



## MINUTES

**Claims Panel Meeting  
of the Board of Trustees of the  
State Universities Retirement System  
Monday, February 12, 2024, 8:30 a.m.  
State Universities Retirement System  
Main Conference Room  
1901 Fox Dr., Champaign, IL  
(Hearing Officer Clifford)**

The meeting of the Claims Panel of the Board of Trustees of the State Universities Retirement System (SURS) convened on Monday, February 12, 2024, at 8:30 a.m.

The following Claims Panel members were present: Ms. Carolyn Clifford, Hearing Officer; Ms. Suzanne Mayer, SURS Executive Director; and Mr. Richard Figueroa, SURS Board of Trustees member.

Others present: Ms. Bianca Green, General Counsel; Mr. Albert Lee, Associate General Counsel; Ms. Heather Kimmons, Associate General Counsel; Ms. Jennifer Bartell, Director of Benefits Processing; Ms. Karen Nyi (*via Zoom*) and Ms. Annette Ackerman, Executive Assistants; Ms. Janet Cummings, Area Wide Reporting; Mr. Jerry Hunt, Claimant; Mr. Charles Elmer, Claimant.

Claims Panel roll call attendance was taken. Hearing Officer Carolyn Clifford, present; Executive Director Suzanne Mayer, present; Trustee Richard Figueroa, present.

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Clifford presented the open session minutes from the Claims Panel Hearing of November 13, 2023.

Ms. Mayer made the following motion:

That the open session minutes from the November 13, 2023, Claims Panel Hearing be approved as presented.

Trustee Figueroa seconded the motion which passed via the roll call vote referenced below:

Ms. Clifford - aye  
Ms. Mayer - aye  
Trustee Figueroa - aye

Ms. Clifford presented the closed session minutes from the Claims Panel Hearing of November 13, 2023.

Ms. Mayer made the following motion:

That the closed session minutes from the November 13, 2023, Claims Panel Hearing be approved as presented and remain closed.

Trustee Figueroa seconded the motion which passed via the roll call vote referenced below:

Ms. Clifford - aye  
Ms. Mayer - aye  
Trustee Figueroa - aye

**PRESENTATION OF CLAIM – JERRY HUNT**

The claim of Mr. Jerry Hunt was called for Hearing. Mr. Hunt appeared in person. Ms. Clifford served as the assigned hearing officer. Ms. Heather Kimmons represented SURS staff. Ms. Clifford admitted into evidence 90 pages as the administrative record for the claim. Ms. Kimmons provided a verbal summary of the issues to be addressed by the Claims Panel. Mr. Hunt was sworn in by the court reporter and then presented his case. Ms. Kimmons cross examined the Claimant. Ms. Jennifer Bartell was then sworn in by the court reporter and was called to testify on behalf of SURS staff.

Upon the conclusion of the claim presentation, Hearing Officer Clifford closed the evidentiary proofs.

**PRESENTATION OF CLAIM – CHARLES ELMER**

The claim of Mr. Charles Elmer was called for Hearing. Ms. Clifford served as the assigned Hearing Officer. Ms. Heather Kimmons represented SURS staff. The Claimant, Mr. Elmer, appeared in person. Ms. Clifford admitted into evidence 253 pages as the administrative record for the claim. Ms. Kimmons provided a verbal summary of the issues to be addressed by the Claims Panel. Mr. Elmer was sworn in by the court reporter and then presented his case. Ms. Kimmons cross examined the Claimant. Ms. Jennifer Bartell was then sworn in by the court reporter and was called to testify on behalf of SURS.

Upon the conclusion of the claim presentation, Hearing Officer Clifford closed the evidentiary proofs.

**PRESENTATION OF CLAIM – DIANA SANDOVAL**

The claim of Ms. Diana Sandoval was called for Hearing. Ms. Sandoval confirmed that she was not able to attend the hearing as scheduled. She was not required to be present for the matter to be heard by the Claims Panel. Ms. Clifford served as the assigned hearing officer. Mr. Albert Lee represented SURS staff. Ms. Clifford admitted into evidence 82 pages as the administrative record for the claim. Mr. Lee provided a verbal summary of the issues to be addressed by the Claims Panel but no witnesses were called to testify.

Upon the conclusion of the claim presentation, Hearing Officer Clifford closed the evidentiary proofs.

**CLAIMS PANEL DELIBERATIONS**

Ms. Mayer made a motion to move into closed session, pursuant to §2(c)(4) of the Illinois Open Meetings Act, to consider the evidence and testimony presented in open session in the three claims. Trustee Figueroa seconded the motion which passed via the roll call vote referenced below:

Ms. Clifford	-	aye
Ms. Mayer	-	aye
Trustee Figueroa	-	aye

**RETURN TO OPEN SESSION**

Upon completion of the closed session deliberations, the Claims Panel returned to open session, at approximately 9:37 a.m.

Ms. Mayer then made the following motion for the Hunt Claim:

To affirm the staff decision, finding that Jerry Hunt has not proven by preponderance of the evidence that he is entitled to the relief sought, and that a written decision of factual findings and conclusions be drafted by the Hearing Officer.

Trustee Figueroa seconded the motion, which passed via the following roll call vote:

Ms. Clifford	-	aye
Ms. Mayer	-	aye
Trustee Figueroa	-	aye

Ms. Mayer then made the following motion for the Diana Sandoval Claim:

To affirm the staff decision, finding that Diana Sandoval has not proven by preponderance of the evidence that she is entitled to the relief sought, and that a written decision of factual findings and conclusions be drafted by the Hearing Officer.

Trustee Figueroa seconded the motion, which passed via the following roll call vote:

Ms. Clifford - aye  
Ms. Mayer - aye  
Trustee Figueroa - aye

Ms. Mayer then made the following motion for the Charles Elmer Claim:

To affirm the staff decision, finding that Charles Elmer has not proven by preponderance of the evidence that he is entitled to the relief sought, and that a written decision of factual findings and conclusions be drafted by the Hearing Officer.

Trustee Figueroa seconded the motion, which passed via the following roll call vote:

Ms. Clifford - aye  
Ms. Mayer - aye  
Trustee Figueroa - aye

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

There was no further business for the Claims Panel and no public comment. Ms. Mayer moved that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded by Trustee Figueroa and passed via the following roll call vote:

Ms. Clifford - aye  
Ms. Mayer - aye  
Trustee Figueroa - aye

Meeting adjourned at 9:39 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Carolyn Clifford  
Hearing Officer

Cc:aa