

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
BOARD OF PENSIONS AND RETIREMENT
Meeting of July 30, 2024

MINUTES

On July 30, 2024, Jacqueline Dunn, Alternate Chairperson, called the public meeting of the Board of Pensions and Retirement to order at 9:34 a.m. This meeting is being conducted in person in the Board's Conference Room at the Board's offices on the 16th Floor of Two Penn Center. Pursuant to Section 21-1503 of the Philadelphia Code, electronic recordings of this meeting will be made through Microsoft Teams conference technology and by an audio recording.

An electronic recording will be made available to the public online at the Board's website without charge within 10 days. Please note that you consent to such recording by attending, participating, or speaking at such meeting.

Present:

Jacqueline Dunn
Brian Coughlin
Renee Garcia
Andrea Rose
Paul Reed
Marsha Greene-Jones
Carol Stukes Baylor
William Sierra
Adam Thiel

Also Attending:

Francis Bielli – Executive Director, Board of Pensions
Elizabeth Bonner, Aiween Zoleta- Board of Pensions
Miranda Mathias, Denise McNeil- Board of Pensions
Christopher DiFusco, Chief Investment Officer
Bernard Buckley- Deputy CIO
Josh Stein- Chief Compliance Officer
Marianna Fazylova, Crystal Brooks, Abdel-Aziz Ibrahim- Investment Unit
Neshea Bumpus, Lavonia Jenkins – Investment Unit
Ellen Berkowitz, Mumin Islam, Adam Coleman- Law
Brad Nyce-Nationwide
Kweku Obed, Dave Smith- Marquette
Hayley McCollum, Alberto Rivera- Marquette
Lisa Hinds, Caleb Orr, Ansumann Yarmah- Xponance
Yadira Gonzalez, Sean Watson- Xponance

Jacqueline Dunn stated that the first order of business is a motion to adopt the rules of order that the Board has approved and used for its virtual public meetings and in-person public meetings. The purpose is to help ensure that accurate and complete audio-visual recordings of the meeting occur to comply with the Code's requirements.

The motion to adopt the new procedures for the meeting carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES OF JUNE 27, 2024

The motion to approve the Minutes of June 27, 2024, carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

CONSIDERATION OF (113) PENSION APPLICATIONS AND (67) WITHDRAWAL APPLICATIONS

The motion to approve carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

APPLICATIONS FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY BENEFITS

Case of Troy Richards, Application for Service-Connected Disability Benefits under Pension Plan “16”

This is an application submitted by Troy Richards, former Brick Mason with the Water Department for Service-Connected Disability benefits under Pension Plan “16”.

According to Mr. Richards, on May 1, 2017, after exiting a parked City vehicle a driver blew their horn and sped by striking him. The impact threw him onto the hood thereafter he rolled to the ground. Emergency medical treatment was provided at Temple University Hospital. Mr. Richards reports that on March 5, 2019, while lifting equipment he sustained an injury (pull) to his back. On September 28, 2020, while reinforcing a 10 by 20-foot hole he attempted to remove a submerged plant and reinjured his back.

Brian Coughlin- Abstain
Renee Garcia- Deny
Marsha Green Jones- Deny
Adam Thiel- Abstain

Paul Reed- Abstain
Andrea Rose- Deny
Willie Sierra- Abstain
Carol Stukes Baylor- Abstain

The motion to approve failed 0-3-5. Motion denied

Case of Tierrah D. Summers, Application for Service-Connected Disability Benefits under Pension Plan “16”

This is an application submitted by Tierrah Summers, former Laborer with the Streets/Sanitation Department for Service-Connected Disability benefits under Pension Plan “16”.

According to Ms. Summers, on October 24, 2019, she was pre-tripping her vehicle when the hood began to fall on top of her. In attempts to catch it, she sustained injuries to her right shoulder and down her right arm as it slammed shut. Ms. Summers reports that on September 15, 2020, while turning the turnbuckle on her truck, it would not open, and she instantly felt pain in her right shoulder. She sustained injuries to her right hand, right wrist, and right rotator cuff

Brian Coughlin- Abstain
Renee Garcia- Deny
Marsha Green Jones- Deny
Adam Thiel- Abstain

Paul Reed- Abstain
Andrea Rose- Deny
Willie Sierra- Abstain
Carol Stukes Baylor- Abstain

The motion to approve failed 0-3-5. Motion denied

Case of Edward M. Ashburn II, Application for Service-Connected Disability Benefits under Pension Plan “B”

This is an application submitted by Edward Ashburn, former Police Officer for Service-Connected Disability benefits under Pension Plan “B”.

