

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

Thursday, October 24, 2024  
9:11 a.m.

Presiding via

Zoom: Brian Williams, Chair

Present: Trustees Neil Baker (Alternate Retiree), Travis Balzarini, Chris Coursey, Amos Eaton, Greg Jahn, Joe Tambe, Mark Walsh, and Bob Williamson, 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 Administrative Aide Julia Smith; Emily Klare and Andy Yeung (of Segal)

Absent: Trustee Erick Roeser

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.

Trustee Brian Williams notified the Board of his need to utilize an emergency exception, under California Government Code section 54953(f)(2), to his in-person attendance at the October Retirement Board meeting and the notice requirements for appearance by teleconference. He indicated a medical issue prevented him from attending in person.

Trustee Williams confirmed with Department Analyst Rebecca Gay that SCERA had not received any public comment prior to the meeting.

I. CONSENT CALENDAR

A. Retirement Board Meeting Minutes – September 19, 2024

**Recommendation:** Approve the Retirement Board Meeting Minutes of September 19, 2024.

A motion was made by Trustee Williamson, seconded by Trustee Walsh, to approve the Retirement Board meeting minutes of September 19, 2024. The motion carried 8-0-0-1 with voting as follows:

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

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 consideration of a public employee performance evaluation. 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 Chair reported on recommendations made by the Committee at the October 24, 2024, meeting:

### Disability Applications:

1. ROWAN SHINOHARA TAYLOR, Deputy Sheriff II filed 10/12/22 for a service connected disability retirement. On 05/18/23 the Retirement Board denied the application for a service connected disability as applicant is not considered permanently incapacitated.

The Board accepted the Disability Committee's direction to refer this matter back to SCERA's Disability Counsel to proceed with the Administrative Hearing.

2. CHRISTOPHER HERMAN, Park Ranger I filed 12/02/22 for a service connected disability retirement. Consideration under Government Code section 31724 (date allowance becomes effective) and 31725.65 (reemployment plan) is requested. On 05/23/24 the Retirement Board denied the request for GCS 31724.

A motion was made by Trustee Balzarini, seconded by Trustee Eaton, to grant the request for an earlier disability retirement effective date under Government Code section 31724 made by Christopher Herman, Park Ranger I. The motion carried 8-0-0-1 with voting as follows:

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

Mr. Walsh           Aye  
Mr. Williams       Aye  
Mr. Williamson     Aye

3. JOHN BAZZANO, Senior Communications Dispatcher filed 02/23/24 for a service connected disability retirement.

A motion was made by Trustee Williamson, seconded by Trustee Balzarini, to grant the application of John Bazzano, Senior Communications Dispatcher, for a service connected disability retirement. The motion carried 8-0-0-1 with voting as follows:

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

4. KRISTIE MCCARTHY, Correctional Deputy II filed 05/14/24 for a service connected disability retirement. Consideration under Government Code Section 31725.65 (reemployment plan) is requested.

A motion was made by Trustee Jahn, seconded by Trustee Williamson, to grant the application of Kristie McCarthy, Correctional Deputy II, for a service connected disability retirement with consideration under Government Code section 31725.65 (reemployment plan). The motion carried 8-0-0-1 with voting as follows:

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

5. VERONICA MARTINEZ ORDAZ, Deputy Sheriff II filed 05/23/24 for a service connected disability retirement. Consideration under Government Code Section 31725.65 (reemployment plan) is requested.

A motion was made by Trustee Williamson, seconded by Trustee Balzarini, to grant the application of Veronica Martinez Ordaz, Deputy Sheriff II, for a service connected disability retirement with consideration under Government Code section 31725.65 (reemployment plan). The motion carried 8-0-0-1 with voting as follows:

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

- B. Executive Session. Meeting closed pursuant to Government Code section 54957(b) to consider a public employee performance evaluation (Chief Executive Officer).

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 that the Board referred the matter of Rowan Shiohara Taylor, Deputy Sheriff II back to SCERA's Disability Counsel to continue with the Administrative Hearing, unanimously granted the request of Christopher Herman, Park Ranger I for an earlier disability retirement effective date under Government Code section 31724, unanimously granted the service connected disability retirements of John Bazzano, Senior Communications Dispatcher, Kristie McCarthy, Correctional Deputy II with consideration under Government Code section 31725.65 (reemployment plan), and Veronica Martinez Ordaz, Deputy Sheriff II with consideration under Government Code section 31725.65 (reemployment plan).

Chair Williams stated that no reportable action was taken by the Board regarding Item B of the Executive Session.

