

**CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
BOARD OF PENSIONS AND RETIREMENT
Meeting of April 22, 2021**

MINUTES

On April 22, 2021, Jacqueline Dunn called the Regular Meeting of the Board of Pensions and Retirement to order at 9:37 AM. The meeting was conducted by Microsoft Teams Conference App.

Present: Jacqueline Dunn
Ronald Stagliano
Carol Stukes-Baylor
Nicole McCormac
Rebecca Rhynhart
Vanessa Garrett-Harley
Marsha Greene-Jones
Brian Coughlin
Veronica Pankey
Sharolyn Murphy
Leontyne Freeman

Also Attending: Francis Bielli, Bill Rubin – Board of Pensions
Ellen Berkowitz, Sean McGrath – Law Department
Christopher DiFusco, Bernard Buckley, Kristyn Bair – Investment Unit
James Cousounis, Dominique Cherry – Investment Unit
Lavonia Jenkins, Neshea Bumpus – Investment Unit
Nick Hand, Sarah DeNault – City Controller’s Office
Brad Nyce, Bina Kumar, Jeff Francis, Keith Wild – Nationwide
Erica Harriton - BlackRock
Will Green – Loop Capital
Nicole Johnson-Barnes, Jesus Jeminez – Marquette Associates
Thomas Ginsberg – PEW Charitable Trusts
Richard Sensenbrenner – Finance Department
Robert McDermott – City Council

Jacqueline Dunn called the meeting to order and stated that the first order of business was the approval of the Virtual Procedures for the Board of Pensions Benefits meeting.

The motion to approve the Virtual Procedures carried unanimously 8-0 on a roll call vote.

CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES OF MARCH 25, 2021

The motion to approve the Minutes of March 25, 2021 carried unanimously 8-0 on a roll call vote.

CONSIDERATION OF 152 PENSION APPLICATIONS AND 48 WITHDRAWAL APPLICATIONS

The motion to approve carried unanimously 8-0 on a roll call vote.

APPLICATION FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY BENEFITS

Case of Latashi Trueheart, Application for Service-Connected Disability Benefits - Plan Y

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

According to Ms. Trueheart, on September 4, 2009 she was stabbed in the right cheek by what she describes as a "mentally unstable" inmate. Ms. Trueheart states that she was his "initiation" and the attack prompted her to look over her shoulder and live in fear both on and off the job.

Ms. Trueheart states that on April 13, 2019 she was rushed to the Emergency Room and admitted to the hospital following an incident at the job when she passed out.

The Board voted as follows:

Brian Coughlin – Approve
Vanessa Garrett-Harley – Deny
Marsha Greene-Jones – Approve
Sharolyn Murphy – Deny

Veronica Pankey - Approve
Nicole McCormac – Approve
Carol Stukes-Baylor – Approve
Ronald Stagliano - Approve

The motion to approve carried 6-2.

APPLICATION FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED DEATH BENEFITS

Case of James Walker, Jr, Deceased, Application for Service Connected Death Healthcare Benefit – Plan D

This is an application by Vita M. Walker, widow of James Walker, Jr., former Police Lieutenant, for Service Connected Death Healthcare benefits under section 22-501(5) of the pension code in Plan D.

James Walker, Jr. was first hired by the Police Department on June 22, 1987. His widow, Vita Walker, is listed as his pension beneficiary. Lieutenant Walker entered the DROP program effective November 7, 2016.

James Walker, Jr. died April 5, 2020 of Acute Respiratory Distress syndrome due to Covid-19 infection.

Medical Director Dr. Marilyn Howarth has determined that Lieutenant Walker's illness and death were solely due to exposure to Covid-19 on the job.

The Board voted as follows:

Brian Coughlin – Approve
Vanessa Garrett-Harley – Abstain
Marsha Greene-Jones – Approve
Sharolyn Murphy – Approve

Veronica Pankey - Approve
Nicole McCormac - Approve
Carol Stukes-Baylor - Approve
Ronald Stagliano - Approve

The motion to approve carried 7-0-1.

Case of Eric M. Gore, Deceased, Application for Service Connected Death Benefits – Plan A

This is an application by Zenaida S. Viloría, widow of Eric M. Gore, former Fire Department Paramedic, for Service Connected Death benefits in Plan A.

Eric M. Gore was first hired by the Police Department on August 13, 1993. He later became employed by the Fire Department effective December 9, 1996.

As his widow, Zenaida S. Viloría is applying for Service Connected Death benefits under the provisions of section 22-501(2)(a) of the pension code.

Eric M. Gore died June 2, 2020.