According to Mr. Ashburn, on April 6, 2021, while escorting an apprehended prisoner/fugitive to a federal holding facility his government issued vehicle was struck head-on by a vehicle traveling in the opposite direction. Mr. Ashburn reports that the striking vehicle crossed the median and became airborne due to its accelerated rate of speed.

The motion to approve carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Case of Sean E. Dandridge, Application for Service-Connected Disability Benefits under Pension Plan “B”

This is an application submitted by Sean Dandridge, former Police Lieutenant for Service-Connected Disability benefits under Pension Plan “B”.

According to Mr. Dandridge, on July 26, 2018, while exiting his patrol vehicle to execute a traffic stop, the open door was struck by another vehicle attempting to go around his stopped patrol car. Mr. Dandridge reports that the striking vehicle impacted on the edge of the door and forcefully snapped his upper body to the front and left, injuring his upper torso, left side, left shoulder, left arm, and neck.

Brian Coughlin- Abstain
Renee Garcia- Deny
Marsha Green Jones- Deny
Adam Thiel- Abstain

Paul Reed- Abstain
Andrea Rose- Deny
Willie Sierra- Abstain
Carol Stukes Baylor- Abstain

The motion to approve failed 0-3-5. Motion denied

Case of Charles H. Durham Jr., Application for Service-Connected Disability Benefits under Pension Plan “B”

This is an application submitted by Charles Durham Jr., former Police Officer for Service-Connected Disability benefits under Pension Plan “B”.

According to Mr. Durham, on April 28, 2021, while loading equipment into his patrol vehicle and checking it for service his left pinky was caught and pulled in an awkward direction. Mr. Durham reports that following his tour he noticed severe swelling and immediately reported the incident to his sergeant.

The motion to approve carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Case of Leonardo M. Gutierrez, Application for Service-Connected Disability Benefits under Pension Plan “B”

This is an application submitted by Leonardo Gutierrez, former Police Officer for Service-Connected Disability benefits under Pension Plan “B”.

According to Mr. Gutierrez, on December 17, 2016, while walking toward his assigned patrol car he slipped on black ice in the parking lot. Mr. Gutierrez reports that he landed on his back while wearing his full “rig” injuring his lower back, right knee, and index finger of his right hand. Additionally, while being transported to the emergency room in a patrol car the vehicle was broadsided on the passenger side further aggravating his injuries.

Brian Coughlin- Abstain
Renee Garcia- Deny
Marsha Green Jones- Deny
Adam Thiel- Abstain

Paul Reed- Abstain
Andrea Rose- Deny
Willie Sierra- Abstain
Carol Stukes Baylor- Abstain

The motion to approve failed 0-3-5. Motion denied

Case of Cedric B. Jones, Administrative Application for Service-Connected Disability Benefits under Pension Plan “B”

This is an **administrative** application submitted by Cedric Jones, former Police Officer for Service-Connected Disability benefits under Pension Plan “B”.

According to Mr. Jones, on June 2, 2020, while stepping onto the running board of a patrol wagon (van) his foot slipped and he fell to the ground injuring his knees and right wrist.

Brian Coughlin- Approve
Renee Garcia- Deny
Marsha Green Jones- Deny
Adam Thiel- Approve

Paul Reed- Approve
Andrea Rose- Deny
Willie Sierra- Approve
Carol Stukes Baylor- Approve

The motion to approve carried 5-3.

Case of John F. McWilliams, Application for Service-Connected Disability Benefits under Pension Plan “B”

This is an application submitted by John McWilliams, former Police Sergeant for Service-Connected Disability benefits under Pension Plan “B”.

According to Mr. McWilliams his mental deterioration began when he entered the Police Academy and continued until his date of separation. Mr. McWilliams reports that the culture of alcoholism, infidelity, and “shady” behavior along with the criminal violence and lack of compassion for humanity he witnessed hastened his descent into depression and alcoholism. Mr. McWilliams cites a lack of training, mental support, and preparation by supervisors and instructors as the predominant contributors to his stressors.

Andrea Rose made a motion to send directly to a hearing panel for additional information and clarity. Brian Coughlin seconded the motion.

The motion to send directly to a hearing panel carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Case of Rahsaan T. Price, Application for Service-Connected Disability Benefits under Pension Plan “B”

This is an application submitted by Rahsaan Price, former Police Officer for Service-Connected Disability benefits under Pension Plan “B”.

