

-*WORKERS' COMPENSATION ADVISORY COUNCIL
J. JOSEPH GARRAHY COMPLEX
ONE DORRANCE PLAZA
PROVIDENCE, RI

April 29, 2025

MEMBERS

(* Denotes absence)

George Nee, Chair
Chief Judge Robert M. Ferrieri
Chief Judge George E. Healy, Jr. (ret.)
Judge Steven A. Minicucci
Jack DeGiovanni, Esq.
Director Elizabeth Kelleher Dwyer*
Director Jonathan Womer*
Raymond Coia
Steven Giarrusso*
Alicia Hargreaves
Ian Ridlon*
Laureen Grebien
Jose Raul Figueroa*
Senator Frank Ciccone*
Representative Arthur J. Corvese
Director Matthew Weldon*
Brian Spero*

Designee Beth Vollucci
Designee Lynne Dupont

Designee Maryanne Kucia

Designee Kathy McElroy
Kevin Flood

A moment of quiet reflection was dedicated to honor Senator Dominick Ruggerio.

1) **Approval of the February 5, 2025 Meeting Minutes**

Revisions relative to attendance were made to the draft Meeting Minutes of February 5, 2025,.

Motion was made by Raymond Coia, seconded by Jack DeGiovanni, to approve the minutes from the Workers' Compensation Advisory Council meeting held on February 5, 2025 as corrected. All in favor. So moved.

2) **Committee Reports**

a) **Update of the Subcommittee Regarding Workers' Compensation Issues**

CJ Ferrieri noted that the subcommittee was tasked with further defining the phrase "case management procedures and dispute resolution" as varying interpretations had been identified among different groups.

Proposed legislation which essentially defined what the Court is permitted and prohibited from hearing was presented to the Council. The recommended legislation added supplementary language to R.I. Gen. Law § 28-29-2 (Definitions) and *R.I. Gen. Law § 49-19-1* (Salary payment during line of duty illness or injury).

With creation of this diverse subcommittee, additional legislation recommendations were made including:

- Change in time in which a person shall apply for an accidental disability retirement allowance from the state retirement board due to variations in R.I. Gen. Law § 49-19-1 (j) and (k). Gen. Law § 49-19-1 (k) has essentially been made equivalent to (j) for consistency.
- Modifications to R.I. Gen. Law § 28-33-13 are intended to promote gender neutrality by replacing the terms husband and wife with spouse.

Motion was made by CJ Ferrieri, seconded by Ray Coia, that § 28-29-2, the document before the Council and §28-33-13 be recommended by the Advisory Council to the General Assembly with a 7/1/2025 effective date. All in favor. So moved.

CJ Ferrieri and Jack DeGiovanni were assigned the responsibility of producing a document that includes all the amendments as discussed, along with an explanation of their purpose to be forwarded to Senator Ciccone and Representative Corvese.

A question was posed by Kathy McElroy about the potential for the Court to send I.O.D. cases to the Arrigan Center for treatment. Discussion ensued.

b) Update of the Subcommittee to Improve the Arrigan Center Building

Chairman Nee reported a line item in the Governor's Proposed Budget in the amount of \$200,000. slated for the Arrigan Center. Without seeking additional funds, he proposed to the Speaker the allocation of a portion of the unspent resources from the RICAP Funds to the Arrigan Center.

Chairman Nee reached out to Director Weldon to request a clearer overview of a more detailed understanding of the expenses involved in making the Aquatic Center operational, enabling the Council to provide the General Assembly with an estimate of the costs.

The utilization of the Aquatic Center remains a priority as it is much needed for the rehabilitation of injured workers.

3) Old Business

Indirect Cost Recovery Efforts Update

Voicing concern over the Governor's proposal to raise the indirect cost recovery from 10% to 15% and the potential effects on the premium tax to ensure adequate funding for the WC Administrative Fund, Chairman Nee reported proposing a compromise with the Speaker, suggesting that the indirect cost recovery from the Workers' Compensation Administrative Fund stay at 10%, with the acknowledgment that it will be phased out on 7/1/26.

4) **Announcements**

The recently held RI Workers' Compensation Educational Conference, sponsored by the RI Workers' Compensation Court along with the International Workers' Compensation Foundation, was a success with a strong attendance. Soon, preparations will begin for next year's conference.

An announcement was made, and congratulations were extended to Chief Judge George E. Healy, (ret.) for being the inaugural recipient of the newly created Chief Judge George E. Healy Lifetime Achievement Award.

In turn, Chief Healy revealed that Rhode Island College has invited Chairman Nee to be the Baccalaureate Ceremony Speaker this year and to receive an honorary Doctorate in Humane Letters degree.

Chairman Nee expressed his gratitude to Representative Corvese, as Chairman of the House Labor Committee, for his ever-present participation with the Council.

5) **Public Comment**

None.

6) **Scheduling of Next Meeting**

At the call of the Chair.

7) **Proposed Agenda for Next Meeting**

None

8) **Adjournment**

There being no further business brought before the Council, the meeting was as adjourned by Chairman Nee.