

STATE BOARD OF MEDIATION AND ARBITRATION

38 WOLCOTT HILL ROAD, WEHTERSFIELD, CT 06109

MINUTES OF ARBITRATORS MEETING

Tuesday, January 18, 2022

An arbitrators meeting of the Connecticut State Board of Mediation and Arbitration was held on Tuesday, January 18, 2022. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, this meeting was held via Zoom.

Present: Gerald T. Weiner, Esq., Chairman
Dennis C. Murphy, Esq., Deputy Chairman
Michael C. Culhane, Management Member
Betty Kuehnel, Labor Member
Peter Carozza, Labor Member
David A. Ryan, Management Member

Guest: Patricia A. Fitton, Director/Mediator

The Tuesday, January 18, 2022 meeting of the Board of Mediation and Arbitration was opened by Gerald T. Weiner, Chairman, at 8:30 a.m.

1) Minutes of Previous Meeting: A motion was made by Dennis Murphy to accept the minutes of the November 15, 2021 Board meeting. The motion was seconded by Peter Carozza and passed unanimously.

2) Old Business:

A. Electronic Signatures: There is continuing debate regarding the use of “/s/” signatures on arbitration awards. The Board prefers to return to the use of actual signatures, rather than the “/s/” signatures. Arbitrators will be notified of the change.

- B. Review of Outstanding Grievance Arbitration Hearings: The number of pending arbitrations, the number of hearings that occurred, the number of cases postponed, and the number of cases held in abeyance were examined by the Board. The comparison of last year's number of cases with this year's showed that the number of cases had only declined slightly.
- C. Motions to Vacate: Two recently filed Motions to Vacate were reviewed by the Board. One case involved the termination of a police officer while the second case involved the arbitrability of a pension issue. Both cases are still pending at this time. The status of the Motion to Vacate that was filed in the Wallingford interest arbitration case will be determined and reported to the Board members.
- D. Applications for Neutral and Party Arbitrators: there is one pending application for a position as a Neutral/Public arbitrator and one pending application for a position as a Labor Arbitrator. These applications will be held and reviewed at a later date.
- E. Late Awards: The Commissioner has requested a monthly report of any late arbitration awards. Presently, this month's report will be same as last month. Two awards are overdue. The arbitrator has been contacted repeatedly and promises to produce the awards no later than Friday, January 21st.

New Business

- A. Reports to Commissioner: As noted above, monthly reports of overdue grievance arbitration awards are now being submitted to the Commissioner. Arbitrators are encouraged to contact the staff in the event they need additional time to complete an award. Staff will then contact the parties advising them of the delay.
- B. Training for New neutral Arbitrators: Two new neutral/public arbitrators are poised to join the Board; they are waiting for appointment by the Governor. Training materials and observation opportunities were discussed. A packet of training materials will be developed and submitted.
- C. Awards on the Web Site: Staff continues to pursue the regular posting of awards on the web site. It is challenging to incorporate a new process while concentrating on eliminating the back log of case waiting to be scheduled, but progress is being made.

D. Moving Towards Paperless: The staff did have one instance when both the Employer and the Union were most anxious to receive the arbitration award as soon as possible. Arrangements were made for simultaneous email transmission of the award to the respective parties, followed by the hard copy being mailed. Both parties were pleased with this service. Staff will continue to explore the electronic transmission of awards.

Director's Report

- A. Staff Update: Part time mediator Joe Dubin's employment will expire at the of January, 2022. Mr. Dubin provided exemplary mediation services and provided extensive training to our new mediator, Sean Lennon. The Board extends their thanks to Mr. Dubin for his excellent work. Sean Lennon will complete his training effective Monday, January 24th. Mr. Lennon has proved a quick study and brings exceptional skill to the mediation service.
- B. Good and Welfare: The SBMA lost several arbitrators in the past month. A moment of silence was observed to mourn the passing of Richard Panagrossi, Robert Brown, Rocco Orlando, Ph.D. and Michael Ferrucci. All of these gentlemen worked for decades with the Board; they demonstrated the highest standards of public service and were notable for their kindness and consideration for the staff. We shall miss them.

Motion to Adjourn was made by Michael Culhane and seconded by Peter Carozza; the motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:28 a.m.