According to Mr. Price, on October 19, 2012, he was parked and in the driver’s seat of his assigned patrol car when he was rear-ended by a driver traveling at a great rate of speed. The driver was driving under the influence. Mr. Price reports that he sustained injuries to his right shoulder, back, and right thumb.

Brian Coughlin- Approve
Renee Garcia- Deny
Marsha Green Jones- Deny
Adam Thiel- Approve

Paul Reed- Approve
Andrea Rose- Approve
Willie Sierra- Approve
Carol Stukes Baylor- Approve

The motion to approve carried 6-2.

Case of Abigail Rodriguez, Application for Service-Connected Disability Benefits under Pension Plan “B”

This is an application submitted by Abigail Rodriguez, former Police Officer for Service-Connected Disability benefits under Pension Plan “B”.

According to Ms. Rodriguez, on November 5, 2018, she was injured during an “active shooter” training scenario. Ms. Rodriguez reports that she sustained multiple paintball “hits” targeted at her hands and fingers. Ms. Rodriguez reports that on January 4, 2023, while working “restricted duty” she reinjured her left hand while operating a hole punch.

Brian Coughlin- Approve
Renee Garcia- Deny
Marsha Green Jones- Deny
Adam Thiel- Approve

Paul Reed- Approve
Andrea Rose- Approve
Willie Sierra- Approve
Carol Stukes Baylor- Approve

The motion to approve carried 6-2.

Case of Michael F. Walker, Application for Service-Connected Disability Benefits under Pension Plan “B”

This is an application submitted by Michael Walker, former Police Officer for Service-Connected Disability benefits under Pension Plan “B”.

According to Mr. Walker, on December 10, 2019, while attempting to restrain and transport a homeless male with mental complications a struggle ensued; the male became resistant and combative. Mr. Walker reports that the male kicked him in the knee and as the male was being carried to the patrol wagon, he rolled over causing him to “wrench” his back.

Brian Coughlin- Approve
Renee Garcia- Deny
Marsha Green Jones- Deny
Adam Thiel- Approve

Paul Reed- Approve
Andrea Rose- Approve
Willie Sierra- Approve
Carol Stukes Baylor- Approve

The motion to approve carried 6-2.

Case of Timothy M. Bass, Application for Service-Connected Disability Benefits under Pension Plan "D"

This is an application submitted by Timothy Bass, former Police Detective for Service-Connected Disability benefits under Pension Plan "D".

According to Mr. Bass, on June 29, 2022, while attempting to subdue and restrain a homicide fugitive a struggle ensued; two family members jumped my partner and myself while the fugitive fled into the household vestibule. There was a violent struggle in the vestibule. Mr. Bass reports that he struck his knee on the sidewalk and rose to chase the fleeing suspect. Mr. Bass further reports that as he knelt to handcuff the suspect another male was on his back punching, choking, and twisting his neck/head to prohibit the arrest. After the arrest was concluded assistance was called.

Brian Coughlin- Deny
Renee Garcia- Deny
Marsha Green Jones- Deny
Adam Thiel- Deny

Paul Reed- Deny
Andrea Rose- Deny
Willie Sierra- Deny
Carol Stukes Baylor- Deny

The motion to approve failed 0-8. Motion denied.

Case of Anthony Y. Benson, Application for Service-Connected Disability Benefits under Pension Plan "Y"

This is an application submitted by Anthony Benson, former Correctional Sergeant with the Department of Corrections for Service-Connected Disability benefits under Pension Plan "Y".

According to Mr. Benson, on July 29, 2020, while touring the facility he fell down the metal/concrete stairs in the fire tower because the elevators were not operational

The motion to approve carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Case of Navarro Fischer, Application for Service-Connected Disability Benefits under Pension Plan "Y"

This is an application submitted by Navarro Fischer, former Correctional Officer with the Department of Corrections for Service-Connected Disability benefits under Pension Plan "Y".

According to Mr. Fischer, on May 31, 2018, during weapons training and certification he injured his right wrist and hand due to the constant recoil. Mr. Fischer further reports that on December 4, 2020, while demonstrating proper weapon handling and manipulation he experienced a sharp pain and swelling in his right hand.

Brian Coughlin- Abstain
Renee Garcia- Deny
Marsha Green Jones- Deny
Adam Thiel- Abstain

Paul Reed- Abstain
Andrea Rose- Deny
Willie Sierra- Abstain
Carol Stukes Baylor- Abstain

The motion to approve failed 0-3-5. Motion denied

Case of Hayden Garrick, Application for Service-Connected Disability Benefits under Pension Plan "Y"

This is an application submitted by Hayden Garrick, former Correctional Officer with the Department of Corrections for Service-Connected Disability benefits under Pension Plan "Y".

