Ebbetts Pass Fire District

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
NOTICE OF REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, July 16, 2019
1037 Blagen Road, Arnold
9:00 A.M.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD
Jon Dashner, President    Thomas Sullivan, Secretary
Denny Clemens, J. Scott McKinney, Mike Barr

Concerning Public Comment
Please Note: The Board of Directors offers the opportunity for the public to speak to specific agenda items during the time that agenda item is discussed by the Board. The Board also allows an opportunity for the public to speak on non-agenda items during “public comments” prior to the conclusion of the meeting. The Board may not make any decision related to non-agendized items until the next Board meeting.

AGENDA

1. Call to Order, Flag Salute, Roll Call

2. Public Appearances/Comment: The Board will hear public comment on any agendized or non-agendized item. The Board may discuss public comment but may not take action.

3. Consent Items: Board action limited to discussion and approval of:
   3.1. Minutes: 06/18/19 Regular Ebbetts Pass Board Meeting
   3.2. Acceptance of May 2019 Checks Listing and Authorize to File for Audit
       3.2.1. Monthly Budget Report

4. Committee Reports: The Board will discuss the status of the following matters. The Board may take action on recommendations and/or give direction to staff or committee members related to follow-up on specific matters addressed by the committee.

   4.1. Finance Committee (Directors Dashner & McKinney)
        4.1.1. Intra-Account Budget Transfer – End of Fiscal Year 2018-19
        4.1.2. Special District Budget Adjustment Fiscal Year 2018-19
   4.2. Personnel Committee (Directors McKinney & Sullivan)
   4.3. Fire Prevention Committee (Directors Clemens & Sullivan)
   4.4. Apparatus/Equipment Committee (Directors Clemens & Barr)
NOTICE OF REGULAR MEETING – continued
July 16, 2019

5. **Scheduled Items:** The Board will discuss and take action on the specific items listed below.

5.1. **Special District Risk Management Authority:** Board of Directors Election Ballot

5.2. **PG&E Community Resiliency Proposal:** PG&E to present to the EPFD Board a proposal for a Community Resiliency Project

5.3. **Ebbetts Pass Fire District:** PG&E Calaveras County Settlement: One-Time Purchase Funding

5.4. **California Public Employees Retirement System:** Request for Public Comments

5.5. **Ebbetts Pass Fire District Policy Introduction:** Begin 30 day review

5.5.1. **Policy 6361: Personnel – Position Description:** Assistant Executive Secretary

6. **Reports:** The Board will hear reports on the following matters. The Board may discuss information contained in these reports.


6.2. Legislative Report

6.3. Administrative – EMS

7. **Comments, Questions, and Consideration:** The Board will entertain comments and questions from the following individuals or representatives. The Board may discuss these comments or questions on these items but may not take action.

7.1. Board Members

7.2. Firefighters' Association

7.3. Employees' Group

7.4. Public Comments

8. **Adjournment of Regular Meeting**

**ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF:**
Michael Johnson, Fire Chief
Cheryl Howard, Secretary
MINUTES
Board of Directors
June 18, 2019

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

1. The meeting was called to order at 9:00 A.M. by President Jon Dashner and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Directors present: Michael Barr, Denny Clemens, Jon Dashner, Scott McKinney and Thomas Sullivan.

   District personnel present: Fire Chief Mike Johnson, Cheryl Howard
   Engineer Bryn Buhler

   Others present: None
   Media present: None

2. PUBLIC APPEARANCES/COMMENT – None

3. CONSENT ITEMS
   3.1. Mr. Barr made a motion to approve Consent Item 3.1. Mr. Clemens seconded; motion passed 5-0 (AYES: Barr, Clemens, Dashner, McKinney, Sullivan).

   3.2. Mr. Sullivan made a motion to approve Consent Item 3.2. Mr. Clemens seconded; motion passed 5-0 (AYES: Barr, Clemens, Dashner, McKinney, Sullivan).

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS
   4.1. Finance Committee (Directors Dashner & McKinney)
Chief Johnson reported that the committee had met and were looking at the last few weeks of the fiscal year. He added that the Station 3 Ambulance revenue included the IGT receipts which were more than budgeted. He noted that the GEMT-QAF (Quality Assurance Fund) amounts were now known and all 2018 quarters would soon be paid. He noted that the District hoped to have a similar amount of carryover for this fiscal year as the previous year. Mr. Clemens asked if the District had set an amount of reserve to be set aside each year. Chief Johnson responded that the Finance Committee members had discussed setting aside 55% of the budget in reserve but it would take a while to get it built up to that much.
4.2. Personnel Committee (Directors McKinney & Sullivan)
Chief Johnson reviewed the Captain’s Promotional Test results with five now on the ranked eligibility list that will be in effect for two years starting 7/01/2019. He also thanked the directors for their help during the testing process. He reported that the part-time secretary-assistant had been hired and Erin Felby has started working. He also reported that Alex Baker had been hired as a full-time Firefighter-EMT. With regard to the upcoming firefighter-paramedic positions, Chief Johnson and BC Rodney Hendrix were working on it through the Fire Training Center (FTC).

4.3. Fire Prevention Committee (Directors Clemens & Sullivan)
Chief Johnson reported a different contact had been made to try to schedule a meeting with Judge Healey. He noted that personnel and equipment had assisted with Big Trees State Park personnel and their prescribed burn in order to obtain some additional training. He noted that burning was now suspended for this fire season.

4.4. Apparatus/Equipment Committee (Directors Clemens & Barr)
Battalion Chief Aaron Downing reported that a CalFire crew would be taking care of the overgrown areas at Station 4 and may also take the rotten siding off Station 4 for replacement by District personnel. He also noted there was a long list of repairs to be done on District vehicles and equipment.

5. Scheduled Items:
5.1. Special District Risk Management Authority: Board of Directors Election
Chief Johnson noted that the Board members could select up to three candidates. Mr. Dashner tabled this item until the July meeting.

5.2. Letter of Appreciation from Ed Cardoza
The Board members noted the letter.

5.3. EPFD Request to Declare Equipment Surplus
After some review, Mr. McKinney made a motion to approve Resolution 2019-3 Declaring the 1979 Howe Type 1 Fire Engine, VIN D80QVEG9501 as surplus and authorizing Chief Johnson to dispose of it. Mr. Sullivan seconded; motion passed 5-0 (AYES: Barr, Clemens, Dashner, McKinney, Sullivan).

5.4. Calaveras County Board of Supervisors Declaring the Results of the Canvass for the EPFD Special Tax Election of May 7, 2019
The Board members noted their excitement following the special tax election success. Chief Johnson reported that the Focus Group was planning to have some gatherings to say thank you to the community.

5.5. PG&E to Manteca: Prepare for Electricity to be Cut to all of City for up to 5 Days
There was some general discussion regarding how community members should prepare for a similar eventuality in Arnold.
5.6. **PG&E Community Resiliency Proposal**
Item was tabled as no representatives were able to attend.

6. **REPORTS**

6.1. **Administrative Report**
Chief Johnson reported that the District was gearing up for the July 4th celebration events. He reported that retired Fire Chief Brian Dickson was very sick and noted that he and Cheryl Howard had visited him recently at his home.

6.2. **Legislative Report**
Chief Johnson reported that AB438 continued to be watched as an effort for fire-based EMS to not be under the control of County Health regarding what calls they could respond to.

6.3. **Administrative - EMS**
Chief Johnson noted that staff continued to gear up for the new Request for Proposal for ambulance services.

7. **COMMENTS, QUESTIONS, CONSIDERATIONS**

7.1. **Board Members**
Each member again noted their pleasure with the large percentage for the passage of Measure A.

7.2. **Firefighters Association:** Everyone was reminded about the sign-ups for the staffing at the BBQ and beer booth.

7.3. **Employees' Group:** Bryn Buhler relayed a story of the compliments she had recently heard from a member of the public during a medical emergency.

7.4. **Public Comments:** None

8. **ADJOURNMENT**
Mr. Barr made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Sullivan seconded; motion passed unanimously 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Howard
District Secretary
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| | 1069939, 1070412 PARS | EE withholding | 52.24 |

5001.1.004: Expenditure: ST/TF Firefighter Payment | none issued |

5001.1.005: Expenditure: Volunteer Firefighter Payment | 15606, 15644 Payroll / Statutory Withholding / Elective Withholding | | 875.43 |
| | 1069939, 1070412 PARS | EE withholding | 36.47 |
| | 1070842 PARS | trust admin fee | 441.63 |

5001.1.050: RETIREMENT (PERS) | 15695 PERS | employer portion | 9,810.68 |
| | 15695 PERS | Accrued Unfunded Liability-Jun | 4,815.71 |

5001.1.055: GROUP INSURANCE | 11782, 11891 Supplemental Life Premium Withholding | | -72.60 |
| | 1053775 FDAC-EBA | vision/dental/life premium | 1,238.31 |
| | 1053783 SDRMA-Employee Benefit Service - medical premium | | 11,398.50 |
| | 1053776 Hometown Health | medical premium | 875.00 |

5001.1.062: UNIFORM ALLOWANCE | none issued |

5111.1.111: SAFETY CLOTHING | 1071111 Petty Cash | uniform tees purchased | -281.00 |
| | 1070122 US Bank | fire department pin | 24.64 |

5111.1.115: SAFETY EQUIPMENT | none issued |
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JE Calaveras County checks postage 21.45
1071111 Petty Cash postage 93.63

5111.1.245: OFFICE EXPENSE: COPIES
1070691 Zoom Imaging Solutions copier maintenance 135.58

5111.1.271: PROFESSIONAL SERVICES
none issued

5111.1.401: SMALL TOOLS/FF EQUIPMENT
1070117 Ebbetts Pass Lumber Co small tools 66.23
1070115 Arnold Auto supply oil 18.22

5111.1.402: SMALL TOOLS: HOSE / SCBA
1070117 Ebbetts Pass Lumber Co battery 54.00
1071111 Petty Cash wash rental, litter 20.16

5111.1.411: SPECIAL DISTRICT EXPENSE
1070122 US Bank: SAMBA CA EPN FleetWatch report 29.07

5111.1.412: SPECIAL DISTRICT EXPENSE: HEALTH MAINTENANCE
none issued

5111.1.422: TRAINING
1070120 Treffin Loris RRT instruction 500.00
15618 Dustin Hanna CPR class refund 400.00
1070122 US Bank Sim Viewer 139.95
1070686 LN Curtis rescue rope - safety gear 542.90

5111.1.478: TRAVEL/EDUCATION/TRAINING
1071111 Petty Cash parking, GCRC Financ wkshop 20.00

5111.1.480: TRANSPORTATION FUEL
1070687 Ebbetts Pass Gas Service fuel 796.44

5111.1.501: UTILITIES: WATER/SEWER
none issued

5111.1.504: UTILITIES: ELECTRICITY
JE CPPA electricity 687.59

5111.1.505: UTILITIES: PROPANE
1070687 Ebbetts Pass Gas Service propane 534.72
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5111.2.271: PROFESSIONAL SERVICES  none issued

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5111.2.402: SMALL TOOLS: HOSE / SCBA  none issued

5111.2.411: SPECIAL DISTRICT EXPENSE
1070122 US Bank: SAMBA  CA EPN FleetWatch report  6.00
   JE Calaveras Co Elections Dept  May 7 Special Tax Election  7,224.52

5111.2.412: SPECIAL DISTRICT EXPENSE: HEALTH MAINTENANCE
1070683 Eric Griffiths  reimburse DMV physical  127.00