Medical Director Dr. Marilyn Howarth has determined that Eric M. Gore's illness and death were solely due to exposure to Covid -19 on the job.

The Board voted as follows:

Brian Coughlin – Approve
Vanessa Garrett-Harley – Approve
Marsha Greene-Jones – Approve
Sharolyn Murphy – Approve

Veronica Pankey - Approve
Nicole McCormac - Approve
Carol Stukes-Baylor - Approve
Ronald Stagliano - Approve

The motion to approve carried unanimously 8-0.

APPLICATION FOR SURVIVORSHIP BENEFITS ON BEHALF OF A MEDICALLY DEPENDENT ADULT CHILD

Case of Patricia Savage, Deceased, Application for Survivorship Benefits on Behalf of a Medically Dependent Adult Child, (MDAC) Plan J

This is an application by Morgan N. Savage, daughter of Patricia Savage, to receive Survivorship benefits as the MDAC under Plan J.

Patricia Savage, a Collection Customer Representative, died on February 17, 2020. She retired from the Revenue Department effective October 26, 1992.

Ms. Savage chose Survivorship Option 4 when she retired. As she divorced Morgan N. Savage's 'father in 1987, there is no surviving spouse. John Bell, Patricia Savage's son, is the Power of Attorney for his sister Morgan N. Savage.

The Board voted as follows:

Brian Coughlin – Approve
Vanessa Garrett-Harley – Approve
Marsha Greene-Jones – Approve
Sharolyn Murphy – Deny

Veronica Pankey - Approve
Carol Stukes-Baylor - Approve
Nicole McCormac - Approve
Ronald Stagliano - Approve

The motion to approve carried 7-1.

APPLICATION TO RESCIND DROP ENROLLMENT

Case of Christopher Gilman, Application to Rescind his DROP enrollment, Plan B

This is an application by Christopher Gilman, Police Officer, Philadelphia Police Department requesting to rescind his DROP enrollment.

On June 11, 2020 Mr. Gilman requested a DROP application. On July 10, 2020 a DROP application, 4-year amortization schedule and survivorship application were mailed out along with the first eligible DROP entry date of 9/21/2020.

On December 16, 2020 Mr. Gilman returned his signed DROP application with DROP entry date of March 22, 2021 along with proof of age and survivorship forms. On January 5, 2021 Mr. Gilman was mailed his DROP congratulation letter.

On March 11, 2021, Mr. Gilman sent an email requesting to rescind his enrollment in DROP. His reasoning was he didn't know the Board of Pensions was not accepting visitors and he wants to participate in the catch-up program with deferred compensation.

Mr. Gilman was informed when he requested his initial DROP application that the Board of Pensions was not doing face to face interviews.

Rescinding enrollment: “Once an employee has submitted the application and has been enrolled in the DROP, the employee may not rescind enrollment or change the selected date for entering the DROP. **Once accepted into DROP, election to participate is irrevocable.**”

March 8, 2021 Stacey M. White, Assistant to the Director of Pensions, administratively denied Mr. Gilman’s request to rescind his enrollment in DROP.

Mr. Gilman submitted a letter dated March 11, 2021 appealing the administrative denial.

The Board voted as follows:

Brian Coughlin – Deny
Vanessa Garrett-Harley – Deny
Marsha Greene-Jones – Deny
Sharolyn Murphy – Deny

Veronica Pankey - Deny
Nicole McCormac – Deny
Carol Stukes-Baylor – Deny
Ronald Stagliano – Abstain

The motion to approve fails 0-7-1. Motion denied.

NEW BUSINESS

Executive Director’s Report – Mr. Bielli updated the Board on the following:

- Virtual Speaking Engagements for Christopher DiFusco – Mr. DiFusco is scheduled to speak at several panels on pension topics including diversity and inclusion February 25, April 9 and April 27, 2021. There is no cost to the City for these events.
- There will be a proposal at the May meeting to reschedule the Trustee election. It will be a similar timeframe to the normal Trustee election cycle. More information will be provided at the May Board meeting.
- Councilman Henon has a Service-Connected Death bill in committee now. It was circulated to the Trustees and will be discussed with a subcommittee of the Board including Ms. Pankey, Ms. Garrett-Hartley and Ms. Rhynhart or a representative from the Controller’s office.
- We are exploring ways to update the system to accept a greater amount of data and increase search functions that will assist pension counselors.

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Litigation Summary – Ms. Berkowitz stated there 10 cases in Common Pleas Court as listed on the Litigation summary.

The motion to adjourn carried unanimously at 9:55 AM.