### IV. REGULAR CALENDAR

- A. Triennial Experience Study, December 31, 2023.

**Recommendation:** Adopt the Assumptions in the Triennial Experience Study, December 31, 2023.

Senior Actuary Emily Klare and Vice President and Actuary Andy Yeung, of Segal, responded to questions from Trustees regarding the results of the Triennial Experience Study for December 31, 2023, which had been presented at SCERA's Educational Forum on October 10, 2024. Trustees asked about the methodology changes in the entry age

normal calculation, specifically noting concern that the changes had an impact on the employee contribution rate. Mr. Yeung explained that they have been moving all their clients towards this change and that auditing actuarial firms have likewise been recommending it. Trustee Walsh noted that this change better aligns a member's entry age with the service they accrue, which the actuaries concurred with. Trustees asked about the inflation assumption and Mr. Yeung noted that all the broad markers that Segal consults indicate a 2.5% assumption. Finally, the Committee discussed the recent spike in Safety Member disability retirements and the recent achievement of full staffing by the Sheriff's Department, with Ms. Klare noting that Segal did not recommend an assumption change that would recognize the full weight of the increased disability retirements in recent years.

Chief Executive Officer Julie Wyne noted that the assumption changes impact the normal cost of the plan which is shared between employees and the employers, with the largest impact on the Safety Plan B members.

A motion was made by Trustee Williamson, seconded by Trustee Walsh, to adopt the Assumptions in the Triennial Experience Study. The motion carried 8-0-0-1 with voting as follows:

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

B. 2025 SCERA Business Plan

**Recommendation:** Adopt the 2025 SCERA Business Plan.

Ms. Wyne presented the 2025 Business Plan noting that the action items support SCERA's Strategic Plan. She indicated that the Plan includes organizational development coaching and adapting to new software, an investment plan that changes year to year, and increased member outreach efforts, all planned for 2025. She touched on the need for reflection on how SCERA can improve its operations and potential for growth into areas such as compliance and communication. Trustees were appreciative of the thought and strategy that went into the development of the Plan.

A motion was made by Trustee Tambe, seconded by Trustee Williamson, to adopt the 2025 SCERA Business Plan. The motion carried 8-0-0-1 with voting as follows:

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

C. 2025 Board and Committee Meeting Calendar

**Recommendation:** Adopt the 2025 Board and Committee Meeting Calendar.

Ms. Wyne noted the change in the September Investment Committee meeting from Thursday, September 25<sup>th</sup> to Tuesday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>.

A motion was made by Trustee Williamson, seconded by Trustee Jahn, to adopt the 2025 Board and Committee Meeting Calendar. The motion carried 8-0-0-1 with voting as follows:

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

D. SACRS 2025 Legislative Proposal

**Recommendation:** Direct the SACRS Voting Proxy to support the SACRS 2025 Legislative Proposal.

Ms. Wyne explained the SACRS 2025 Legislative Proposal to clean up two sections of the County Employees Retirement Law dealing with the calculation of final average salary for members with less than three years of service and retroactive upgrades of service for members who get reclassified as Safety.

A motion was made by Trustee Williamson, seconded by Trustee Tambe, to direct the SACRS Voting Proxy to support the SACRS 2025 Legislative Proposal. The motion carried 8-0-0-1 with voting as follows:

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

E. Communications

1. Service Retirements October 2024
2. Trustee Education Report – Q3 2024
3. SACRS October 2024 Legislative Summary
4. CALAPRS Administrators Institute Conference Report

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.

1. SACRS Fall Conference, November 12 to 15, 2024, Hyatt Regency Hotel and Spa, Monterey, CA. Trustees Baker, Walsh, and Williams are attending.
2. CALAPRS Trustee Roundtable, October 11, 2024, San Jose Marriott, San Jose, CA.
3. AON Wealth Insight Series – Miami Conference, December 9 to 11, 2024, Miami, FL.
4. CALAPRS General Assembly, March 2 to 5, 2025, Silverado Resort, Napa, 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.

Department Analyst Rebecca Gay reminded Trustees to complete the Socially Responsible Investing surveys.

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

November 21, 2024

8:30 a.m.

Audit Committee

November 21, 2024

~12:00 p.m.

Disability Committee

December 19, 2024

8:30 am.

Retirement Board

December 19, 2024

9:00 a.m.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to conduct, the meeting adjourned at 10:46 a.m.

X. APPROVAL

The above minutes from the October 24, 2024, Retirement Board meeting were approved at the Retirement Board meeting on December 19, 2024.

BRIAN WILLIAMS, CHAIR