5111.2.413: SPECIAL DISTRICT EXPENSE: ADMINISTRATIVE FEE  none issued

5111.2.422: TRAINING
1070686 LN Curtis  rescue rope - safety gear  455.81

5111.2.478: TRAVEL/EDUCATION/TRAINING  none issued

5111.2.480: TRANSPORTATION FUEL
1070687 Ebbetts Pass Gas Service  fuel  614.87

5411 P: SPECIAL TAX HANDLING FEE
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CHECKS ISSUED LISTING - JUN 2019

5111.3.151: INSURANCE: PROPERTY/LIABILITY
5111.3.153: INSURANCE: WORKER'S COMPENSATION

none issued

5111.3.181: MAINTENANCE: APPARATUS

none issued

5111.3.183: MAINTENANCE: AMBULANCES

1070115 Arnold Auto Supply U3508: blue def 90.02
1070117 Ebbetts Pass Lumber Co U3508: bulb 5.67

5111.3.201: BUILDING & GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

none issued

5111.3.211: EMERGENCY CARE

1070114 Airgas oxygen 270.69
1070685 Life Assist medical supplies 859.80

5111.3.221: MEMBERSHIPS/SUBSCRIPTIONS

none issued

5111.3.241: OFFICE EXPENSE

1070843 Staples paper 119.02
1071111 Petty Cash ink 10.00

5111.3.245: OFFICE EXPENSE: COPIES

1070691 Zoom Imaging Solutions copier maintenance 9.00

5111.3.271: PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

JE Cal Co Sheriff’s Office dispatch fee April 2019 2,158.32
1070119 Elinor Hall MPH IGT consultation services 1,312.50

5111.3.401: SMALL TOOLS/FF EQUIPMENT

none issued

5111.3.402: SMALL TOOLS: HOSE / SCBA

1070117 Ebbetts Pass Lumber Co battery 28.89

5111.3.411: SPECIAL DISTRICT EXPENSE

1070122 US Bank: SAMBA . CA EPN FleetWatch report 24.00
1070121 Stericycle medical waste disposal 151.44
JE Calaveras Co Elections Dept May 7 Special Tax Election 14,667.96

5111.3.412: SPECIAL DISTRICT EXPENSE: HEALTH MAINTENANCE

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**Fixed Assets**

<p>| Building Fund: Structures   | 5640| 52,084   | 0.00    | 52,083.62   | -               | -                       |
| Equipment                   | 5701| 1,906,264| 142,111.08| 1,806,312.16 | 99,951.84       | 95%                     |</p>
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Subtotal: $ 154,066.33  $ 154,066.33

Increase/Decrease Reserve: 

Total: $ 154,066.33  $ 154,066.33

Votes by the Special District Board of Directors:

AYES: ________________________________  NOES: ________________________________  ABSENT: ________________________________  ABSTAIN: ________________________________  ATTEST: ________________________________  Date: ________________________________

Revised: 1/04/05ch
OFFICIAL ELECTION BALLOT ENCLOSED

This is an official election packet that contains items that require ACTION by your Agency's governing body for the selection of up to three (3) candidates to the SDRMA Board of Directors.

ELECTION PACKET ENCLOSURES

☐ Election Ballot Instructions
☐ Official Election Ballot (Action Required)
☐ Candidate's Statements of Qualifications (5)
☐ Self-addressed, Stamped Envelope
SDRMA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS
ELECTION BALLOT INSTRUCTIONS

Notification of nominations for three (3) seats on the Special District Risk Management Authority's (SDRMA's) Board of Directors was mailed to the membership in January 2019.

On May 2, 2019, SDRMA's Election Committee reviewed the nomination documents submitted by the candidates in accordance with SDRMA's Policy No. 2017-10 Establishing Guidelines for Director Elections. The Election Committee confirmed that five (5) candidates met the qualification requirements and those names are included on the Official Election Ballot.

Enclosed is the Official Election Ballot along with a Statement of Qualifications as submitted by each candidate. Election instructions are as follows:

1. The enclosed Official Election Ballot must be used to ensure the integrity of the balloting process.

2. After selecting up to three (3) candidates, your agency's governing body must approve the enclosed Official Election Ballot at a public meeting. Ballots containing more than three (3) candidate selections will be considered invalid and not counted.

3. The signed Official Election Ballot MUST be sealed and received by mail or hand delivery at SDRMA's office on or before 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, August 21, 2019 to the address below. A self-addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed. Faxes or electronic transmissions are NOT acceptable.

   Special District Risk Management Authority
   Election Committee
   1112 "I" Street, Suite 300
   Sacramento, California 95814

4. The four-year terms for newly elected Directors will begin on January 1, 2020 and terminate on December 31, 2023.

5. Important balloting and election dates are:

   August 21, 2019: Deadline for members to return the signed Official Election Ballot
   August 22, 2019: Ballots are opened and counted
   August 23, 2019: Election results are announced, and candidates notified
   September 25, 2019: Newly elected Directors are introduced at the SDRMA Annual Breakfast to be held in Anaheim at the CSDA Annual Conference
   November 6-7, 2019: Newly elected Directors are invited to attend SDRMA board meeting (Sacramento)
   January 2020: Newly elected Directors are seated, and Board officer elections are held

If you have any questions regarding the election and balloting process, please do not hesitate to call SDRMA's Chief Operating Officer Paul Fryendall at 800.537.7790.
Special District Risk Management Authority
Board of Directors
Candidate’s Statement of Qualifications

This information will be distributed to the membership with the ballot, “exactly as submitted” by the candidates – no attachments will be accepted. No statements are endorsed by SDRMA.

Bob Swan
Candidate*
District/District Agency Groveland Community Services District (GCSD)
Work Address P.O. Box 350, Groveland, CA 95321
Work Phone (209) 962-7161 Home Phone (408) 398-4731

*The name or nickname and any designations (i.e. CPA, SDA, etc.) you enter here will be printed on the official ballot, exactly as submitted.

Why do you want to serve on the SDRMA Board of Directors? (Response Required)

I am a current Board member. I would like to be elected to a second term because:
1. As a board member of Groveland CSD, I am particularly aware of the great value that smaller districts get from SDRMA, and I’d like to continue to do my part to make sure that this important agency continues to operate smoothly and stably into the indefinite future.
2. The insurance market in California (and nationwide) is going through a period of rapid change. The Board and staff are engaged in a major re-evaluation of SDRMA’s approach to fulfilling its mission of providing cost-effective risk management services to its members. I believe that it is important to maintain Board continuity in this effort.
3. SDRMA Board members are either board members ("elected") or employees of a member agency. I think there is value in having a balance between elected and employee Board members. The Board seats that are NOT up for election are currently 3 employees / 1 elected. I’d like to make sure the new Board has at least 2 elected members.

What Board or committee experience do you have that would help you to be an effective Board Member? (SDRMA or any other organization) (Response Required)

1. SDRMA Board Member since 2016. This year (2019), I serve as Secretary. During our "no CEO" period in late 2017 - early 2018, I was a member of the ad hoc Personnel Committee. I am also a member of the Alliance Executive Council, and a backup member of the Legislative Committee.
2. Groveland CSD Board Member since I was appointed in June 2013. For the years 2014-2018, I served as Board President. (We finally implemented mandatory rotation of the office in 2019).
3. Member of the Board of Southside Community Connections, a local nonprofit in Groveland that provides educational, social, and recreational services to seniors, as well as free transportation to those who cannot drive.
4. Board Member (currently Treasurer) of Pine Cone Performers, a local choral and acting group, since 2010.
5. Back during my work life, I was a corporate representative on an IEEE standards committee concerned with wireless networking. It was very educational being on a committee where the members had widely differing (competing) goals.
What special skills, talents, or experience (including volunteer experience) do you have?  (Response Required)

History: BS Physics, MS Computer Science. 3 years in USAF. 30 years in the semiconductor industry, first as an engineering manager, later as a business unit manager. Now retired (so I have plenty of time).

Skills, etc.: Very familiar with financial reports, cost accounting, quantitative analysis. Working knowledge of modern computer and communications technology. Managed distributed organizations with up to 150 technical people and up to $120M in annual sales. Pretty good at listening to different views, and helping to achieve consensus (or, at least, compromise).

What is your overall vision for SDRMA? (Response Required)

Well, obviously I support our (newly revised) vision statement: "To be the exemplary public agency risk pool of choice for California special districts and other public agencies". In order to achieve this vision, I believe the key issues are:

1. Maintain long term financial stability. This includes ensuring that there is a fair allocation of cost versus risk across the pool membership.

2. Continue to retain / acquire highly qualified staff, and ensure that this is a desireable place to work.

3. Remember who are our target clientele, which in my opinion are small to mid-sized districts with limited options for insurance.

4. In light of ever-evolving California workers-compensation law, expand risk-management training even further than we now provide.

5. Maintain good relations with our re-insurers (who insulate us from catastrophe). In the long run, explore the possibility of joining a "captive" re-insurer to improve stability.

I certify that I meet the candidate qualifications as outlined in the SDRMA election policy. I further certify that I am willing to serve as a director on SDRMA’s Board of Directors. I will commit the time and effort necessary to serve. Please consider my application for nomination/candidacy to the Board of Directors.

Candidate Signature: [Signature] Date: 4-24-2019
Special District Risk Management Authority
Board of Directors
Candidate’s Statement of Qualifications

This information will be distributed to the membership with the ballot, “exactly as submitted” by the candidates – no attachments will be accepted. No statements are endorsed by SDRMA.

Candidate* Jesse D. Claypool
District/Agency Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District
Work Address USDA Service Center 170 Russell Avenue, Suite C Susanville, CA 96130
Work Phone 530-257-7271 ext 100 Home Phone 530-310-0232
*The name or nickname and any designations (i.e. CPA, SDA, etc.) you enter here will be printed on the official ballot, exactly as submitted.

Why do you want to serve on the SDRMA Board of Directors? (Response Required)

My interest for being on the SDRMA Board of Directors is because I believe it is imperative for there to be a knowledgeable and experienced voice on the Board with the perspective of the small to mid-size special district, working together with the other SDRMA Board Members, to ensure relevant—affordable solutions are available to all size special districts.

What Board or committee experience do you have that would help you to be an effective Board Member? (SDRMA or any other organization) (Response Required)

I am currently serving my fifth (5th) consecutive term as Chairman of the Board of a special district. I served two (2) yrs. on a Technical Advisory Committee for the prevention of violence against schools K-12. I served one (1) term on an elementary school board. I am currently serving my second (2nd) consecutive term on CSDA’s committee for Professional Development. I am currently serving my sixth (6th) consecutive term on the board of a Regional Water Management Group. I am currently serving my second (2nd) consecutive term on CSDA’s committee for Member Services. I am currently serving as a member of the County’s Civil Grand Jury.

I have attended and completed the California School Board Association’s New Board Member Training. I have Certificates of Completion from CSDA for General Manager Evaluation, Exercising Legislative Authority and Achieving Transparency. I attended and completed CSDA’s Extraordinary Leader training. I attended and completed CSDA’s Special District Leadership Academy and I have received CSDA’s Recognition in Special District Governance certificate.
Special District Risk Management Authority
Board of Directors
Candidate's Statement of Qualifications

What special skills, talents, or experience (including volunteer experience) do you have? (Response Required)

My experience with special districts and governance, belief in the importance of quality governing policies, the ability to work effectively with the other board members and staff and a desire to give back to SDRMA and its membership will be what I bring to the SDRMA Board of Directors.

