

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
PUBLIC SAFETY RETIREMENT BOARD
OF THE TOWN OF CHINO VALLEY
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2026
1:00 PM**

PUBLIC WORKS CONFERENCE ROOM | 1950 VOSS DRIVE | CHINO VALLEY, ARIZONA 86323

1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL

Laura Kyriakakis called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Present: Board Member Cheryl Romley, Sergeant Deana Winn, Sergeant Jon Szymanski
Absent: Mayor Tom Armstrong
Staff Present: Human Resources Director Laura Kyriakakis, PSRB Attorney Nick Cornelius

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. Consideration and possible action to approve the September 16, 2025, special meeting minutes.

There was no discussion on this item.

MOVED by Board Member Cheryl Romley, seconded by Sergeant Jon Szymanski to approve the September 16, 2025, special meeting minutes.

AYE: Board Member Cheryl Romley, Sergeant Deana Winn, Sergeant Jon Szymanski

NAY: None

3 - 0 Passed - Unanimously

3. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Consideration and possible action to accept Deana Winn into the Public Safety Personnel Retirement System Drop Program, effective February 5, 2026.

There was no discussion on this item.

MOVED by Sergeant Jon Szymanski, seconded by Board Member Cheryl Romley to accept Deana Winn into the Public Safety Personnel Retirement System Drop Program, effective February 5, 2026.

AYE: Board Member Cheryl Romley, Sergeant Deana Winn, Sergeant Jon Szymanski

NAY: None

3 - 0 Passed - Unanimously

- b. Consideration and possible action to accept Scott Unterseher into the Public Safety Personnel Retirement System, effective June 1, 2023, with an official employer acknowledgment on November 10, 2025.

Laura Kyriakakis, Human Resources Director, presented the following:

- Mr. Unterseher has been in PSPRS and this was a housekeeping item as PSPRS did not have his formal membership form, but he had been making contributions and everything was fine with his account.

MOVED by Board Member Cheryl Romley, seconded by Sergeant Deana Winn to accept Scott Unterseher into the Public Safety Personnel Retirement System, effective June 1, 2023, with an official employer acknowledgement on November 10, 2025.

AYE: Board Member Cheryl Romley, Sergeant Deana Winn, Sergeant Jon Szymanski

NAY: None

3 - 0 Passed - Unanimously

- c. Consideration and possible action to terminate McKenzie Szymanski from the Public Safety Personnel Retirement System, effective September 27, 2025.

There was no discussion on this item.

MOVED by Board Member Cheryl Romley, seconded by Sergeant Deana Winn to terminate McKenzie Szymanski from the Public Safety Personnel Retirement System, effective September 27, 2025.

AYE: Board Member Cheryl Romley, Sergeant Deana Winn, Sergeant Jon Szymanski

NAY: None

3 - 0 Passed - Unanimously

- d. Consideration and possible action to terminate Joseph Pelano from the Public Safety Personnel Retirement System, effective September 30, 2025.

Laura Kyriakakis, Human Resources Director, presented the following:

- Mr. Pelano was approved for disability, terminated employment, and is now on disability with PSPRS.

MOVED by Sergeant Jon Szymanski, seconded by Board Member Cheryl Romley to terminate Joseph Pelano from the Public Safety Personnel Retirement System, effective September 30, 2025.

AYE: Board Member Cheryl Romley, Sergeant Deana Winn, Sergeant Jon Szymanski

NAY: None

3 - 0 Passed - Unanimously

- e. Consideration and possible action to terminate Austin McAvoy from the Public Safety Personnel Retirement System, effective October 14, 2025.

There was no discussion on this item.

MOVED by Sergeant Deana Winn, seconded by Sergeant Jon Szymanski to terminate Austin McAvoy from the Public Safety Personnel Retirement System, effective October 14, 2025.

AYE: Board Member Cheryl Romley, Sergeant Deana Winn, Sergeant Jon Szymanski

NAY: None

3 - 0 Passed - Unanimously

4. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- a. An executive session for legal advice pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(3); and pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(2) for discussion and consideration of records exempt by law from public inspection with regard to:
 - Disability application for David Herrera originally dated February 20, 2025.
 - Review of David Herrera's Independent Medical Evaluation dated July 1, 2025, and Addendum dated January 21, 2026.

5. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Consideration and possible action to accept or deny the disability application for David Herrera.

Cassidy Bacon, attorney for David Herrera, presented the following:

- They were not asking the Board for approval today, rather to briefly table the matter so that the Board can ensure the medical opinion is based on a complete and accurate record.
- Ms. Bacon and Mr. Herrera were particularly concerned with record completeness and clearing up causation.
 - Dr. Parker's addendum did not include performance reviews and employment documentation as they had not been transmitted to him. This is significant as his original report specifically stated that he had not seen those reviews, and they may be very valuable to providing a fully informed opinion.
 - There appeared to be a factual misunderstanding that affects the discussion regarding causation. The addendum references the applicant applying for VA PTSD benefits related to a military event. She clarified that Mr. Herrera has never applied for VA disability benefits related to his PTSD diagnosis, and they will provide whatever documentation is necessary to clarify that matter for Dr. Parker. The evaluator should have the opportunity to address that clarification before the Board relies on his opinion.
- There were some other contextual issues that may warrant further medical clarification regarding supposed inconsistencies regarding traumatic events in different settings and refusal of medication in relation to the severity of symptoms.