According to Mr. Garrick, on September 14, 2017, while standing in the doorway of a cell overseeing a medical procedure being performed on an inmate, his thumb was pinned and crushed in the door frame.

The motion to approve carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Case of Joel Gray, Application for Service-Connected Disability Benefits under Pension Plan "Y"

This is an application submitted by Joel Gray, former Building Maintenance Mechanic with the Department of Public Property for Service-Connected Disability benefits under Pension Plan "Y".

According to Mr. Gray, on July 26, 2021, he was unloading his truck when his coworker, who did not see him, hit him on his left side with a steel barricade. On impact, Mr. Gray twisted in pain, and sustained injuries to his left and right hips, left shoulder, and lower back.

Brian Coughlin- Abstain
Renee Garcia- Deny
Marsha Green Jones- Deny
Adam Thiel- Abstain

Paul Reed- Abstain
Andrea Rose- Deny
Willie Sierra- Abstain
Carol Stukes Baylor- Abstain

The motion to approve failed 0-3-5. Motion denied

APPLICATION FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED DEATH BENEFITS

Case of John F. Garrow, Deceased, Application for Service-Connected Death Benefits under Pension Plan "A"

This is an application submitted by Shannon M. Garrow, spouse of the late John Garrow, former Fire Battalion Chief with the Fire Department for Service-Connected Death benefits under Pension Plan "A"

Shannon Garrow reports that on February 19, 2024, her husband fell ill while working as Battalion Chief. She further reports that her husband was transported to the emergency room of Temple University Hospital for treatment and subsequently succumbed to cardiovascular complications.

John Garrow was appointed to the Fire Department on December 31, 1993. He accumulated 32 years and 2 days of credited service. John Garrow was sixty (60) years of age at the time of death.

Brian Coughlin made a motion to send it directly to a hearing panel for additional information. Paul Reed seconded the motion.

Brian Coughlin- Approve

Renee Garcia- Deny

Marsha Green Jones- Approve

Adam Thiel- Approve

Paul Reed- Approve

Andrea Rose- Approve

Willie Sierra- Approve

Carol Stukes Baylor- Approve

The motion to defer to a hearing panel carried 7-1.

APPLICATION TO APPEAL REVOCATION OF WAIVER FOR BENEFITS

Case of Aretha M. Hall Deceased, Application to Appeal Revoke of Waiver of Benefits- Plan "J"

This an application by Ricktesha Hall and Richard Hall, appeal to revoke the waiver by Donnie Moore.

Aretha Hall, Social Worker Supervisor, died. December 6, 2018. At the time of her death, Aretha Hall was still employed with the city, she was also in DROP.

At the time of her death, she had a designation of beneficiary for pensions benefit form dated October 14, 2014, designating Richard A. Hall III, son, Ricktesha Hall, daughter and Donnie Moore Fiancé listed as beneficiaries. Her Group Life Insurance form dated October 14, 2014, also listed the same individuals.

On January 11, 2019, an Ordinary Death appointment was scheduled for her three beneficiaries. Her son, daughter and Mr. Moore came in together to apply for the death benefit. At the time of the appointment Mr. Moore elected to waive the Ordinary Death Benefit and just receive his portion of her DROP funds.

He filled out the waiver of benefit form and indicated he was waiving the monthly death benefit. At that time, Mr. Moore was informed by Pension Counselor Shelita Thomas and Pension Counseling Supervisor, Stephen Martin, that he can revoke the waiver at any time.

Ricktesha and Richard Hall were also informed that if Mr. Moore does revoke his waiver, their benefit would be adjusted accordingly. Both Ricktesha Hall and Richard Hall elected to receive the lifetime benefit.

Board of Pension's received letter date April 23, 2024, from Mr. Moore's attorney requesting to revoke is waiver.

Brian Coughlin- Deny
Renee Garcia- Deny
Marsha Green Jones- Deny
Adam Thiel- Deny

Paul Reed- Deny
Andrea Rose- Deny
Willie Sierra- Deny
Carol Stukes Baylor- Deny

The motion to approve failed 0-8. Motion denied.

OLD BUSINESS

Hearing Panel Summary for Linda M. Long, Application for Service-Connected Disability Benefits under Pension Plan “A”

This case was **deferred to a hearing panel** at the Board meeting held on February 22, 2024. A hearing panel was conducted on June 5, 2024.