What is your overall vision for SDRMA? (Response Required)

For SDRMA to continually advance as an industry leader providing affordable solutions for special districts of any size enabling them to be effective within the communities they serve.

I certify that I meet the candidate qualifications as outlined in the SDRMA election policy. I further certify that I am willing to serve as a director on SDRMA's Board of Directors. I will commit the time and effort necessary to serve. Please consider my application for nomination/candidacy to the Board of Directors.

Candidate Signature _______________________________ Date 4-26-19
Special District Risk Management Authority
Board of Directors
Candidate’s Statement of Qualifications

This information will be distributed to the membership with the ballot, “exactly as submitted” by the candidates – no attachments will be accepted. No statements are endorsed by SDRMA.

Candidate*
Patrick K. O'Rourke, MPA/CFRM

District/Agency
Redwood Region Economic Development Commission (RREDC)

Work Address
520 E Street Eureka, CA 95501

Work Phone
707-445-9651

Home Phone
707-726-6700

*The name or nickname and any designations (i.e. CPA, SDA, etc.) you enter here will be printed on the official ballot, exactly as submitted.

Why do you want to serve on the SDRMA Board of Directors? (Response Required)

I have considerable interest, knowledge, and experience in board leadership; board service; and board governance/policy development & oversight in for-profits, nonprofits, a joint powers authority/SDRMA member organization, and as an elected city councilman. I also have considerable experience (as a top-level executive board leader and manager) in organizational risk management and risk mitigation/prevention. I would like to share my knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience in service to SDRMA members, via my service on SDRMA's board of directors. I believe that my knowledge, experience, and dedication to excellence and implementation of best practices in governance and policy development/oversight will serve SDRMA well, and will assist SDRMA in maintaining its "Excellent" accreditation via the California Association of Joint Powers Authorities (CAJPA).

What Board or committee experience do you have that would help you to be an effective Board Member? (SDRMA or any other organization) (Response Required)

Having served in board leadership roles (25+ years in for-profit entities; 25+ years in nonprofit & private/public foundations; and 2+ years in a Joint Powers Authority [SDRMA member organization]), I am well-versed and experienced in board governance, policy development; financial statement analysis and budget review; executive management search/selection, oversight and evaluation; organizational risk management/mitigation; litigation oversight; and best practices in organizational governance. At SDRMA member organization, Redwood Region Economic Development Commission (RREDC), I have served as 2019 Immediate Past Chair; 2018 Board Chair; 2017 Vice Chair; Chair of Executive Committee; and Member of the Loan Committee. I have in-depth knowledge of policy governance (Culver, et al.); I am an advocate for transparency & best practices; and I am knowledgeable & experienced in California's Ralph M. Brown Act and Roberts Rules of Order. I have also served in board governance and board leadership roles in several nonprofit organizations and in both public and private foundations, including as Board Chair (12+ years) and in President & Vice President roles. I have also Chaired Search/Selection committees; Public Relations committees; Fund Development committees; and Finance/Audit committees.
Special District Risk Management Authority  
Board of Directors  
Candidate's Statement of Qualifications

What special skills, talents, or experience (including volunteer experience) do you have?  
(Response Required)

Besides holding a Master of Public Affairs degree, with a specialty in nonprofit management; having completed all coursework and written/oral exams (all except dissertation) for a PhD in Mass Communication, with a specialty in public relations and a cognate in organizational communication management, I have several other directly-relevant skills/talents/experience including: I am expertly adept at executive-level relationship development and stewardship, and have served as an organizational & industry advocate and liaison working closely with community organizations, local/county/state elected officials, and public/private entities/organizations and foundations. I am expertly adept at financial and operational analysis, and at asset/portfolio management and risk mitigation. I have taught for-credit university courses in corporate leadership; in entrepreneurial leadership research and practice; as well as having published peer-reviewed academic research on leadership in public relations.

What is your overall vision for SDRMA?  
(Response Required)

My vision for SDRMA would be for SDRMA to continue to add value to its members; operate with the highest ethical practices and transparency; continue in providing excellence in service, education, safety and compliance training; help members to mitigate and reduce risk; provide expedient claims review and response; provide members with state-of-the-art education and information; educate members to minimize losses/risk in member workplaces; and to continue to provide members with comprehensive coverage for property/liability, workers comp, and health benefits.

I would envision SDRMA management and staff enjoying a quality of life that will ensure their happiness and continue an atmosphere of dedicated service to SDRMA members. I would also envision that SDRMA will continue to operate with efficiencies that minimize costs/expenses, continue to enable SDRMA to maintain competitive premium rates, and (when possible) lower organizational and member costs. I would also envision a governing board that embraces and employs best governing practices in all areas of policy development; executive management oversight; financial review/audit; and in investing and spreading portfolio assets to minimize portfolio investment risks and maximize return on investments. Finally, I would envision SDRMA, and its management team/staff, operating in ways that will continue to earn accreditation "Excellence" from the California Association of Joint Powers Authorities (CAJPA).

I certify that I meet the candidate qualifications as outlined in the SDRMA election policy. I further certify that I am willing to serve as a director on SDRMA's Board of Directors. I will commit the time and effort necessary to serve. Please consider my application for nomination/candidacy to the Board of Directors.

Candidate Signature ______________________  Date 3/25/2019
Special District Risk Management Authority
Board of Directors
Candidate’s Statement of Qualifications

This information will be distributed to the membership with the ballot, “exactly as submitted” by the candidates. No statements are endorsed by SDRMA.

Candidate* Sandy Seifert-Raffelson
District/Agency Herlong Public Utility District
Work Address 447-855 Plumas St., P.O. Box 115, Herlong, CA 96113
Work Phone (530) 827-3150 Cell Phone (530) 310-4320

*The name or nickname and any designations (i.e. CPA, SDA, etc.) you enter here will be printed on the official ballot, exactly as submitted.

Why do you want to serve on the SDRMA Board of Directors?

I am a current Board member of SDRMA and feel that I have added my financial background to make better informed decisions for our members. As a Board member, I continue to improve my education of insurance issues and look forward to representing small District’s and Northern California as a voice on the SDRMA Board. I feel I am an asset to the Board with my degree in Business and my 30 plus years’ experience in accounting and auditing.

I understand the challenges that small District face every day when it comes to managing liability insurance, worker’s compensation and health insurance for a few employees with limit revenue and staff. My education and experience give me an appreciation of the importance of risk management services and programs, especially for smaller District that lack expertise with insurance issues on a daily basis.

I feel I am an asset to this Board, and would love a chance to stay on 4 more years!

What Board or committee experience do you have that would help you to be an effective Board Member? (SDRMA or any other organization)

While serving on the SDRMA Board, I have been privilege to be Secretary of the Board for two years, and currently the Vice-President. I have served on CSDA’s Audit and Financial Committee’s for 6 years; I have served on the SDLF Board; Northeastern Rural Health Clinic Board; Fair Board; School and Church boards; 4-H Council and leader for 15 years; and UC Davis Equine Board. In the past 25 years, I have learn that there is no “I” in Board and it can be very rewarding to be part of a team that makes a difference for others.

As part of my many duties working with Herlong PUD, I worked to form the District and was directly involved with LAFCo, Lassen County Board of Supervisors and County Clerk to establish the initial Board of Directors and first Policies for HPUD. I have administered the financial portion of 2 large capital improvement project with USDA as well as worked on the first ever successful water utility privatization project with the US Army and Department of Defense. I am currently working on a 4.2 million grant from California for new infrastructure for the small District HPUD absorb through LAFCo in 2017. I am also the primary administrator of a federal contract for utility services with the Federal Bureau of Prison and the US Army.
Special District Risk Management Authority
Board of Directors
Candidate's Statement of Qualifications

What special skills, talents, or experience (including volunteer experience) do you have?

I have my Bachelor's Degree in Business with a minor in Sociology. I have audited Small Districts for 5 years, worked for a Small District for almost 15 years and have over 30 years of accounting experience. I am a good communicator and organizer. I have served on several Boards and feel I work well within groups or special committee. I am willing to go that extra mile to see things get completed.

I believe in recognition for jobs well done. I encourage incentive programs that get members motivated to participate and strive to do their very best to keep all losses at a minimum and reward those with no losses.

I have completed my Certificate for Special District Board Secretary/Clerk Program in both regular and advance course work through CSDA and co-sponsored by SDRMA. I have completed the CSDA Special District Leadership Academy and Special District Governance Academy. I am in the processes of getting my small District re-certified for their District of Transparency and hope one day to attain our District of Distinction.

I work for a District in Northeastern California that has under gone major changes from a Cooperative Company to a 501c12 Corporation, to finally a Public Utility District. I have worked with LAFCo to become a District. Also our small District consolidated another small District into our District. Through past experience I feel I make a great Board member representing the small districts of Northern California and their unique issues and will make decisions that would help all rural/small districts.

What is your overall vision for SDRMA?

For SDRMA to be at the top of the risk management field and to continue communicating and listening to the needs of all California Special Districts and meeting those needs at a reasonable price that Special Districts can afford. I would like to continue education and rewards for no claims and explore avenues of financial endeavors that will benefit our customers.

I certify that I meet the candidate qualifications as outlined in the SDRMA election policy. I further certify that I am willing to serve as a director on SDRMA’s Board of Directors. I will commit the time and effort necessary to serve. Please consider my application for nomination/candidacy to the Board of Directors.

Candidate Signature  
Date 4/16/19
Candidate*  James (Jim) M. Hamlin
District/Agency  Burney Water District
Work Address  20222 Hudson St. Burney, Ca. 96013
Work Phone  (530) 335-3582  Cell Phone

*The name or nickname and any designations (i.e. CPA, SDA, etc.) you enter here will be printed on the official ballot, exactly as submitted.

Why do you want to serve on the SDRMA Board of Directors? *(Response Required)*

Hope to serve and help with decisions being made to both strengthen SDRMA and move into new areas. Our districts are facing new challenges constantly.

What Board or committee experience do you have that would help you to be an effective Board Member? *(SDRMA or any other organization) *(Response Required)*

See Next
Special District Risk Management Authority
Board of Directors
Candidate’s Statement of Qualifications

What special skills, talents, or experience (including volunteer experience) do you have? (Response Required)

September 1972 until January 2014, owned and operated a Insurance brokerage
Sold business and retired.
Board Member of Mayera Memorial Hospital Districr From 1990 until 2014
Served on the Assocical of Hospital Districts for six years.
Served on the board of Burney Water District the previous six years. Current
Serving on Mayers Memorial Hospital Financial Board.

What is your overall vision for SDRMA? (Response Required)

----- SDRMA Board must be strong and protect the concerns of their members. Need
to have a listening ear for the districts that are represented. Need to
use caution when jumping into new areas, not jeopardize their strong programs
and beliefs for new programs.

I certify that I meet the candidate qualifications as outlined in the SDRMA election policy. I further certify that I
am willing to serve as a director on SDRMA’s Board of Directors. I will commit the time and effort necessary to
serve. Please consider my application for nomination/candidacy to the Board of Directors.

Candidate Signature  

Date 3-27-2019  

Page 2 of 2
OFFICIAL 2019 ELECTION BALLOT
SPECIAL DISTRICT RISK MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

VOTE FOR ONLY THREE (3) CANDIDATES

Mark each selection directly onto the ballot, voting for no more than three (3) candidates. Each candidate may receive only one (1) vote per ballot. A ballot received with more than three (3) candidates selected will be considered invalid and not counted. All ballots must be sealed and received by mail or hand delivery in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope at SDRMA on or before 4:30 p.m., Wednesday, August 21, 2019. Faxes or electronic transmissions are NOT acceptable.