- Ms. Bacon and her client were not attacking Dr. Parker or asking the Board to reject the IME, rather asking for an approximate 60-day tabling to allow complete transmission of records, clarification regarding the VA disability issue, and a supplemental addendum from Dr. Parker based on the complete and corrected record, or any further direction from the Board as it deems appropriate. The seriousness of a permanent disability determination would make it pre-mature to deny the application when the evaluator did not have all the materials that the Board previously voted to provide, and where a material, factual clarification should be supplied.

The Board, applicant, and attorneys discussed the following:

- Mr. Cornelius, attorney for the Board, inquired if the applicant had applied for any worker's compensation or other disability claims.
 - Ms. Bacon stated that he has not.
- Mr. Cornelius asked for clarification regarding inconsistent reporting at the VA and this application.
 - Ms. Bacon stated that Mr. Herrera went to the VA seeking treatment for PTSD and in that scenario he was asked what he witnessed in his military career that would qualify him for receiving treatment in that setting which is different from submitting an application for accidental disability within PSPRS. Previously experienced trauma does not necessarily mean that trauma caused his current symptoms or caused the accidental disability as it is defined under the statute.
- Mr. Cornelius stated that it is up to the Board, and they could consider tabling the matter to make sure Dr. Parker receives the underlying employment records.
 - Mr. Cornelius, Ms. Bacon, and Ms. Kyriakakis further discussed the particular documents to be provided to Dr. Parker. There was some discussion on whether the employment records were only discussed or whether the Board directed for them to be provided to Dr. Parker. Mr. Cornelius pointed to Page 16 of the report which stated that employment records from the Town may be valuable, and advised that they make sure Dr. Parker receives them.
 - Mr. Herrera stated that he corresponded with Sergeant Winn and Ms. Kyriakakis about sending those documents over but was told that only mandatory records were sent, referring to medical records only.
- The Board inquired if Mr. Herrera received a VA disability when he separated from the military and might be part of the confusion.
 - Mr. Herrera stated that the original report states that only three questions were asked regarding his military experience, including whether he was a veteran, if he had disability, and how much he received per month.
 - Mr. Cornelius clarified that the addendum refers to Mr. Herrera "applying for veteran's administration post-traumatic stress benefits" and stated it suggests treatment.
- Mr. Cornelius reviewed possible procedures going forward if the Board reaches a decision one way or the other.
- Mr. Cornelius inquired if Mr. Herrera discussed PTSD in any of his performance evaluations.
 - Ms. Bacon stated that she did not believe a discussion of PTSD would be necessary if there are symptoms or behaviors that are apparent in the performance evaluations that the doctor could read and view as symptomatic of PTSD.
- The Board clarified that Mr. Herrera is asking for accidental disability.
 - Mr. Herrera stated that is correct.

- The Board inquired if Mr. Herrera voluntarily resigned his position from the Town of Chino Valley.
 - Mr. Herrera stated that is correct.
 - Ms. Kyriakakis inquired if his resignation letter referred to PTSD as a reason for resigning, or if he mentioned it to any of his lieutenants.
 - Mr. Herrera stated that he did not, but was told by lieutenants and the chief, as he was leaving, that they were worried about his mental health.
 - The Board inquired if Mr. Herrera told his lieutenant that he was leaving for insurance sales as a way to make more money.
 - He stated that he did and stated that he was feeling a lot of "burnout" and thought that if he could get as far away as possible from his job as an officer that he would be better off.
- The Board inquired if Mr. Herrera went to the VA to start receiving VA healthcare, or specifically mental health.
 - Mr. Herrera stated he was already a VA patient and then began receiving treatment for PTSD.
- The Board questioned whether employment evaluations would make any difference as he voluntarily resigned and was in good standing.
 - Ms. Bacon stated that Mr. Herrera had mentioned that his supervisors were concerned about his mental health. She did not know if it was reflected in his personnel reviews, but if they went so far as to remove him from duties, she would assume there would be something in the records to explain why.
 - Ms. Kyriakakis stated that she had seen the reviews and stated there were comments of being unmotivated.
 - Mr. Cornelius suggested having the Board decide if it wants to have those documents turned over to Dr. Parker before getting into any further discussion regarding the reviews.
- The Board discussed their individual views on whether to provide the documents to Dr. Parker.

MOVED by Sergeant Jon Szymanski, seconded by Sergeant Deana Winn to table the matter for up to 60 days to send the rest of the requested information (performance reviews and disciplinary actions) to Dr. Parker.

AYE: Board Member Cheryl Romley, Sergeant Deana Winn, Sergeant Jon Szymanski

NAY: None

3 - 0 Passed - Unanimously

The Board, applicant, and attorneys clarified exactly what documents had already been sent and what would now be sent to Dr. Parker. Mr. Cornelius advised that staff send a copy of the personnel file, including any documents referencing any pre-employment medical records.

6. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Sergeant Deana Winn, seconded by Sergeant Jon Szymanski to adjourn the meeting at 2:09 p.m.

AYE: Board Member Cheryl Romley, Sergeant Deana Winn, Sergeant Jon Szymanski

NAY: None

3 - 0 Passed – Unanimously

Submitted: March 11, 2026.

By: Sara Burchill, Deputy Town Clerk

Approved: June 25, 2026.