

**MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING
FOR THE CORRECTIONS OFFICER RETIREMENT PLAN LOCAL BOARD
FOR THE JUDICIARY**

A Public Meeting of the Corrections Officer Retirement Plan Local Board for the Judiciary was convened on Tuesday, November 18, 2025, at 2:00 p.m., via Zoom, Arizona State Courts Building, 1501 West Washington Street, Phoenix, Arizona.

Board Members Present by Conference/Video Call: Kevin Kluge, Chair; Jason Hathcock; Jennifer Fish; Scott Mabery

Board Members Absent: Brandon Shimizu

Also Present by Conference/Video Call: Kayla Adkins, Board Secretary; Alexi Papalossi, Recorder; Nick Cornelius, Board Attorney; Iris-Marie Novor, disability applicant #25-02 spouse

Call to Order:

Consideration of Ordinary Disability Application #25-02 – IME Review; Decision on Benefits

The Board received Application #25-02 for Ordinary Disability benefits from Bernard Kuma on September 17, 2025.

- The applicant was a Maricopa County Juvenile Probation Officer with 18.081 years of credited service. The applicant's last day of employment with Maricopa County was on August 13, 2025.
- The applicant identified the disabling condition as cancer, end-stage kidney disease; stroke.
- Mr. Kuma was notified via email that the Board would consider his application at this meeting and of his right to attend.
- The applicant initialed the Waiver of Confidentiality provision, to allow discussion of the medical condition in an open public meeting.
- A copy of the IME report conducted on November 12, 2025, by Dr. Andrew Schneider, M.D., is provided for the Board to review.
- The criteria for Ordinary Disability benefits per A.R.S. §38-881 are:
 - "Ordinary disability" means a physical condition that the local board determines will totally and permanently prevent an employee from performing a reasonable range of duties within the employee's department or a mental condition that the local board determines will totally and permanently prevent an employee from engaging in any substantial gainful activity.

- A copy of A.R.S. §38-886.01 governing Local Board consideration of applications for Ordinary Disability was included for reference purposes.

IME Report:

Dr. Schneider performed an Independent Medical Examination of the applicant on November 12, 2025. A copy of Dr. Schneider's IME report was provided to the Board. See pages 2-5 of the report for Dr. Schneider's discussion of findings and his responses to the Board's questions.

The Local Board will need to determine eligibility based on the Independent Medical Evaluation. Any motion to approve or disapprove the application should include a reference to the Independent Medical Evaluation upon which the determination is based. The Board can consider any medical evidence that the applicant may want to provide; however, the statutes are clear that a determination of disability shall be based on the IME. Material conflicts in medical evidence must be resolved by the findings of the Board. Disability determinations by the State Comp Fund or other workers' compensation bodies are not binding on the Local Board.

Discussion:

Mr. Hathcock asked the Board Secretary why the motion stated "an estimated amount determined by PSPRS" rather than a definitive amount. The Board Secretary stated that Board Staff attempted to use the retirement estimator provided by PSPRS but were unable to successfully generate an estimate.

The Chair reminded the Board that Mr. Kuma would reach his normal retirement date on July 15, 2027, and that, in accordance with the Board's Rules of Procedure, a reevaluation of his case would typically occur in three years. The Chair expressed the opinion that a reevaluation would not be necessary since Mr. Kuma would have already reached his normal retirement date.

The Chair asked if Mr. Kuma's wife, Ms. Norvor, would like to make a statement on his behalf. Ms. Norvor stated that Mr. Kuma is still undergoing treatment for his condition and had recently had his gallbladder removed and his foot amputated. Ms. Norvor clarified to the Board that her husband's condition is still ongoing and has not been resolved.

Mr. Hathcock reviewed the criteria for ordinary disability and confirmed that the Board had received the following documents: a letter of separation from Maricopa County, an application for Ordinary Disability from Bernard Kuma submitted within the required timeframe, and an Independent Medical Examination. Mr. Hathcock stated that, based on the information provided to the Board and his standard retirement date, he would approve the applicant without the need for an additional review.

MOTION: Jason Hathcock moved to (1) approve the application for Ordinary Disability Retirement benefits from Applicant #25-02, Bernard Kuma, based on the findings of the Independent Medical Evaluation conducted by Dr. Schneider for the Local Board, as set forth in the report dated November 12, 2025 and the Form C5-LB-O dated November 12,

2025; (2) Approve an Ordinary Disability Benefit for Bernard Kuma in an estimated amount to be determined by PSPRS; (3) Not to review this matter again as the applicant's earliest normal retirement date would have been July 15, 2027, when he would have attained 20+ years of service. The motion was seconded by Scott Mabery and passed unanimously. **CORP 2025-48**

Future Agenda Items:

- Consideration of Accidental Disability Application #25-01 – IME Review; Decision on Benefits

The meeting was adjourned at 2:14 p.m.

Transcribed November 18, 2025