☐  BOB SWAN (INCUMBENT)
   Board Member, Groveland Community Services District

☐  JESSE D. CLAYPOOL
   Board Chair, Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District

☐  PATRICK K. O’ROURKE, MPA/CFRM
   Board Member, Redwood Region Economic Development Commission

☐  SANDY SEIFERT-RAFFELSON (INCUMBENT)
   Finance Manager/Treasurer, Herlong Public Utility District

☐  JAMES (Jim) M. HAMLIN
   Board President, Burney Water District

ADOPTED this ____ day of ____________, 2019 by the Ebbetts Pass Fire District at a public meeting by the following votes:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

ATTEST: ______________________  APPROVED: ___________________
The Calaveras County Board of Supervisors has authorized One-Time Purchase Funding of $250,000 for the Ebbetts Pass Fire District. An action is required from the Ebbetts Pass Fire District Board to utilize the funding specifying what will be purchased. Recently our Ebbetts Pass Fire District – Apparatus Committee reviewed various options and is recommending the below items to be purchased from the One-Time Purchase Funding:

- New Ambulance: $206,000
- New Utility Vehicle Chassis: $44,000

Sincerely,

Mike Johnson, Fire Chief
Ebbetts Pass Fire District
Memorandum

June 25, 2019

To: All CalPERS Contracting Agencies

From: John Shipley
Senior Attorney
Legal Office


On February 20, 2019, the CalPERS Board (Board) conducted a full board hearing in an administrative appeal before the Board entitled "In the Matter of the Appeal Regarding the Final Compensation Calculation of MARK L. WHEELER, THOMAS R. VALDEZ, JOHN M. LOPEZ, LARRY D. BLACKWELL, GARRY G. COHOE, Respondents; LOS ANGELES COUNTY, Respondent; and SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY, Respondent."

On February 21, 2019, the Board adopted the Final Decision. A copy of the Final Decision is attached. The Final Decision determined that in order to be used in the calculation of compensation earnable, the pay rate or base pay of a member must be created by public notice and action of the governing board and with public consent. The pay schedule must be readily available in an open manner or place. That in addition to being noticed, a pay schedule must provide a pay rate or base pay that is stable and predictable among all members of a group or class.

The Board determined at its meeting on May 15, 2019, to consider the question of whether its decision in this matter should be designated as precedential and directed staff to take public comments about whether the decision should be made precedential.

This Request for Public Comments has been issued to solicit your written comments on the question of whether the Board's Final Decision in this matter should be made precedential. (Please note: The Board is not requesting comments or arguments on the merits or correctness of its Final Decision, which is not up for reconsideration; any such comments or arguments will not be considered.)
In deciding whether to designate a decision as precedential, the Board's policy is to consider the following questions:

- Does the decision contain a significant legal or policy determination of general application that is likely to recur?
- Does it include a clear and complete analysis of the issues in sufficient detail so that interested parties can understand why the findings of fact were made, and how the law was applied?

If you are interested in commenting on whether the Board’s Final Decision should be precedential, please address the questions above, along with any other questions or considerations, and mail, fax or deliver your written comments to:

CalPERS Legal Office
Attn: John Shipley, Senior Attorney
P. O. Box 942707
Sacramento, CA 94229-2707
Fax No. (916) 795-3659

Comments must be received in the CalPERS Legal Office no later than 5:00 p.m. PDT, July 25, 2019. Comments should not exceed six pages in length (single spaced). Late comments will not be considered.

The Board will consider all comments received at a future Board public meeting, on a date to be announced, and determine whether to make its Final Decision in the Mark L. Wheeler, et al., matter precedential.

CalPERS staff will provide copies and a summary of the comments received to Board members. CalPERS staff will also provide its written recommendations to the Board. Other than public comment provided in accordance with California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 552.1, oral comment or argument will not be received at the Board meeting.

Questions concerning this notice may be directed to John Shipley in the CalPERS Legal Office at (916) 795-9511.

Attachment
BOARD OF ADMINISTRATION
CALIFORNIA PUBLIC EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM

In the Matter of the Appeal Regarding the Final Compensation Calculation of
MARK L. WHEELER,
   Respondent,
   and
LOS ANGELES COUNTY,
   Respondent.

AGENCY CASE NO.: 2016-1073
OAH NO.: 2017100516 (LEAD)

FINAL DECISION

AGENCY CASE NO.: 2017-0275
OAH NO.: 2017100518

In the Matter of the Appeal Regarding the Final Compensation Calculation of
THOMAS R. VALDEZ,
   Respondent,
   and
LOS ANGELES COUNTY,
   Respondent.

AGENCY CASE NO.: 2017-0686
OAH NO.: 2017100520

In the Matter of the Appeal Regarding the Final Compensation Calculation of
JOHN M. LOPEZ,
   Respondent,
   and
LOS ANGELES COUNTY,
   Respondent.

FINAL DECISION

-1-
These consolidated matters were heard before the Board of Administration of the California Public Employees' Retirement System on February 20, 2019, at Sacramento, California, pursuant to the Board's determination at its meeting on November 15, 2018, to decide the matter itself rather than adopt the Corrected Proposed Decision of the Administrative Law Judge. After reviewing the entire record and considering the arguments, the Board of Administration made the following determination:

RESOLVED, that the Board of Administration of the California Public Employees' Retirement System hereby adopts Attachment B Final Decision concerning the appeal of Mark L. Wheeler, Thomas R. Valdez, John M. Lopez, 

///
Larry Blackwell, and Garry G. Cohoe; RESOLVED FURTHER that this Board Final Decision shall be effective immediately upon the Board's adoption.

* * * * *

I hereby certify that on February 21, 2019, the Board of Administration, California Public Employees' Retirement System, made and adopted the foregoing Resolution, and I certify further that the attached copy of the Administrative Law Judge's Final Decision is a true copy of the Decision adopted by said Board of Administration in said matter.

BOARD OF ADMINISTRATION, CALIFORNIA PUBLIC EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
MARIE FROST
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Dated February 26, 2019:

BY [Signature]
DONNA RAMELUM
Deputy Executive Officer
Customer Services and Support
BEFORE THE
BOARD OF ADMINISTRATION
CALIFORNIA PUBLIC EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Appeal Regarding the Final Compensation Calculation of:

MARK L. WHEELER,

Respondent,

and

LOS ANGELES COUNTY,

Respondent.

Case No. 2016-1073
OAH Case No. 2017100516

In the Matter of the Appeal Regarding the Final Compensation Calculation of:

THOMAS R. VALDEZ,

Respondent,

and

LOS ANGELES COUNTY,

Respondent.

Case No. 2017-0275
OAH Case No. 2017100518

In the Matter of the Appeal Regarding the Final Compensation Calculation of:

JOHN M. LOPEZ,

Respondent,

and

LOS ANGELES COUNTY,

Respondent.

Case No. 2017-0586
OAH Case No. 2017100520
In the Matter of the Appeal Regarding the Final Compensation Calculation of:

LARRY D. BLACKWELL, 
Respondent, 

and 

LOS ANGELES COUNTY, 
Respondent.

In the Matter of the Appeal Regarding the Final Compensation Calculation of:

GARRY G. COHOE, 
Respondent, 

and 

SAN BERNARDINO TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY, 
Respondent.

Case No. 2017-0966 
OAH Case No. 2018020308

Case No. 2017-1217 
OAH Case No. 2018020953

FINAL DECISION

The hearing in this matter initially took place on April 11, 2018, at Los Angeles, California, before Joseph D. Montoya, Administrative Law Judge (ALJ), Office of Administrative Hearings. At the hearing before the ALJ, the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS or PERS) was represented by John Shipley, Senior Attorney, and Respondents Mark L. Wheeler, John M. Lopez, Larry D. Blackwell, Gary G. Cohoe and Thomas Valdez (Respondents) were represented by Stephen Silver and Elizabeth S. Tourgeman, Lucia, Stem, St. Phalle & Silver, P.C. However, Thomas Valdez did not personally appear at the hearing.

There was no appearance by the other Respondents, Los Angeles County (LA County) or San Bernardino County Transportation Authority (SBCTA).
The record was held open for production of a transcript, and for briefing by the parties. CalPERS' closing brief was received on June 4, 2018, and is identified as exhibit 77. Respondents' closing brief was received on June 4, 2018, and is identified as exhibit C.

Respondents submitted two binders containing material pertaining to legislative history. The first binder is identified as exhibit D, and the second as exhibit E.

Reply briefs were submitted in a timely manner by each party. CalPERS' reply brief is identified as exhibit 78, and Respondents' reply brief is identified as exhibit F.

Thereafter, the ALJ ordered the record reopened so that he could hear argument from counsel. A telephonic hearing was held on July 26, 2018. The record was closed, and the matter was submitted for decision on July 26, 2018.

The ALJ issued a Proposed Decision on August 28, 2018. On September 11, 2018, it came to the ALJ's attention that the original Proposed Decision showed that the telephonic hearing mentioned above took place on June 26, 2018, with that day as the submission date. That was incorrect, as the telephonic hearing was held on July 26, 2018, and the matter again submitted on that date.

The ALJ's Corrected Proposed Decision (hereinafter, the Proposed Decision), which was issued on September 13, 2018, found that Government Code Section 20638, entitled, "Final Compensation- Concurrent Retirement with County Retirement System," creates a new definition of compensation earnable for purposes of county employees, which includes Respondents. The ALJ found that Section 20638 requires CalPERS to determine Respondents' final compensation based on definitions of compensation and compensation earnable contained in the County Employees Retirement Law of 1937 (CERL). Consequently, the ALJ granted Respondents' appeals and found that Respondents' CalPERS retirement benefits shall be based on the compensation figures provided to CalPERS by their respective county retirement systems, even though those figures contain items of pay that do not qualify under the Public Employees' Retirement Law's definitions of compensation and compensation earnable.

At its November 15, 2018, meeting, the CalPERS Board of Administration (Board) requested a Full Board Hearing on this case and on February 20, 2019, the Board conducted a Full Board Hearing. All parties received notice of the proceedings before the Board. At the February 20, 2019, hearing before the Board, Respondents were represented by Attorney Stephen Silver. John Shipley, Senior Attorney, represented CalPERS.

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF THE CASE

This case involves two statutory schemes pertaining to retirement systems for public employees: The Public Employees' Retirement Law, Government Code section 20000 et seq., and

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1 Pursuant to a stipulation made at the hearing, the further proceeding was conducted telephonically, and electronically recorded.
the County Employees Retirement Law of 1937, Government Code section 31450 et. seq.  

The Respondents were previously members of CalPERS, and each subsequently became members of a county retirement system. CalPERS and the county retirement systems entered into agreements to allow members of the reciprocal systems to enjoy reciprocal membership. How reciprocal membership affects Respondents’ final compensations for purposes of determining their CalPERS retirement benefits must be determined in this case.

This matter is primarily a trial on the law, rather than on the facts. (Cf. Code Civ. Proc., § 588.) That is, the bulk of the facts are not disputed—many have been stipulated to—but the legal significance of those facts is very much in dispute. The parties agree that CalPERS and the two county retirement systems are reciprocal retirement systems. Respondents assert that when CalPERS calculates their CalPERS retirement payments it must make to them, CalPERS must utilize their final compensation as calculated by their county retirement systems and reported to CalPERS; that is, the CERL’s rules must control. CalPERS asserts, on the other hand, that when calculating final compensation, the PERL’s definitions for compensation (Section 20630) and compensation earnable (Section 20636) control, and that some items of pay made to Respondents by their respective county employers do not qualify as pensionable income under the PERL and cannot be included when determining Respondents’ final compensations, effectively reducing the retirement benefits that they might otherwise receive from CalPERS.

