



## Return to Work Hearing Procedures

**Appointment of the Return to Work Committee.** The Return to Work Committee will consist of three to five Trustees appointed by the Board.

### **Conduct of the Return to Work Hearing.**

- (1) **Combined Hearing.** The Return to Work Committee, acting through a hearing officer, may conduct a single group hearing. Individual pensioners shall be permitted to present their own case.
- (2) **Hearing Officer.** The Hearing Officer shall be responsible for conducting the hearings as set forth in Section F, below.
- (3) **Notice of Hearing.** The hearing will be held at the Fund's offices. Staff, as directed by the Return to Work Committee, will issue written notice of the hearing which will be sent to the pensioners by certified mail, return receipt requested not less than thirty (30) calendar days before the scheduled hearing date. The Hearing Officer will have the authority to grant continuances for good cause.
- (4) **Pre-Hearing Exchange of Information.** All evidentiary documentation and/or stipulations shall be exchanged by the parties at least ten (10) calendar days before the date of the hearing. Copies of all documentation and stipulations so exchanged will be provided to the Committee and to the Hearing Officer at least ten (10) calendar days before the date of the hearing.
- (5) **Representation by Counsel.** The Fund will be represented at the hearing by staff counsel. Pensioners shall have the right to be represented by counsel or to represent themselves.
- (6) **Conduct of the Hearing.** The Hearing Officer will have full authority to control the procedure of the hearing, including, but not limited to:
  - (i) To exclude witnesses;
  - (ii) To admit or exclude testimony or other evidence;
  - (iii) To change the order of the hearing; and
  - (iv) To make any other necessary decisions and orders required for the creation of a full and fair hearing conducted in an orderly manner.
- (7) **Burden of Proof.** The pensioner has the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence that the pensioner did not violate 40 ILCS 5/17-149 of the Illinois Pension Code.

**(8) Order of the Hearing, Examination of Witnesses, and Introduction of Evidence.**

All hearings will be conducted in the following order, unless the Hearing Officer provides otherwise:

- (i) Opening statement by staff counsel;
- (ii) All documents properly exchanged pursuant to Section D shall be admitted as an exhibit;
- (iii) Staff counsel shall examine any CTPF witnesses;
- (iv) Each individual pensioner may examine the CTPF witnesses and make any objections to testimony or evidence offered;
- (v) Return to Work Committee may examine any CTPF witnesses;
- (vi) Opening statement by the first pensioner, which is determined by the Hearing Officer;
- (vii) Pensioner presents case, including introduction of any witnesses or evidence; cross-examination of witnesses by staff counsel; and objection by staff counsel to any testimony or evidence.
- (viii) Staff counsel may cross-examine pensioner.
- (ix) Return to Work Committee may examine any witness;
- (x) Steps (vi) through (ix) repeated for each pensioner; and
- (xi) Hearing Officer closes the proceedings.

**(9) Hearing Record.** All testimony at the administrative hearing shall be under oath and shall be recorded or transcribed by a court reporter provided by the Fund. The Fund shall order the original transcript. Copies will be available from the court reporter at the pensioner's expense.

**(10) Post-Hearing.**

- (i) The CTPF Staff and any pensioner may file Proposed Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law with the Hearing Officer, within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the transcript.
- (ii) The Hearing Officer shall prepare Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law and a Recommended Decision, which shall be submitted to the Return to Work Committee within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the Proposed Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law.
- (iii) The Return to Work Committee by majority assent shall recommend to the Board adoption or rejection of the Recommended Decision. The Board shall vote on the Committee's recommendation. The Fund will issue a written Final Administrative Decision to the pensioner within thirty (30) calendar days of the Board's adoption or rejection of the Recommended Decision.

The notification shall be sent to the pensioner by first class and certified mail, return receipt. The notification will include:

- a) The Board decision;
- b) The Hearing Officer's Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law and Recommended Decision;
- c) Notification that the Board will not require or permit the filing of motions for reconsideration;
- d) Notification that the decision is final and appealable; and
- e) Notification of appeal rights pursuant to the Administrative Review Act.