The hearing panel recommendations are as follows:

Marsha Greene-Jones:	Approve the application
Paul Reed:	Approve the application
Francois Dutchie, Esq.:	Approve the application

Case Summary:

According to Ms. Long, over the course of her lengthy career with the Fire Department she has been exposed to fumes and various toxic chemicals beginning with the February 3, 1991, fire at Meridian and including her involvement at the June 21, 2019, Philadelphia Energy Solutions fire. Ms. Long reports that her breathing difficulty worsened within 24 hours of the refinery explosion and fire. Ms. Long further reports that hydrogen fluoride was released by the explosion and that information was not immediately provided to the responding fire personnel.

The motion to approve carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Hearing Panel Summary for Cathy Ramer, Application for Service-Connected Disability Benefits under Pension Plan “A”

This case was **denied** at the Board meeting held on August 29, 2023. A hearing panel was conducted on May 15, 2024.

The hearing panel recommendations are as follows:

Andrea Rose:	Approve the appeal
Francois Dutchie, Esq.:	Approve the appeal

Case Summary:

This is an application submitted by Cathy Ramer, former Firefighter for Service-Connected Disability benefits under Pension Plan “A”.

According to Ms. Ramer, on February 5, 2016, while descending the rear ladder of a fire truck she slipped and began to fall backwards. Ms. Ramer states that she caught the handrail with her left hand, twisted and dangled in the air until she was able to get her foot back on the ladder (rung).

The motion to approved carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Hearing Panel Summary for Felix E. Nosik, Appeal the denial of an application for Service-Connected Disability Benefits under Pension Plan “B”

This case was **denied** at the Board meeting held on August 29, 2023. A virtual hearing panel was conducted on April 30, 2024. This was a Sammons case.

The hearing panel recommendations are as follows:

Brian Coughlin:	Approve the appeal
Andrea Rose:	Approve the appeal
Sharolyn Murphy, Esq.:	Deny the appeal

Case Summary:

This is an application submitted by Felix Nosik, former Police Officer for Service-Connected Disability benefits under Pension Plan “B”.

Brian Coughlin- Approve	Paul Reed- Approve
Renee Garcia- Deny	Andrea Rose- Approve
Marsha Green Jones- Deny	Willie Sierra- Approve
Adam Thiel- Abstain	Carol Stukes Baylor- Approve

The motion to approve carried 5-2-1.

Hearing Panel Summary for Suzanne A. Tucker, Application for Service-Connected Disability Benefits under Pension Plan “J”

This case was denied at the Board meeting held on August 29, 2023. A hearing panel was conducted on May 15, 2024.

The hearing panel recommendations are as follows:

Andrea Rose:	Approve the appeal
Francois Dutchie, Esq.:	Deny the appeal

Case Summary:

This is an application submitted by Suzanne Tucker, former Heavy Equipment Operator I with the Streets Department for Service-Connected Disability benefits under Pension Plan “J”.

According to Ms. Tucker, on June 15, 2020, while driving the trash truck she was involved in a vehicular accident. Ms. Tucker states that the collision caused injuries to her left side, arm, shoulder, elbow, leg, foot, neck, and eye. She was transported to the hospital for medical attention which included medical personnel placing three staples in her head.

Brian Coughlin- Approve	Paul Reed- Approve
Renee Garcia- Deny	Andrea Rose- Approve
Marsha Green Jones- Deny	Willie Sierra- Approve
Adam Thiel- Abstain	Carol Stukes Baylor- Approve

The motion to approve carried 5-2-1.

NEW BUSINESS

Executive Director's Report

- Staff and the CTO of OIT have been meeting to evaluate businesses processes for benefits to potentially review technological upgrades.
- Josh Stein to hold a Fiduciary and Proxy initiative seminar in the Fall. Please be on the lookout for dates and times. Proxy sub-committee to meet after seminar.
- The law department is undergoing restructuring. Designating Mumin Islam as Deputy of the Finance Pension Unit. Adam Coleman moving to another unit.
- MES Solutions, the new medical panel, has been receiving cases. Intake process is seamless.
- Applications and appeals continue to increase. Trustee participation for the hearing panels is essential.
- Thank you to the interns in attendance from Xponance.

Litigation Summary

- The Bentley case has been closed in favor of the city.
- No additional updates.

The motion to adjourn carried unanimously on a roll call vote at 9:59 AM.