The issue then becomes a question of which statute in the PERL controls how “compensation” and “compensation earnable” are defined for purposes of determining a reciprocal member’s retirement benefits. CalPERS asserts that Sections 20630 and 20636 define compensation and compensation earnable for reciprocal members, and Respondents assert Section 20638 provides an alternative definition of compensation earnable for reciprocal members.

While the main part of the case pertains to which statutes define pensionable income, Respondent Cohoe, as a separate matter, claims that even if Section 20636 controls, the compensation he received from SBCTA in the form of Top of Range Merit pay should qualify as pensionable income under the PERL and be included in his final compensation for purposes of calculating his CalPERS retirement benefits. Likewise, Respondents Wheeler and Valdez claim that the compensation they received from LA County in the form of Longevity/Merit Bonus pay should qualify as pensionable income and be included in their final compensations for purposes of calculating their CalPERS retirement benefits.

**Issues**

1. Should CalPERS apply the PERL’s definitions of “compensation” and “compensation earnable” when calculating Respondents’ retirement benefits, or does Section 20638 provide an alternative definition of “compensation earnable” for purposes of reciprocal members, including Respondents, requiring CalPERS to use the figures provided by reciprocal system’s under the CERL?

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2 All further statutory citations are to the Government Code unless otherwise noted.
2. Does Respondents Wheeler and Valdez' Longevity/Merit Bonus pay qualify as compensation earnable under the PERL?
3. Does Respondent Cohoe’s Top of Range Merit pay qualify as compensation earnable under the PERL?

The Parties and Jurisdiction

1. (A) Respondent Larry D. Blackwell (Blackwell) established membership in CalPERS on December 4, 2000, through employment with the City of Temple City (Temple City). Blackwell separated from Temple City on or about July 9, 2002, but he remained a member of CalPERS.

(B) Blackwell became an employee of the County of Los Angeles on or about July 10, 2002, and he established membership in the Los Angeles County Employees' Retirement Association (LACERA). He was last employed with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department as a lieutenant.

(C) Blackwell has reciprocity rights for concurrent retirement with both CalPERS and LACERA.

(D) Blackwell signed an application for service retirement with a retirement date of January 31, 2017. He has 1.714 years of service credit with CalPERS.

(E) CalPERS received a Retirement Salary Request form from LACERA dated February 13, 2017, along with other documents pertaining to Blackwell's final average compensation. LACERA reported as compensation several categories, including Pensionable Cafeteria Plan, Pensionable Sick Buyback, and Pensionable Vacation Buyback.

(F) CalPERS staff analyzed the aforementioned categories of compensation, and concluded that they do not meet the definition of 'compensation earnable' within the meaning of the statutes and regulations that govern CalPERS. CalPERS gave Blackwell and LACERA notification of its determination, along with information about their appeal rights.

(G) Blackwell filed a timely appeal and this proceeding ensued. CalPERS filed a Statement of Issues (SOI), and Blackwell submitted a Notice of Defense. All jurisdictional requirements have been met.

2. (A) Respondent John M. Lopez (Lopez) established membership in CalPERS on September 27, 1982 through employment with the City of Alhambra (Alhambra). Lopez went to work for the City of Downey (Downey) on March 11, 1984, and remained in the employ of Downey through April 28, 1994, and he remained a member of CalPERS.

(B) Lopez became an employee of LA County on or about May 1, 1994, and he established membership in LACERA at that time.

(C) Lopez has reciprocity rights for concurrent retirement with both CalPERS and LACERA.
(D) Lopez took steps to retire beginning on August 8, 2016, and he retired from service effective September 17, 2016, with 11.880 years of service credit with CalPERS.

(E) CalPERS received a Retirement Salary Request form from LACERA dated October 21, 2016, with other documents pertaining to Lopez’s final average compensation. LACERA reported as compensation several categories, including Pensionable Cafeteria Plan, Pensionable Sick Buyback, and Pensionable Vacation Buyback.

(F) CalPERS staff analyzed the aforementioned categories of compensation, and concluded that they do not meet the definition of “compensation earnable” within the meaning of the statutes and regulations that govern CalPERS. In January 2017, CalPERS gave Lopez and LACERA notification of its determination, along with information about their appeal rights.

(G) Lopez filed a timely appeal and this proceeding ensued. CalPERS filed a SOI, and Lopez submitted a Notice of Defense. All jurisdictional requirements have been met.

3. (A) Respondent Thomas R. Valdez (Valdez) established membership in CalPERS effective December 6, 1978, through employment with the City of El Segundo (El Segundo). Valdez remained in the employ of El Segundo until August 22, 1982, and he then entered into employment with the City of Inglewood (Inglewood) on August 23, 1982. Valdez worked for Inglewood until May 8, 1986, remaining a member of CalPERS through that later date.

(B) Valdez became an employee of LA County on or about May 9, 1986, and he established membership in LACERA at that time.

(C) Valdez has reciprocity rights for concurrent retirement with both CalPERS and LACERA.

(D) Valdez retired from service effective March 31, 2016, with 7.679 years of service credit with CalPERS.

(E) CalPERS received a Retirement Salary Request form from LACERA on or about March 21, 2016, with other documents pertaining to Valdez’s final average compensation. LACERA reported as compensation several categories, including Pensionable Cafeteria Plan, Pensionable Sick Buyback, and Pensionable Vacation Buyback. 3

(F) CalPERS staff analyzed the aforementioned categories of compensation,

3 LACERA did not initially identify Longevity/Merit Bonus pay as an item of compensation that Valdez received. CalPERS was first informed this was an item of pay he received after it issued its initial determination. As discussed in Paragraph 3(G), CalPERS issued an amended determination when it received documentation that the Longevity/Merit Bonus Pay provided to Valdez also did not comply with the PERL.
and concluded that they do not meet the definition of "compensation earnable" within the meaning of the statutes and regulations that govern CalPERS. Further, CalPERS was unable to verify if compensation identified by LACERA as Pensionable Holiday Buyback, and certain payments included in Scheduled Earnings or Regular Earnings should be included as final compensation. On July 5, 2016, CalPERS wrote Valdez and LACERA, giving them notice of its determination, along with information about their appeal rights.

(G) In July 2016, Valdez filed a timely appeal. Thereafter, CalPERS received further information from LA County and LACERA regarding compensation. CalPERS concluded that Pensionable Cafeteria Plan, Pensionable Sick Buyback; and Pensionable Vacation Buyback were not eligible for inclusion in the calculation of final compensation. Further communications between CalPERS and Valdez's attorney ensued, which focused on whether longevity pay was to be included in Valdez's final compensation. On March 9, 2017, CalPERS gave notice to Valdez that longevity pay would not be included in the calculation of final compensation.

(H) Valdez sought an appeal, and CalPERS filed a SOI. Valdez then submitted a Notice of Defense. This proceeding ensued, all jurisdictional requirements having been met.

4. (A) Respondent Mark L. Wheeler (Wheeler) established membership in CalPERS effective July 1, 1981, through employment with the City of La Habra (La Habra). Wheeler remained employed by La Habra until July 1, 2005, remaining a member of CalPERS through that later date.

(B) Wheeler became an employee of LA County on or about July 1, 2005, and he established membership in LACERA at that time.

(C) Wheeler has reciprocity rights for concurrent retirement with both CalPERS and LACERA.

(D) Wheeler retired from service effective March 31, 2016, with 24.014 years of service credit with CalPERS.

(E) CalPERS received a Retirement Salary Request form from LACERA on or about March 21, 2016, with other documents pertaining to Wheeler's final average compensation. LACERA reported as compensation several categories, including Pensionable Cafeteria Plan, Pensionable Sick Buyback, Pensionable Vacation Buyback, and Longevity/Merit Bonus pay.

(F) CalPERS staff analyzed the aforementioned categories of compensation, and concluded that they do not meet the definition of "compensation earnable" within the meaning of the statutes and regulations that govern CalPERS. In June 2016, CalPERS gave Wheeler and LACERA notification of its determination, along with information about their appeal rights.

(G) Wheeler filed a timely appeal, which led to CalPERS filing a SOI. Wheeler filed a notice of defense, and this proceeding ensued. All jurisdictional requirements
have been met.

5. (A) Respondent Garry G. Cohoe (Cohoe) established membership in CalPERS effective July 6, 1987, through employment with the City of Ontario (Ontario). Wheeler remained employed by Ontario until August 1, 1991. Cohoe then commenced employment with the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans), and he worked for CalTrans until January 26, 2003, remaining a member of CalPERS through that later date.

(B) Cohoe became an employee of the County of San Bernardino on or about January 27, 2003, and he established membership in the San Bernardino County Employees' Retirement Association (SBCERA) at that time.

(C) Cohoe has reciprocity rights for concurrent retirement with both CalPERS and SBCERA.

(D) Cohoe retired from service effective January 7, 2017, with 15.682 years of service credit with CalPERS.

(E) CalPERS received a Retirement Salary Request form from SBCERA on or about February 6, 2017, with other documents pertaining to Cohoe’s final average compensation. SBCERA reported as compensation several categories of compensation, including Auto Allowance, Cell-Phone Contract, Cashout Admin-Earnable Comp, Cashout Vac-Earnable Comp, and Flex-Manual Pay. 4

(F) CalPERS staff analyzed the aforementioned categories of compensation, and concluded that they do not meet the definition of “compensation earnable” within the meaning of the statutes and regulations that govern CalPERS. In April 2017, CalPERS gave Cohoe and SBCERA notification of its determination, along with information about their appeal rights.

(G) Cohoe responded to the April 2017 letter, asserting reasons that the compensation should remain in the calculation of his retirement benefits. After further consideration, CalPERS notified Cohoe and SBCERA that it did not find the payments should be part of his final compensation calculation, and that pay he had received as “Top of Range Merit” pay was not eligible for inclusion into his retirement benefit calculations. This was communicated by a letter dated June 30, 2017, addressed to Cohoe and SBCERA.

(H) Cohoe filed a timely appeal, which led CalPERS to file a SOI. Cohoe filed his notice of defense, and this proceeding ensued. All jurisdictional requirements have been met.

6. Each of the five SOI’s were signed by Renee Ostrander in her capacity as

4 SBCERA did not initially identify Top of Range Merit pay as an item of pay that Cohoe received. After CalPERS received additional information from SBCERA, a supplemental determination was issued informing Cohoe that Top of Range Merit pay did not qualify as compensation earnable under the PERL and could not be included in the final compensation used when determining his CalPERS retirement benefits.
Chief of CalPERS' Employer Account Management Division.  

7. On October 11, 2017, CalPERS moved to consolidate the SOI's pertaining to Lopez, Valdez, and Wheeler for hearing, which motion was granted on December 15, 2017. Thereafter, CalPERS moved to consolidate the SOI's pertaining to Cohoe and Blackwell for hearing along with the other cases, which motion was granted.

8. LA County was named as a respondent in the cases involving Blackwell, Lopez, Valdez, and Wheeler, and it was served with the SOI's for those cases. Likewise, SBCTA was named in the action pertaining to Cohoe, and was served with the SOI. Neither LA County nor SBCTA appeared in this matter.

The Parties' Stipulation

9. Prior to the hearing in this matter, the parties entered into a written stipulation. (Exh. 74.) The salient terms of the stipulation are set out below, in their entirety.

