

STATE BOARD OF MEDIATION AND ARBITRATION
38 WOLCOTT HILL ROAD, WETHERSFIELD, CT 06109
MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING

Monday, July 19, 2021

An arbitrators Board meeting of the Connecticut State Board of Mediation and Arbitration was held on Monday, July 17, 2021. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, this meeting was held via Zoom.

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

Excused Absence: Dennis C. Murphy, Esq., Deputy Chairman

Guest: Patricia A. Fitton, Director/Mediator

The Monday, July 19, 2021 meeting was opened by Gerald T. Weiner, Chairman, at 8:34 a.m.

- 1) Minutes of Previous Meetings: The Board reviewed the minutes of the regular Board meeting held on May 17, 2021. David Ryan made a motion to accept the minutes, Peter Carozza seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- 2) Old Business:
 - A. Review of Arbitration Hearings: The number of grievance arbitration cases received in Fiscal Year 2020-2021 increased to 370, a gain of 155

- cases or 72% over the previous fiscal year. The number of cases pending, cases scheduled and those waiting for in person hearings for each case manager were reviewed.
- B. Requests for In Person Hearings: SBMA continues to receive numerous requests for in person hearings. The Board directed the staff to begin scheduling in person hearings if either Labor or Management request it. Remote hearings will continue to be available to the parties. Any hearings that began in the virtual setting will continue remotely. Any hearings that begin in person will be completed in person, public health measures permitting.
 - C. Motions to Vacate: The Board received notice of a Motion to Vacate filed by NIPSEU in Case No. 2020-MBA-304. The case involved the City of Wallingford and NIPSEU. The Motion to Vacate centered on the substitution of a new management arbitrator for the original management arbitrator who died prior to any executive sessions being held. The Union made no objection to the naming of the substitute arbitrator during the process.
 - D. Postal Dates for Submission of Remote Exhibits: In response to the requests of various parties, David Ryan made a motion to reduce the number of required calendar days for the submission of exhibits from the current seven (7) days to four (4) days. Betty Kuehnel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
 - E. Required Documents for Payment: Arbitrators were reminded that payment vouchers cannot be processed unless the case managers receive the staff notes and sign in sheets for the hearings.

3) New Business:

- A. The Secretary 2 vacancy is on the cusp of being filled. Hopefully, the selected applicant will begin work on or around July 30th. Training and cross training the new secretary will be a priority.
- B. Filling Full Time Mediator Position: Productive discussions were held with Interim Commissioner Dante Bartolomeo regarding the full-time mediator vacancy. Ms. Bartolomeo will review the financial impact and we will proceed if possible.

- C. Status of Request for Temporary Clerical Workers: HR located one potential temporary worker; however, the candidate did not pass the ACCESS test. SBMA may revise the required skills to secure a worker who could at least perform the purging and filing that must be done.
- D. Applications for Alternate Arbitrators: The Board is in receipt of an application to be an alternate labor arbitrator. The Board will consider if it is necessary to add any more labor or management arbitrators.

4) Director's Report:

- A. Staff Update: The staff continues to struggle to accomplish the requisite workload while the SBMA is operating at 60% staff capacity. Staff are now in the office Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday; this reduces the number of times staff has to pack/unpack files and equipment for transport to their homes. Whenever the new Secretary 2 starts work, staff will return to in person work every day. Some remote days may be scheduled in the future when training needs are met. While there is no return to work date anticipated for the staff member who is out on FMLA, that staff member has been able to perform some work in the office and has increased her remote hours as well.
- B. Anticipated Retirements: Fortunately, fewer retirements are presently anticipated in 2022. Now one full time mediator and two secretary 2s are committed to staying. The administrative assistant has not yet committed one way or the other, but it seems likely that she will continue to work past July 2022.

Motion to Adjourn was made by Michael Culhane, Peter Corozza seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:33 a.m.