BRIAN WILLIAMS, CHAIR