1. CalPERS asserts that all retirement benefits paid by CalPERS to its members, including members who've established reciprocity between CalPERS and a Reciprocal Retirement System, such as the Los Angeles County Employees' Retirement Association (LACERA) and the San Bernardino County Employees' Retirement Association (SBCERA), are subject to the California Public Employees' Retirement Law (PERL). CalPERS takes the position that only those items of compensation that qualify as compensation earnable under the PERL will be included in the Final Average Compensation (FAC) or final compensation amount that's used to determine a CalPERS retirement allowance.

2. In the past, CalPERS did not have an automated process to review all reported final salary information provided by Reciprocal Retirement Systems. However, upon discovery that a reciprocal Retirement System possibly regarded as pensionable income and final compensation under the County Employee's Retirement Law (CERL) items of special compensation that don't qualify as compensation earnable under the PERL, CalPERS has and will conduct independent reviews.

3. Recently, CalPERS was made aware that Reciprocal Retirement Systems were routinely treating and reporting to CalPERS as pensionable income and final compensation under the CERL items of compensation that did not qualify as compensation earnable under the PERL. Consequently, CalPERS has dedicated additional resources to its Compensation Compliance Review Unit to ensure when using reciprocal salary information, only compensation that qualifies as compensation earnable under the PERL is used in the calculation of retirement benefits for the CalPERS portion of the reciprocal allowance. CalPERS does this by requiring Reciprocal Retirement Systems to provide greater details for

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5 In one instance, another person signed the SOI on Ostrander's behalf.
items provided as part of the FAC under the CERL to CalPERS. In addition, CalPERS recently issued a Circular Letter to address and provide information regarding CalPERS' review and determination process for computation of the FAC or final compensation amount that CalPERS may use to calculate member benefits for the CalPERS portion of the reciprocal allowance.

4. With respect to Respondents Lopez, Valdez, Wheeler and Blackwell, the following items of compensation earned by those individuals during their final compensation measurement period were reported to CalPERS by the County of Los Angeles and LACERA as compensation earnable, and therefore final compensation, under the CERL: Pensionable Sick Buyback, Pensionable Vacation Buyback, and Pensionable Cafeteria Plan. CalPERS does not have independent knowledge as to whether these items qualify as compensation earnable, and therefore final compensation, under the CERL. However, for the sole purpose of this consolidated hearing, CalPERS does not dispute that these items qualify as compensation earnable, and therefore final compensation, under the CERL. However, these items do not qualify as compensation earnable and/or final compensation under the PERL.

5. With respect to Respondent Cohoe, the following items of compensation earned by him during his final compensation measurement period were reported to CalPERS by the San Bernardino County Transportation Authority and SBCERA as compensation earnable, and therefore final compensation: Auto Allowance, Cell Phone-Contract, Cashout Admin-Earnable Comp, Cashout Vac-Earnable Comp and Flex-Manual Pay. CalPERS does not have independent knowledge as to whether these items qualify as compensation earnable, and therefore final compensation, under the CERL. However, for the sole purpose of this consolidated hearing, CalPERS does not dispute that these items qualify as compensation earnable, and therefore final compensation, under the CERL. However, these items do not qualify as compensation earnable and/or final compensation under the PERL.

Testimony Offered by CalPERS

10. Jennifer Sandness testified on behalf of CalPERS. She has been employed there for nearly 10 years, working for the last eight years in the Employer Account Management Division’s compensation review unit.

11. Ms. Sandness took the position that various items of pay used by LACERA and SBCERA to determine Respondents pensionable income are not deemed items of pensionable compensation under the PERL. She also spoke to Respondent Cohoe’s payrate, asserting that he received a payrate that was above the maximum amount on his employer’s publicly available pay schedule.

12. Regarding Cohoe’s pay, the information received from SBCERA indicated he was paid above the maximum amount of payrate set out on the publicly available pay schedule adopted by SBCTA covering his position, and under the PERL that excess could not be treated as payrate. Further inquiry to SBCERA led to information to the effect that
Cohoe’s employer would sometimes pay employees in excess of the maximum payrate based on the employee’s time at the top of the pay range and their performance. Ms. Sandness took the position that under the PERL, the excess amount could not be defined as a performance bonus, and it did not meet the requirements of longevity pay. Ms. Sandness testified that the PERL, and case law interpreting the PERL, requires that an item of special compensation meet the specific definition of an item listed in California Code of Regulations (CCR), title 2, section 571 (CCR Section 571) to be pensionable. Ms. Sandness testified that CCR Section 571 contains a definition for “merit bonus,” and separately a definition for “longevity.” However, Ms. Sandness testified that Respondent’s Top of Range Merit pay combines the requirement for both merit bonus and longevity, and the law does not allow an employer to combine two or more items listed in CCR Section 571 to create a reportable item of special compensation. Ms. Sandness also testified that the Top of Range Merit pay Cohoe received could not qualify as payrate because it was not the normal monthly rate of pay or base pay of Cohoe paid to similarly situated members. The Top of Range Merit pay was not the normal monthly rate of pay or base pay, but was pay that recognized Cohoe’s longevity and excellent performance. Consequently, Ms. Sandness testified that it did not qualify as payrate, as that term is defined in Section 20636.

13. Ms. Sandness also testified that Respondent Wheeler and Valdez’s longevity bonus did not qualify under the PERL because it required the employee to be at the top step of their pay range and because it also had a performance component. Ms. Sandness testified that, similar to Respondent Cohoe’s Top of Range Merit pay, the law does not allow an employer to combine two or more items listed in CCR Section 571 to create a reportable item of special compensation. Because L.A County’s longevity bonus combines longevity, being on the top step of a salary range for a position, and performance, it is not recognized on the exclusive list for reportable items of special compensation found in CCR Section 571.

14. Ms. Sandness confirmed that for many years CalPERS accepted as the final compensation variable in computing the pension benefits the compensation forwarded to it by the reciprocal county retirement systems; however, Ms. Sandness testified that if CalPERS became aware of an instance where a reciprocal county retirement system reported compensation that did not qualify under the PERL, CalPERS took steps to ensure that the reciprocal member’s final compensation was calculated to include only pensionable compensation as defined by the PERL. Ms. Sandness testified that in these instances CalPERS only paid retirement benefits on final compensation amounts that qualified under the definitions of compensation and compensation earnable found in Sections 20630 and 20636 of the PERL.

Testimony of Respondent Cohoe

15. Respondent Cohoe testified that he had been receiving Top of Range Merit pay, which was based on both longevity and performance, which is why his pay was in excess of the maximum payrate listed on SBCTA’s publicly available pay schedule for his position. He had been receiving such pay for six to seven years before he retired in early 2017.
Other Matters

16. Respondent Cohoe's salary was set out on an SBCTA document entitled "Annual Salary Range by Class Title" for the fiscal year 2016-2017, effective July 1, 2016. (Ex. 68.) He, along with six other employees, was in salary range 40. It had a minimum pay of $116,871, a mid-point pay of $145,088, and a maximum pay of $175,306 per year. The Salary Schedule notes that "Salary Ranges may be adjusted, as approved, by the Board of Directors." A fourth category, entitled "Top of Range Merit" set the salary at $192,837. It should be noted that every position listed, from receptionist (the lowest paid) to the Deputy Executive Director (highest) had a Top of Range Merit category on the pay schedule. A double asterisk under the category "Top of Range Merit" led to a footnote that stated: "Policy 10107 outlines authority of the Executive Director to approve Top of Range advancement for staff at top of range for three years based on performance." Policy 10107.VIII.D. Top of Range provides "Employees who have been at or over the maximum of their salary range for 36 months or more will become eligible for advancement based upon work performance and supervisor's recommendation (Refer to Policy 10115). Such advancement must be approved by the Executive Director and may not exceed 5% in any year. At no time shall advancement exceed more than 10% above the maximum of the employee's salary range assignment."

17. Respondents Wheeler and Valdez each received compensation that was reported to CalPERS as a longevity bonus. Los Angeles County Code of Ordinance 6.10.100 provides the eligibility requirements for receiving the "longevity bonus." To be eligible for the "longevity bonus," Respondents Wheeler and Valdez had to complete "at least 10 years of aggregate service in such position" and also be "on the top step of the salary range of such position." (LA County Ordinance 6.10.100.A.1.) In addition, Respondents Wheeler and Valdez could only receive the "bonus...upon departmental certification that the employee's performance is 'competent' or better. (LA County Ordinance 6.10.100.C.)

LEGAL CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

On Reciprocity

1. The parties' agreement that the county systems are in reciprocity with CalPERS on its own does little to advance the analysis, especially when CalPERS argues that the statute relied upon by respondents, section 20638, does not provide an alternative definition of "compensation" and "compensation earners" for reciprocal members such as Respondents. Statutes pertinent to reciprocity are found in the PERL and in the CERL.


3. Section 20351, found in the aforementioned portion of the Government Code, states:

The provisions of this part extending rights to a member of this system, or subjecting him or her to any limitation by reason of his or her...
membership in a county retirement system, shall apply in like manner and under like conditions to a member of this system by reason of his or her membership in any retirement system established under Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 45300) of Division 5 of Title 4 with respect to which an ordinance complying with Section 45310.5 has been filed with and accepted by the board or by reason of his or her membership in a retirement system established by or pursuant to the charter of a city or city and county or by any other public agency of this state and that system, in the opinion of the board, provides a similar modification of rights and benefits because of membership in this system and with respect to which the governing body of the city, city and county or public agency and the board have entered into agreement pursuant to this section. An agreement under this section shall provide that the governing body shall modify its retirement system to conform to any amendments to this part affecting a member’s right because of membership in a county retirement system, and may contain other provisions consistent with this section as the board deems appropriate. This section shall apply only to a member whose termination and entry into employment resulting in a change in membership from this system to the other system or from the other system to this system occurred after the acceptance by the board or after the effective date specified in the agreement. However, provisions relating to computation of final compensation shall apply to any other member if the provision would have applied had the termination and entry into employment occurred after the acceptance or determination by the board.

4. Section 20353 states:

Any public agency that has pursuant to the provisions of Section 20351 entered into an agreement to establish a reciprocal retirement system with this system shall be deemed to have obtained the same rights and limitations with respect to all other public agencies who have entered into those agreements and established reciprocity as well as with respect to county retirement systems and under Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 45300) of Division 5 of Title 4 that have established reciprocity with this system pursuant to Section 20351.

5. Government Code section 31380, part of the CERL, states the legislative intent regarding reciprocity between county and other retirement systems, as follows:

The provisions of this article are intended to encourage career public service by granting reciprocal retirement benefits to members who are entitled to retirement rights or benefits from two or more retirement systems established under this chapter or from a retirement system established under this chapter and the Public Employees’ Retirement System, the State Teachers’ Retirement System, or a retirement system of any other public agency of the state that has established reciprocity with
the Public Employees' Retirement System subject to the conditions of section 31840.2, and to delineate the financial obligations of each system and related political entity so that no system or political entity shall be liable for more than its just financial obligation.

Statutes and Regulations Relating to Compensation, Compensation Earnable, and Final Compensation

6. (A) The PERL and the CERL each have their own definitions of the terms compensation and compensation earnable.

(B) "Compensation" within the PERL is defined at section 20630, and "compensation earnable" is defined at section 20636. However, "compensation earnable" is also defined at sections 20636.1, 20637, 20638, and 20639.

(C) Within the CERL, compensation is defined at section 31460. Several statutes define compensation earnable, depending on the circumstances; these include sections 31461, 31461.1, 31461.2, 31461.3, 31461.4, 31461.45, and section 31461.6.

