MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF
THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
STATE EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF ILLINOIS

August 13, 2026

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the State Employees' Retirement System of Illinois was held on Thursday, August 13, 2026, at 8:45 a.m. in the System's Springfield office at 2101 S. Veterans Parkway.

Committee Members Present:

Marvin Becker, Chairperson
Arnold Black, Vice-Chairperson
Timothy Blair, Executive Secretary

Others Present:

Jeff Houch, Associate Executive Secretary
Jacob Schlosser, General Counsel
Casey Evans, Chief Internal Auditor
Jessica Blood, Recording Secretary
Aaron Evans, Attorney, Sorling Northrup

Others Present via Teleconference:

Steven Rooney, Claimant
Gina Rooney, Claimant's Associate
Barbara Bell, Claimant's Attorney
Kristi Landolina, Stenographer

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Chairperson Becker presented the minutes of the Executive Committee's meeting on July 9, 2026, for approval. Copies of the minutes were previously emailed to Committee members for review. Chairperson Becker moved to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by Executive Secretary Blair and passed unanimously.

Routine Claims Report

The Routine Claims Report for July 2026 was presented. Following a brief discussion, the Routine Claims Report for July 2026, as prepared by staff, was received by the Committee.

Old Business

Lisa Linder – Appeal for Reinstatement of Occupational Disability Benefits – Deferred

Lisa Linder works for the Illinois Department of Corrections as a Correctional Officer. On July 10, 2022 she suffered a work-related injury. She underwent a meniscus repair and disputed left knee replacement.

Ms. Linder received TTD benefits and SERS occupational benefits October 16, 2023 through August 15, 2025. TTD was terminated due to an IME showing she could perform heavy work. She returned to work on August 27, 2025 and continued to work until she resigned on March 31, 2026 after signing a settlement contract on March 18, 2026.
Contract disputes left knee replacement, and no future medical will be paid on treatment for the left knee.

Ms. Linder then applied for SERS occupational disability benefits again, based on receiving this settlement. SERS denied this claim, citing 40 ILCS 5/14-123, which states an occupational benefit ends when the member becomes gainfully employed. She became gainfully employed when she returned to work for the State of Illinois.

Ms. Linder and her attorney, Jim Vainikos, requested a personal hearing in the Springfield office. They claimed the agency was no longer accommodating her restrictions and that she was asked to resign by the agency. They feel that Ms. Linder should have her occupational disability benefits reinstated.

Attorney Vainikos presented the appeal on behalf of Ms. Linder at the Committee's July 9, 2026 meeting. After discussing the information presented, the Committee decided to refer additional medical evidence to a third-party physician for evaluation to aid the committee's determination on whether she qualifies for the disability benefit.

Jeff Houch, Associate Executive Secretary, informed the Committee that the third-party physician found the additional evidence supported Ms. Linder's request for continued disability benefits and no further action was necessary.

Lori Rees – Request for Reappeal – FAC Recalculation – Deferred

On June 11, 2025, the Executive Committee unanimously denied Lori Rees's appeal in which she requested the following outcomes:

- Utilize her "uncapped" monthly rate of compensation as her Final Average Compensation (FAC) calculation;
- Include the unpaid longevity pay rate in her F AC calculation; and
- Allow her to purchase 0.5 months of service credit associated with the gap in service related to her leave of absence which began in 2019.

Ms. Rees submitted additional documentation and is requesting a reappeal of her FAC

calculation.

Following a review of the additional information provided at their July 13, 2026 meeting, the Committee decided to defer a decision on whether to grant Ms. Rees a reappeal of her case pending a ratification decision on her initial appeal from the SERS Board of Trustees at their July 2026 meeting.

After further review of the additional information provided and some discussion, along with the SERS Board's decision to ratify the initial denial of Ms. Rees' appeal, no Committee member moved to grant Ms. Rees a reappeal.

New Business

Steven Rooney – Appeal Termination of Occupational Disability Benefits – Gainful Employment – Personal Appeal via Teleconference – 9:00 a.m.

Steven Rooney has been receiving occupational disability benefits continually since 2011. On March 24, 2026, SERS requested tax returns to verify that he was not generating income above the gainful employment limit. Based on tax returns, SERS staff determined that he was a landlord and that he has been gainfully employed. He is appealing this determination.

The Schedule E for "Supplemental Income and Loss" for real estate shows he is renting mobile or manufactured homes in Florida and Wisconsin. In he and his wife, Gina's 2024 return, he had 11 properties with rental receipts of $104,278 and showed an income of $10,523. In 2025, he had 12 properties with rental receipts totaling $75,189, showing a loss of $10,702. He does have expenses listed on the Schedule E which generally includes auto/travel, insurance, repairs, taxes, utilities, garbage service, but no expenses shown for a property manager.

He began occupational disability benefits in August 2009 and later received an IWCC settlement beginning June 2011. Each property was purchased between June 2017 to October 2025. The properties are in Walworth County, Wisconsin and in Pasco County or Hernando County, Florida.

