

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

Thursday, February 20, 2025
9:16 a.m.

Presiding: Travis Balzarini, Chair

Present: Trustees Neil Baker (Alternate Retiree), Chris Coursey (left at 10:37 a.m.), Amos Eaton, Jared Gonce, Erick Roeser, Joe Tambe, Mark Walsh (Vice Chair), and Bob Williamson; Assistant CEO/Chief Legal Counsel Cristina Hess, Retirement Analyst Rebecca Gay, and Administrative Aide Julia Smith

Absent: Trustee Greg Jahn

Public comments were solicited prior to the meeting by emailing 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.

Chair Balzarini 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 – January 23, 2025

Recommendation: Approve Retirement Board Meeting Minutes – January 23, 2025.

A motion was made by Trustee Williamson, seconded by Trustee Roeser, to approve the Retirement Board Meeting Minutes from January 23, 2025. The motion carried 8-0-0-1 with voting as follows:

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

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 February 20, 2025, meeting:

A. Disability Applications:

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

A motion was made by Trustee Walsh, seconded by Trustee Gonce, to grant he application of Michael Dietrick, Deputy Sheriff II, 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. Gonce	Aye
Mr. Jahn	Absent
Mr. Roeser	Aye
Mr. Tambe	Aye
Mr. Walsh	Aye
Mr. Williamson	Aye

2. RYAN RUSSELL, Sergeant filed 07/22/24 for a service-connected disability retirement.

A motion was made by Trustee Tambe, seconded by Trustee Walsh, to grant the application of Ryan Russell, Sergeant, 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. Gonce	Aye
Mr. Jahn	Absent

Mr. Roeser	Aye
Mr. Tambe	Aye
Mr. Walsh	Aye
Mr. Williamson	Aye

3. DONALD HUDDLESTON, Correctional Lieutenant filed 10/31/24 for a service-connected disability retirement.

A motion was made by Trustee Walsh, seconded by Trustee Coursey, to grant the application of Donald Huddleston, Correctional Lieutenant, 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. Gonce	Aye
Mr. Jahn	Absent
Mr. Roeser	Aye
Mr. Tambe	Aye
Mr. Walsh	Aye
Mr. Williamson	Aye

B. Proposed Decision:

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.

A motion was made by Trustee Tambe, seconded by Trustee Gonce, to adopt the proposed decision of the Administrative Law Judge to deny the application of Rowan Shinohara Taylor, Deputy Sheriff II, 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. Gonce	Aye
Mr. Jahn	Absent
Mr. Roeser	Aye
Mr. Tambe	Aye
Mr. Walsh	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 Balzarini reported that the Board unanimously granted the service-connected disability retirement applications of Michael Dietrick, Deputy Sheriff II, Ryan Russell, Sergeant, and Donald Huddleston, Correctional Lieutenant. The Board unanimously adopted the proposed decision of the Administrative Law Judge to deny the application of Rowan Shinohara Taylor, Deputy Sheriff II, for a service-connected disability retirement.

IV. REGULAR CALENDAR

A. Wire Transfer Policy Review

Recommendation: Approve amendments to the Wire Transfer Policy.

Mr. Roeser suggested the policy contain additional safety measures to safeguard against fraud and proposed enhancing the requirements for setting up a new wire and renaming the policy, "Electronic Payment Policy." This newly named policy would include the process for safe ACH transactions. Ms. Hess stated the policy should be returned to staff for editing and plans to bring the revised policy back to the Board at the March 20, 2025, Board meeting.

B. Incompatible Activities Policy Review

Recommendation: Approve amendments to the Incompatible Activities Policy.

Ms. Hess presented the policy to Board in review form as the policy is consistent with the law and SCERA practices.

A motion was made by Trustee Williamson, seconded by Trustee Walsh, to approve amendments to the Incompatible Activities Policy. The motion carried 7-0-0-2 with voting as follows:

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

C. Educational Presentation by Kara Abelson, Deputy County Counsel – Psychiatric Disabilities

Ms. Abelson provided an interactive educational presentation centering on a trustee's fiduciary duty in disability matters when a disability applicant's condition is based on a psychiatric disability. Ms. Abelson provided the steps of analysis that board members must undertake during their deliberation and provided case examples to exemplify the process.

D. Communications

1. Service Retirements February 2025
2. Normal cost sharing letters; December 31, 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.

1. CALAPRS General Assembly, March 2 to 5, 2025, Silverado Resort, Napa, CA. Trustees Baker and Williamson are attending.
2. AgriVest Annual Shareholder's Meeting, April 3, 2025, Monterey Plaza Hotel, Monterey, CA.
3. SACRS Spring Conference, May 13 to 16, 2025, Omni Rancho Las Palmas Resort, Rancho Mirage, CA. Trustees Walsh and Eaton are planning to attend.
4. Arrowstreet Capital 2025 Client Conference, May 13 to 14, 2025, The Fairmont Copley Hotel, Boston, MA.
5. SACRS UC Berkeley Program, July 13 to 16, 2025, UC Berkeley Haas School of Business, Berkeley, 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.

Mr. Williamson asked if there were any updates regarding the retiree COLA discussion. Ms. Hess stated that CEO Wyne was working with SCERA's actuary, Segal, to prepare the final cost study that the Ad Hoc Cola Committee requested and would soon schedule another Ad Hoc COLA Committee meeting.

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
February 27, 2025
8:30 a.m.

Disability Committee
March 20, 2025
8:30 am.

Retirement Board
March 20, 2025
9:00 a.m.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to conduct, the meeting adjourned at 10:42 a.m.

X. APPROVAL

The above minutes from the February 20, 2025, Retirement Board meeting were approved at the Retirement Board meeting on March 20, 2025.

TRAVIS BALZARINI, CHAIR