7. Section 20630 defines "compensation" as follows:

(a) As used in this part, "compensation" means the remuneration paid out of funds controlled by the employer in payment for the member's services performed during normal working hours or for time during which the member is excused from work because of any of the following:

(1) Holidays.
(2) Sick leave.
(3) Industrial disability leave, during which, benefits are payable pursuant to Sections 4800 and 4850 of the Labor Code, Article 4 (commencing with Section 19869) of Chapter 2.5 of Part 2.6, or Section 44043 or 87042 of the Education Code.
(4) Vacation.
(5) Compensatory time off.
(6) Leave of absence.

(b) When compensation is reported to the board, the employer shall identify the pay period in which the compensation was earned regardless of when reported or paid. Compensation shall be reported in accordance with Section 20636 and shall not exceed compensation earnable, as defined in Section 20636.

8. The CERL definition of compensation, found in section 31460, states:

"Compensation" means the remuneration paid in cash out of county or district funds, plus any amount deducted from a member's wages for participation in a deferred compensation plan established pursuant to Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 18310) of Part 1 of Division 5 of
Title 2 or pursuant to Article 1.1 (commencing with Section 53212) of Chapter 2 of Part 1 of Division 2 of Title 5, but does not include the monetary value of board, lodging, fuel, laundry, or other advantages furnished to a member.

9. Section 20636 defines "compensation earnable" and provides in part:

(a) "Compensation earnable" by a member means the payrate and special compensation of the member, as defined by subdivisions (b), (c), and (g), and as limited by Section 21752.5.

(b) (1) "Payrate" means the normal monthly rate of pay or base pay of the member paid in cash to similarly situated members of the same group or class of employment for services rendered on a full-time basis during normal working hours, pursuant to publicly available pay schedules. "Payrate," for a member who is not in a group or class, means the monthly rate of pay or base pay of the member, paid in cash and pursuant to publicly available pay schedules, for services rendered on a full-time basis during normal working hours, subject to the limitations of paragraph (2) of subdivision (e).

(2) "Payrate" shall include an amount deducted from a member's salary for any of the following:

(A) Participation in a deferred compensation plan.

(B) Payment for participation in a retirement plan that meets the requirements of Section 401(k) of Title 26 of the United States Code.

(C) Payment into a money purchase pension plan and trust that meets the requirements of Section 401(a) of Title 26 of the United States Code.

(D) Participation in a flexible benefits program.

(3) The computation for a leave without pay of a member shall be based on the compensation earnable by him or her at the beginning of the absence.

(4) The computation for time prior to entering state service shall be based on the compensation earnable by him or her in the position first held by him or her in state service.

(c) (1) Special compensation of a member includes a payment received for special skills, knowledge, abilities, work assignment, workdays or hours, or other work conditions.
(2) Special compensation shall be limited to that which is received by a member pursuant to a labor policy or agreement or as otherwise required by state or federal law, to similarly situated members of a group or class of employment that is in addition to payrate. If an individual is not part of a group or class, special compensation shall be limited to that which the board determines is received by similarly situated members in the closest related group or class that is in addition to payrate, subject to the limitations of paragraph (2) of subdivision (g).

(3) Special compensation shall be for services rendered during normal working hours and, when reported to the board, the employer shall identify the pay period in which the special compensation was earned.

(4) Special compensation may include the full monetary value of normal contributions paid to the board by the employer, on behalf of the member and pursuant to Section 20691, if the employer's labor policy or agreement specifically provides for the inclusion of the normal contribution payment in compensation earnable.

(5) The monetary value of a service or noncash advantage furnished by the employer to the member, except as expressly and specifically provided in this part, is not special compensation unless regulations promulgated by the board specifically determine that value to be "special compensation."

(6) The board shall promulgate regulations that delineate more specifically and exclusively what constitutes "special compensation" as used in this section. A uniform allowance, the monetary value of employer-provided uniforms, holiday pay, and premium pay for hours worked within the normally scheduled or regular working hours that are in excess of the statutory maximum workweek or work period applicable to the employee under Section 201 or seq. of Title 29 of the United States Code shall be included as special compensation and appropriately defined in those regulations.

(7) Special compensation does not include any of the following:

(A) Final settlement pay.

(B) Payments made for additional services rendered outside of normal working hours, whether paid in lump sum or otherwise.

(C) Other payments the board has not affirmatively determined to be special compensation.
(d) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, payrate and special compensation schedules, ordinances, or similar documents shall be public records available for public scrutiny.

(e) (1) As used in this part, "group or class of employment" means a number of employees considered together because they share similarities in job duties, work location, collective bargaining unit, or other logical work-related grouping. One employee may not be considered a group or class.

(2) Increases in compensation earnable granted to an employee who is not in a group or class shall be limited during the final compensation period applicable to the employees, as well as the two years immediately preceding the final compensation period, to the average increase in compensation earnable during the same period reported by the employer for all employees who are in the same membership classification, except as may otherwise be determined pursuant to regulations adopted by the board that establish reasonable standards for granting exceptions.

(f) As used in this part, "final settlement pay" means pay or cash conversions of employee benefits that are in excess of compensation earnable, that are granted or awarded to a member in connection with, or in anticipation of, a separation from employment. The board shall promulgate regulations that delineate more specifically what constitutes final settlement pay. [¶] ... [¶]

10. CCR Section 571 delineates more specifically and exclusively what constitutes "special compensation" and provides, in part:

(a) The following list exclusively identifies and defines special compensation items for members employed by contracting agency and school employers that must be reported to CalPERS if they are contained in a written labor policy or agreement:

(1) INCENTIVE PAY

Bonus – Compensation to employees for superior performance such as "annual performance bonus" and "merit pay. If provided only during a member’s final compensation period, it shall be excluded from final compensation as "final settlement pay. A program or system must be in place to plan and identify performance goals and objectives.

[¶] ... [¶]
Longevity Pay - Additional compensation to employees who have been with an employer, or in a specified job classification, for a certain minimum period of time exceeding five years.

11. “Final Compensation” for reciprocal members is separately defined in the PERL (Section 20638) and the CERL (Section 31835).

Section 20638, contained in the PERL, states, in pertinent part:

The highest annual average compensation during any consecutive 12- or 36-month period of as a member of a county retirement system shall be considered compensation earnable by a member of this system for purposes of computing final compensation for the member provided [¶][¶]

(b) He or she retires concurrently under both systems and is credited with the period of service under the county system at the time of retirement.

Section 31835, contained in the CERL, states in pertinent part:

The average compensation during any period of service as a member of the Public Employees' Retirement System, a member of the Judges' Retirement System or Judges' Retirement System II, a member of a retirement system established under this chapter in another county, a member of the State Teachers' Retirement System, or a member of a retirement system of any other public agency of the state that has established reciprocity with the Public Employees' Retirement System subject to the conditions of Section 31840.2, shall be considered compensation earnable or pensionable compensation pursuant to Section 7522.34, whichever is applicable, by a member for purposes of computing final compensation for that member provided [¶][¶]

(b) He or she retires concurrently under both systems and is credited with the period of service under that other system at the time of retirement.

The provisions of this section shall be applicable to all members and beneficiaries of the system.

Applicability of Section 20351

12. Respondents argue that section 20351, cited by CalPERS in determination letters and the SOI’s, does not control in this case. They point out that CalPERS did not quote the entire statute, leaving out the bulk of it, and the reference to the city-based retirement systems authorized by section 45300 et. seq. While all of the statute is not quoted below, the portion referenced by Respondents states:

The provisions of this part extending rights to a member of this system,
or subjecting him or her to any limitation by reason of his or her membership in a county retirement system, shall apply in like manner and under like conditions to a member of this system by reason of his or her membership in any retirement system established under Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 45300) of Division 5 of Title 4 with respect to which an ordinance complying with Section 45310.5 has been filed with and accepted by the board or by reason of his or her membership in a retirement system established by or pursuant to the charter of a city or city and county or by any other public agency of this state and that system, in the opinion of the board, provides a similar modification of rights and benefits because of membership in this system and with respect to which the governing body of the city, city and county or public agency and the board have entered into agreement pursuant to this section....

13. Respondents asserted that section 20351 only applies to retirement systems established by cities and other localities in compliance with section 45300 et. seq. Respondents are mistaken. Section 20351 is applicable in this matter because it provides that cities and counties may enter into reciprocal agreements with PERS, provided that they give CalPERS the same reciprocity it gives them. (Khan v. Los Angeles City Employees’ Retirement System (2010) 187 Cal.App.4th 98, 109.) Consequently, Section 20351 is applicable in this matter because it is the statute through which the Legislature allows public retirement systems, including LACERA and SBCERA, to enter into reciprocal agreements with CalPERS, provided these county systems give CalPERS the same reciprocal rights.

Stare Decisis and Relevant Case Law

14. Under the doctrine of stare decisis, “all tribunals exercising inferior jurisdiction are required to follow decisions of courts exercising superior jurisdiction.” (Auto Equity Sales, Inc. v. Superior Court (1962) 57 Cal.2d 450, 455.)

15. The Court of Appeal in Stillman v. Board of Retirement of Fresno County Employees’ Retirement Assn., (2011) 198 Cal.App.4th 1355 (Stillman) is directly on point to the primary issue in this matter—whether CalPERS must use the PERL, or the CBRL, in determining Respondents’ final compensations for purposes of calculating their CalPERS retirement benefits. In Stillman, the Court was tasked with determining whether the Fresno County Employees’ Retirement Association’s Board (FCERA) “must determine the compensation upon which the retirement benefit is based from the Government Code definition of ‘compensation’ used by FCERA or, instead, whether the Board must use the different definition of ‘compensation’ established by the retirement plan of San Luis Obispo County.” (Id. at 1358.) In Stillman, the reciprocal member (Stillman) was attempting to force FCERA to use the definition of “compensation” used by a reciprocal retirement system, San Luis Obispo County Pension Trust (SLOCPT), because it would increase the benefits FCERA would have to pay Stillman. Stillman’s pensionable income was different under the two systems because the amount San Luis Obispo County paid for a member’s retirement contribution qualifies as pensionable income under SLOCPT’s statutory scheme, while this item did not qualify as pensionable income under FCERA’s statutory scheme (the CBRL). Stillman argued that Section 31835 of the CBRL created a unique definition of “compensation” and “compensation earnable” for reciprocal members and that FCERA was required to use the figure supplied by SLOCPT. (Id. at 1363.)
The Court of Appeal rejected Stillman's argument that Section 31835 created a new definition of "final compensation" that must be used by FCERA when calculating Stillman's retirement benefits. (Ibid.) In Stillman, the Court found that the "CERL defines 'compensation,' 'compensation earnable' and 'final compensation.' The definitions build upon each other, with final compensation ultimately providing the basis for calculation of retirement benefits." (Id. at 1361.)

The Court of Appeal recognized that "final compensation" looks to the time when the compensation was earned, and does not establish compensation earnable. (Id. at 1362.) In Stillman, the Court found that Section 31835 did not redefine "compensation" or "compensation earnable" for the purpose of calculating retirement benefits for a CERL employee who has been employed by a non-CERL reciprocal employer. (Id. at 1363.) The Court found that the "obvious purpose of section 31835 is to modify, under some circumstances, the temporal limitation of section 31462.1" which "permits the employee to select the year of compensation to be used as the basis for retirement calculations, but impliedly limits that year to one during which the employee was working for the employer that is providing the retirement benefit. Section 31835, when applicable, allows the employee to select a different year -- a year during which the employee was working for a different (but reciprocal) employer. And that is all it does." (Id. at 1363.)

