

Disability Committee Meeting – March 3, 2006
Reported by Joe Flynn

The Disability Committee of the SDCERS Board met on 3-03-06. It is chaired by Bill Sheffler and made up of members Mark Sullivan, Steve Meyer, Thomas Hebrank and Peter Prevolos.

I am not on the committee, but I attended to observe and to provide a couple of suggestions for the committee and the Board. Earlier I had reported to you that SDCERS boards, past and present, have been criticized for not reviewing disability retirements after the fact to verify that the recipient is still disabled. The Municipal Code calls for such review but they have not been accomplished. The Pension Reform Committee pointed out this lack of oversight. Last year a Disability Review Committee made up of City and SDCERS administrators also pointed out this lapse in review practices.

In response, the Board and SDCERS staff initiated a process to begin this review of existing disability retirements. Not all disability retirements will be reviewed; only those cases where the recipient has not yet reached the age for service retirement, that is safety workers under 50 years old and general workers under 55 years old.

At the Feb. 17 SDCERS Board meeting, the issue was discussed and I had raised questions on the notification process. Following that meeting, I met with retirees to get their reaction to the process and came up with some suggestions which I provided to the Committee during my 3 minutes of non agenda comment time. The text of these comments is shown below:

Mar. 3, 06

Chairman Sheffler and Members of the Disability Committee

My Name is Joe Flynn, retired city employee and SDCERS Board Member

I am here today to speak on the upcoming process to verify continued eligibility for disability retirement.

At the last Retirement Board meeting the Board agreed to initiate contact with the 288 non- service eligible disability retirants. The process was to begin with 11 cases where questions had been raised and proceed to all 288 individuals in a phased program. Individuals would receive notices,

in the month of their birth, that information related to their disability would be required.

The overall information program for these individuals was not detailed. Having discussed this program with Retirees, I would like to offer the following suggestions for the Committee's consideration:

- 1. That an letter outlining the disability review program, its basis, and the proposed process, be sent to each of the 288 non- service eligible disability retirants. This would reduce the amount of questions likely to result when the first letters reach their recipients. This would minimize anxiety among retirees and reduce workload for SDCERS Staff.*
- 2. That a brief article be included in the next edition of the FreeSpirit to advise all SDCERS members about the process, and the increased scrutiny being directed to disability retirement.*

In conclusion, *It was stated that this process had not been followed for at least 20 years. Therefore it should be treated as a new program with the supporting information normally afforded any new, major change.*

*Thank you.
Joe Flynn*

end ofsuggestions

SDCERS Staff indicated that they will be sending letters to the 288 retirees who will be affected by this process, and that an article will be included in the next FreeSpirit.

San Diego has many high risk jobs, not only police and fire but other construction related jobs, heavy equipment operators, and plant operators exposed to physical and environmental risks. This review is necessary to meet Municipal Code requirements, avoid fraud or abuse, and preserve the disability retirement for those who are disabled in the course of their employment. This review will protect that process.

Joe Flynn, Retiree Rep. to the Board