The petition asserts that all property was either purchased prior to the injury, was transferred to a trust with a third-party trustee after the injury or was exchanged under Section 1031 (but never "sold"), therefore exempting any sale of property from 2017 to 2025 from "gainful employment."

The petition further alleges that, although Steven was involved as a landlord prior to the injury, he no longer collects rent, contracts with vendors for care of the property, nor is in any way involved in maintenance of the business.

Mr. and Mrs. Rooney provided materials including lease agreements, eviction notices and other material indicating that Gina is primarily involved in the leasing and maintenance of at least some of these properties, but there remain deeds for properties

for which no lease has been provided.

Additionally, Steven was the owner-operator of Main Street Suites, an Illinois business which has since been dissolved. Despite this fact, one lease provided lists Main Street as the landlord, implying Main Street, and thereby Steve, is still conducting business.

Steven and Gina Rooney, along with attorney Barbara Bell, presented their appeal to the Committee. The oral proceedings were recorded by stenographer Kristi Landolina, and the transcripts shall be provided to Mr. Rooney and the Executive Committee. Following a discussion regarding the information presented, the Committee referred to external counsel for a recommendation.

Felice Romanzi – Appeal Termination of Occupational Disability Benefits – Gainful Employment – Personal Appeal via Teleconference – 9:45 a.m.

Jeff Houch informed the Committee that Mr. Romanzi had requested to defer his appeal to a later date.

Michelle Bergbower – Appeal Denial of Nonoccupational Disability Benefits

Michelle Bergbower works as a Human Services Caseworker for the Illinois Department of Human Services. She alleges disability since March 31, 2026 due to an impairment.

Ms. Bergbower's file was sent to a third-party physician for determination. The reviewer found the evidence did not support an incapacity to perform her job duties. They noted she was engaged in treatment, but the frequency of services provided was not consistent with an individual impaired by the condition. They also point out that on an April 23, 2026 visit, she had no signs or symptoms that would impact her ability to work.

Ms. Bergbower is appealing against the denial of nonoccupational disability benefits and provided a written statement from her medical provider supporting her claim for disability benefits.

Following a review of the information provided, the Committee decided to defer a decision pending the receipt of additional medical documentation from Ms. Bergbower.

Craig Medinger – Appeal Denial of Nonoccupational Disability Benefits

Craig Medinger is employed as a Public Service Representative by the Secretary of State at a CDL facility. His May 27, 2026 application for non-occupational disability benefits was denied after a third-party physician review found that the medical documents did not support that Mr. Medinger's alleged disabling conditions have mentally or physically incapacitated him from performing his job duties.

Mr. Medinger provided a statement from his primary care physician in support of his

request for disability benefits but did not provide further medical test results or documentation to corroborate his claim.

After reviewing the documentation provided and some discussion, Chairperson Becker moved to deny Mr. Medinger's appeal. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairperson Black and passed unanimously.

Denise Napier – Appeal Overpayment of Disability Benefits

Denise Napier is a Public Service Representative for the Illinois Secretary of State. She is appealing a staff decision that she was overpaid a disability benefit for April of 2026.

SERS notified Ms. Napier that her most recent disability application was approved on March 20, 2026. The period covered in the first payment (issued March 25, 2026) was for February 22 through February 28, 2026. Although subsequent payments were made, she returned to work on March 9, 2026. Ms. Napier was notified of the overpayment for March on May 5, 2026. In the interim, she again went on a leave of absence from April 16-30, 2026. The payment for the most recent leave should have been issued around July 10, 2026, but Ms. Napier claims she has received no such payment. She further requests that SERS send her the exact amount of her overpayment and when these payments were made.

Ms. Napier was previously denied disability benefits on December 26, 2024 and appealed the denial. The appeal was denied and she reappealed. She was granted disability benefits in April 2025.

After discussing the facts presented, the Committee decided to defer a decision pending further research into her case.

Marie L. White – Request for Reappeal – Reinstatement of Service Credit after Termination Refund

On July 10, 2025, the Executive Committee unanimously denied Marie White's appeal to reinstate her service credit after receiving a termination refund.

Ms. White was issued a $3,509.10 termination refund on April 13, 1984, which represented 68.00 months of service credit. While SERS and the Office of the Illinois Comptroller have limited records regarding this transaction, SERS contends that this payment was issued on warrant number RA8427669 and that such payment did not escheat.

Ms. White has repeatedly requested documentation that the payment was cashed but has not been satisfied with the information received. She began contributing to the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) on July 1, 2017. She is several months below the 2-year TRS service credit threshold necessary to allow her to buy back her refunded SERS credits, see 40 ILCS 5/14-130(b) and 40 ILCS 5/20-118.

Ms. White is requesting a reappeal of her case and submitted a letter from the Attorney General's Office referring her back to SERS for resolution.