In Stillman, the Court concluded that Section 31835 "does not change the statutory definition of either 'compensation' or 'final compensation,' both of which provide the bedrock foundation upon which retirement benefits are calculated. Noncompensation does not become compensation just because it is paid by a reciprocal employer." (Id. at 1363.)

16. The Court of Appeal in DiCarlo v. County of Monterey (2017) 12 Cal.App.5th 468 analyzed whether a CalPERS member was entitled to include a longevity performance stipend as pensionable special compensation under the PERL. Essentially, the longevity performance stipend combined two separate items of special compensation that are allowed under the PERL: longevity pay and bonus. (See Regulation 571(a)(1).)

The Court in DiCarlo found that "only those items of compensation expressly identified in section 571, subdivision (a) constitute special compensation that must be reported to CalPERS and included in CalPERS calculation of retirement benefits." (DiCarlo, supra, 12 Cal.App.5th at 483.) The Court in DiCarlo found "[I]t is undisputed that a longevity performance stipend or bonus was not included in the section 571, subdivision (a) list of qualifying items of special compensation. Moreover, there is nothing in the language of section 571 or Government Code section 20636 that indicates that the Board of Administration affirmatively determined that a form of incentive pay combining longevity pay and bonus pay constitutes special compensation." (Id. at 484.) Consequently, the Court in DiCarlo held that "construing section 571 to authorize a local agency employer to combine two items of special compensation listed in section 571, subdivision (a) to form another item of special compensation would not be consistent with the clear language and purpose of section 571 and its authorizing statute, Government Code section 20636." (Id at 485.)

Issue 1: Section 20638 Does Not Provide An Alternative Definition of Compensation or Compensation Earnable for Reciprocal Members and All Pensionable Income For Reciprocal Members Must Qualify Under the PERL's Definitions of Compensation and Compensation Earnable

17. Respondents' primary argument is that Section 20638 provides an alternative
definition for compensation and compensation earnable for reciprocal members, including the Respondents. However, the Court in Stillman rejected this argument while analyzing a statute analogous and nearly identical to Section 20638, and Stillman is binding precedent for this issue. Reciprocity only allows a member to utilize a time period, for purposes of determining their final compensation period, during which they work with a non-CalPERS employer, so long as certain requirements are met. Section 20638, as did Section 31835, modifies the temporal limitation contained in the PERL for purposes of determining the member’s final compensation period. This limitation generally requires that a CalPERS member’s final compensation period be during a period of time they were actively employed with an employer that provides benefits through CalPERS. Section 20638 allows reciprocal members to use as their final compensation period a 12 or 36-month period for which they worked for an employer covered by a reciprocal system. The Court’s holding in Stillman requires a finding that compensation earned by a reciprocal member does not become pensionable income under the PERL, for purposes of calculating CalPERS benefits, simply because it is treated as pensionable under the PERL, or any other public retirement system that has entered into a reciprocal agreement with CalPERS.

18. Finally, Stillman decisively rejected the analysis in Block v. Orange County Employees’ Retirement System (2008) 161 Cal.App.4th 1297 because that case dealt with entirely different issues. (Stillman, supra, 198 Cal.App.4th at 1363-1364.) Furthermore, as Stillman highlights, the Court’s ruling in Block does not actually support Respondents’ position that CalPERS is required to utilize the final compensation amounts provided by Respondents’ employers and/or reciprocal retirement systems (LACERA and SBCERA). (Id. at 1364.) The Court in Block did not analyze whether reciprocity impacts a reciprocal system’s ability to independently calculate final compensation for purposes of determining retirement benefits. (Ibid.) Although Block did not directly address this issue, the Court recognized that Block’s final compensation amounts differed between CalPERS ($6,793.42) and OCERA ($7,021.15). (Ibid.) Consequently, the only reasonable inference from the Court’s decision is that each system was allowed to independently determine Block’s “average monthly compensation” and arrived at different figures, with CalPERS’ amount being less than the amount calculated by OCERA under the PERL. (Ibid.)

Issue 2: Respondents Wheeler and Valdez’s Longevity/Merit Bonus Pay Does Not Qualify as Compensation Earnable Under the PERL

19. Respondents Wheeler and Valdez each received compensation in the form of a Longevity/Merit Bonus. Respondents Wheeler and Valdez argue that even if Sections 20630 and 20636, as well as CCR Section 571, determines what qualifies as pensionable income for their CalPERS retirement benefits, these payments should qualify. As discussed above, to qualify as pensionable income it must qualify under the PERL, and in particular Sections 20630 and 20636, as well as CCR Section 571. To receive Longevity/Merit Bonus pay, Respondents Wheeler and Valdez had to qualify under LA County Ordinance 6.10.100. The “longevity bonus” combines components of longevity (10 years in a position), being at the top step of a salary range, and merit. The definition of “bonus” in CCR Section 571(a) contains no requirement regarding longevity and/or being at the top step of a salary range. Likewise, the definition of “longevity” in CCR Section 571(a) does not contain a requirement for being at the top step of a salary range and/or merit. Essentially, “longevity bonus,” as defined by LA County Ordinance 6.10.100 combines three items of special compensation and does not meet the
definition of any of the specific items listed in CCR Section 571. The Court of Appeal expressly ruled that the PERL does not allow an employer to combine two or more items of special compensation listed in CCR Section 571 to form an allowable item. (See DiCarlo, supra, 12 Cal.App.5th at 485.) DiCarlo addressed a nearly identical item of pay, compensation based on both longevity and merit, and ruled it does not qualify as pensionable income under the PERL.

Respondents’ argument that an Administrative Law Judge is not bound by the Court’s holding in DiCarlo is rejected. As discussed above, under the doctrine of stare decisis, “all tribunals exercising inferior jurisdiction are required to follow decisions of courts exercising superior jurisdiction. (Auto Equity Sales, Inc. v. Superior Court (1962) 57 Cal.2d 450, 455.) For these reasons, Respondents Wheeler and Valdez’s request to include compensation in the form of a Longevity/Merit Bonus as pensionable income must be rejected.

**Issue 3: Respondent Cohoe’s Top of Range Merit Pay Does Not Qualify as Compensation Earnable Under the PERL**

20. Respondent Cohoe received Top of Range Merit pay as a result of being at the top of his salary range for 36 months or more and receiving his supervisor’s recommendation based on Respondent Cohoe’s superior work performance. Essentially, the Top of Range Merit pay was based on combining longevity, being at the top of a salary range, and merit. As discussed in paragraph 18, above, the law does not allow an employer to combine two or more items of special compensation listed in CCR Section 571 to form an allowable item. (See DiCarlo, supra 12 Cal.App.5th at 485.) Therefore, to qualify as pensionable income, Top of Range Merit pay must meet a definition of a specific item listed in CCR Section 571. It does not. Consequently, Top of Range Merit pay does not qualify as an item of pensionable special compensation under the PERL.

21. Respondent Cohoe argued, alternatively, that the Top of Range Merit pay qualifies as payrate. This argument is rejected. Payrate is the normal monthly rate of pay or base pay of a member paid in cash to similarly situated members of the same group or class of employment for services rendered on a full-time basis during normal working hours. The publicly available pay schedule makes clear that the pay range for Cohoe normally performing his duties was $166,871-175,306. Top of Range Merit pay is not pay for Cohoe normally performing his duties on a full-time basis. It is pay based on Cohoe being at the top of his salary range for 36-months and performing superior work in the eyes of his supervisor. This is supported by the definition of Top of Range Merit pay. It makes clear that there is a top of salary range (maximum payrate) and that Top of Range Merit pay is pay in excess of this amount. In addition, the evidence showed Cohoe received Top of Range Merit pay in excess of those members who were in his group or class. Cohoe received Top of Range Merit pay that equaled 15% of his maximum salary range. The other members of Cohoe’s group received a 10% Top of Range Merit pay increase. Section 20636(b) limits payrate to compensation paid to similarly situated members of a group or class. The fact Cohoe received pay in excess of similarly situated members is additional grounds for denying his request to deem his Top of Range Merit pay as reportable payrate.
ORDER

The Board, after considering the entire record as well as oral argument of counsel, denies the appeals of Mark L. Wheeler, Thomas R. Valdez, John M. Lopez, Larry Blackwell, and Garry G. Cohoe. CalPERS properly excluded compensation paid to Respondents by their employers that did not qualify as compensation and compensation earnable under the PERL.

February 21, 2019
Scope of Employment
Under the direction of the Executive Secretary plans, organizes and conducts varied clerical activities and performs other such duties as required by the Executive Secretary. The Assistant Executive Secretary performs the duties of General Secretary, Receptionist, District Accountant/Bookkeeper, and shall have knowledge of District Treasurer role, and District Clerk role for fill-in purposes. In the absence of the Executive Secretary the Assistant Executive Secretary shall report the Chief Officer on duty.

The Assistant Executive Secretary serves as the assistant to the Executive Secretary. The Assistant Executive Secretary gathers, assembles, tabulates, proofs, extends, balances, summarizes, and posts fiscal, financial and other data; composes correspondence; acts as office manager in the absence of the Executive Secretary and attends to other administrative details as assigned.

As the first point of public contact for the District, the Assistant Executive Secretary answers the telephone and greets the public in a cheerful, friendly manner, provides routine information, handles complaints and leaves a positive image with members of the public who telephone or visit the Fire District.

Duties and Responsibilities
Listed below are examples of the typical duties and responsibilities of the Executive Secretary. This list is not intended to encompass all the duties relative to this position.

1. In the absence of the Executive Secretary records minutes of all Board meetings, transcribes and edits the minutes, prepares and distributes Board packets and agendas.

2. In the absence of the Executive Secretary receives bills and processes payments, makes deposits, maintains ledgers and records of payments and expenditures, computes payroll and taxes, balances, audits, and accounts for cash, warrants and other funds.

3. In the absence of the Executive Secretary processes payroll

4. In the absence of the Executive Secretary maintains files on all official actions of the Board and District.

5. Writes letters of correspondence, memorandums, reports, agendas, requisitions, resolutions, warrants, and other materials from rough draft to clear copy.

6. Assists on budgetary items.
7. Operates computer to perform accounting, database management, word processing functions and digitized mapping.

8. Answers the telephone and greets the public, gives information to organizations, insurance companies, other agencies and employees as requested.

9. In the absence of the Executive Secretary maintains employee records relating to time sheets, evaluations, health insurance, workers compensation injuries, sick leave, vacation, etc.

11. Files correspondence, minutes, resolutions, financial information, agreements, contracts, and other official documents.
12. In the absence of the Executive Secretary opens and distributes mail.

Minimum Qualifications/Knowledge/Skills/Experience:

- High School Diploma with business experience, or the equivalency thereof
- Knowledge of elementary accounting procedures
- Knowledge of PC-based computers
- Ability to use database and spreadsheet software
- Ability to proficiently use the latest version of Windows
- Ability to analyze data and draw logical conclusions
- Ability to understand and carry out oral and written instructions
- Knowledge of English, vocabulary, grammar and spelling
- Ability to communicate effectively both orally and in written form
- Ability to accurately type at a minimum speed of 50 words per minute
- Ability to greet the public, provide information and handle complaints in a positive, friendly manner
- Knowledge of modern office practices
- Ability to perform responsible clerical and secretarial duties and independently take care of administrative details
- Ability to maintain a cooperative relationship with coworkers and the Board of Directors