After determining that Ms. White did not provide sufficient documentation to support her case, no member moved to allow her a reappeal.

Priva Dorfman – Appeal to Temporarily Reduce or Suspend Benefits

Priva Dorfman is a current retiree receiving a monthly retirement annuity and a monthly Social Security check. Ms. Dorfman's POA agent, Jeffrey Dorfman, has submitted a written appeal to temporarily reduce or, alternatively, to suspend Ms. Dorfman's retirement annuity from September 1, 2026 to February 1, 2027. This period coincides with an audit period run by the new ownership of her nursing facility during which the facility will be verifying that all residents remain under a certain income threshold.

The Pension Protection Clause of the State constitution does not allow the State to reduce pension benefits. However, several statutory policies, such as the buyout provisions, are permissible because the member voluntarily elects the reduction. To not violate the Pension Protection Clause, any relief given to Ms. Dorfman must be voluntarily elected.

The federal definitely determinable benefit rule (26 CFR 1.401-1) requires a pension plan to provide systematically for payment of benefits which are calculated without employer discretion. For this reason, a temporary reduction in payments may violate federal law as SERS would be designating a period in which Ms. Dorfman's benefit is temporarily calculated at the System's discretion. It is unclear whether a temporary suspension would violate this rule, but SERS has suspended retiree annuities for several other reasons.

It should be noted that if Ms. Dorfman's benefits are suspended, she will also lose coverage under the State Group Health Insurance Act for the duration of the suspension.

After reviewing the case and some discussion, Executive Secretary Blair moved to deny Ms. Dorfman's appeal. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairperson Black and passed unanimously.

Felicita Lebron Cortes – Appeal Overpayment of Disability Benefits

Felicita Lebron Cortes worked for the Illinois Department of Human Services as a Human Services Caseworker. She alleged a work-related injury on March 13, 2012. She states she slipped on a wet surface while walking down the stairs. To avoid falling, she grabbed onto the railing and in the process injured her shoulder. She filed a Workers' Compensation (WC) claim and filed for SERS' occupational disability benefit.

WC denied her claim on June 7, 2014, as not being compensable under the Illinois

Workers' Compensation Act. She decided to appeal this denial. SERS changed Ms. Lebron Cortes' application to a temporary benefit application, and she was sent the Required Signature for Temporary Disability form, which she signed on October 30, 2015 and returned.

After a 30-day waiting period, her temporary disability benefit started on September 10, 2015. She was on this benefit for more than 12 months, so she was required to apply for disability benefits from the Social Security Administration (SSA). She was awarded SSA benefits beginning February 1, 2016. This created an overpayment of SERS's temporary disability benefits from February 1, 2016 through December 31, 2018. Her monthly benefit going forward was reduced and she remained on SERS's Temporary disability though January 31, 2019, retiring on February 1, 2019.

Around April 22, 2026, SERS was notified that Ms. Lebron Cortes' WC claim had been settled and that she had been awarded TTD as well as a PPD settlement. TTD benefits were awarded from June 28, 2013 through March 3, 2014 and from April 29, 2015 through October 22, 2018. SERS paid Ms. Lebron Cortes an occupational disability benefit for the 2013-2014 period. She was then paid by her agency through August 10, 2015.

SERS then had to convert her temporary benefit to an occupational benefit. SERS paid an occupational benefit for the 30-day waiting period from August 11, 2025 through September 9, 2025. The conversion created an overpayment from September 10, 2025 through January 31, 2016. Starting February 1, 2016, the conversion created an underpayment through October 22, 2018, as her temporary benefit was being offset by her SSA benefit.

SERS next had to convert the remainder of the time temporary benefits were paid using the PPD settlement. From October 23, 2018 through January 31, 2019, the conversion of benefits created an additional underpayment.

Following the benefit conversions, Ms. Lebron Cortes was left with an overpayment balance due to SERS. Ms. Lebron Cortes is appealing against the overpayment. She disputes the calculation of the overpayment and requests a complete explanation of how this was determined. She did receive a copy of both calculation sheets.

Ms. Lebron Cortes would like to know SERS' statutory authority supporting our calculation, how we determined the offset and documentation showing how attorney fees and costs were offset. She is requesting all documents and calculations including the complete offset worksheet, payment history, WC records and any internal calculations supporting her overpayment.

Ms. Lebron Cortes is requesting that SERS forgive the entire overpayment or recalculate after providing all supporting documentation or grant any other relief the Executive Committee believes ls fair and appropriate.

Following a discussion about the facts presented, Chairperson Becker moved to deny

Ms. Lebron Cortes' appeal. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairperson Black and passed unanimously.

There being no further business to be brought before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 11:16 a.m.

The next meeting of the Executive Committee is scheduled for September 10, 2026, in the System's Springfield office.

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Marvin Becker, Chairperson

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Arnold Black, Vice-Chairperson

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Timothy Blair, Executive Secretary