

**Public Employees Benefits Board**  
**Meeting Minutes**

September 17, 2018  
Health Care Authority  
Sue Crystal Rooms A & B  
Olympia, Washington  
4:50 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**Members Present:**

Sue Birch  
Tom MacRobert  
Tim Barclay  
Myra Johnson (joined late)  
Carol Dotlich

**Members via Phone:**

Greg Devereux  
Harry Bossi  
Yvonne Tate

**PEB Board Counsel:**

Katy Hatfifeld, Assistant Attorney General

**Call to Order**

**Sue Birch, Chair**, called the meeting to order at 4:50 p.m. Sufficient members were present to allow a quorum. Board self-introductions followed.

**Approval of March 21, 2018 PEB Board Meeting Minutes**

**Sue Birch:** Tim Barclay moved and Greg Devereux seconded a motion to adopt. Minutes approved by unanimous vote as written.

**Approval of April 25, 2018 PEB Board Meeting Minutes**

**Sue Birch:** Tim Barclay moved and Yvonne Tate seconded a motion to adopt. Minutes approved by unanimous vote as written.

**Approval of May 21, 2018 PEB Board Meeting Minutes**

**Sue Birch:** Tim Barclay moved and Harry Bossi seconded a motion to adopt. Minutes approved by unanimous vote as written.

### **Approval of June 7, 2018 PEB Board Meeting Minutes**

**Sue Birch:** Harry Bossi moved and Yvonne Tate seconded a motion to approve. Minutes approved by unanimous vote as written.

### **Approval of June 20, 2018 PEB Board Meeting Minutes**

**Sue Birch:** Tom MacRobert moved and Carol Dotlich seconded a motion to adopt. Minutes approved by unanimous vote as written.

### **Approval of July 17, 2018 PEB Board Meeting Minutes**

**Sue Birch:** Greg Devereux moved and Tom MacRobert seconded a motion adopt. Minutes approved by unanimous vote as written.

**Tim Barclay:** I would like to take a moment and make one comment on the record. I would like to ask the Health Care Authority, Dave, in particular, since the next time we meet is our January retreat, to make sure one of the agenda items for that day is the long-term disability basic benefit. As much as we can, have a conversation about how best to go about advocating for an enhancement in that benefit for our members.

**Dave Iseminger:** One of the few people in the audience is Marcia Peterson, who has just started working on the retreat agenda. So noted.

I just want to say the Board approved 170 pages of minutes in about five minutes. And, it took a lot longer to get to that five minutes. I want to thank Connie and Jesica who spent a lot of time getting them ready when they saw the opportunity to have a 15-minute special meeting to get minutes approved instead of waiting until next year. I appreciated their effort to get them here and the Board for being willing to tack on at the end of the meeting.

**Carol Dotlich:** I want to again express my concern about the customer service at the time of open enrollment. I was hopeful that there would be a phone option where people could leave their name and number for a call back when lines were busy. It's my understanding that what's going to happen now is, when the lines are tied up and staff are busy with keying in, and the phones are less busy, they're simply going to turn the phones off with a message saying that you'll have to call back. The message would say "we'll be shut down from one to three – you may call back after that," or, "you have to call back tomorrow." I understand how busy the staff is and I appreciate that there have been staff hired and there's a real effort to improve customer service during open enrollment, but I'm disappointed that we weren't able to put something else into place, something a little more customer friendly than just turning off the phones.

**Sue Birch:** Carol, thank you for that feedback, but I would just ask Dave to clarify.

**Dave Iseminger:** I will clarify. During open enrollment, we don't turn the phones off. In anticipation of open enrollment, for example, this week or next week, we catch up on forms received that need to be processed. One of the vicious cycles we end up in is people call to find out where their form is in the queue, and we can't queue the form because we're on the phone telling them where it is in the queue. As we get closer to open enrollment, but not during open enrollment, we'll find the lowest call volume from

historical times, and say, "this two-hour period on a Friday shows that it's the lowest call volume and it has the lowest impact." During that period, we would turn off the phones and say, "For business reasons we are working on X, Y, Z, the phones will be back on at blank time." But, they are not turned off during open enrollment. During the month of November, there is no turn off.

If it is down in November, it's because there's a system failure. It's not because of keying forms in the month of November. The phones stay on that entire time. As we get closer to open enrollment, but not before open enrollment materials go out in October, we catch up and help get out of that vicious cycle of people asking questions we can't answer because we're working on the forms. It's trying to get ahead of that.

**Sue Birch:** Dave, thank you for that clarification. I do want to comment, Carol, that there are ways to access us. I don't think we'll have system disruptions like you're suggesting during the open enrollment period.

**Carol Dotlich:** So, my question to you, is this phone system incapable of accepting a message from me, I need to talk to you, that you could call me back? The system that you have in place won't do that. It won't say, "please leave your name and number, and we will call you back within the next 24 hours, or 48 hours." Or whatever it is. Your phone system here won't do that. Is that my understanding?

**Sue Birch:** Carol, I don't know that we have programmed the system that way. I think we need to explore your very explicit question. But, we are currently not programmed that way because staff have made the recommendation to configure it the way Dave has just explained. But, let us take that forward, and we can talk offline to get back to you about the specifications of our current system.

**Tom MacRobert:** I think I know what Carol's talking about where there are certain places where you can call in and it will say, "we will take your number and you will be placed in the queue, and we will be able to get back to you within the next number of minutes."

**Dave Iseminger:** We do that. It was a limited roll out feature last year and it didn't have as robust a queue as individuals would like, but that's called a callback feature where you're left in the queue but you don't have to sit and listen to elevator music. It calls you back in real time and then you're put on a brief hold. But, Carol's also describing leaving a voice message. At the end of the day, or at some point if there's down time, and I'll tell you right now there is never down time during open enrollment, so it would be at the end of the day, collecting voice messages and calling people back the next day.

**Sue Birch:** Dave, thank you again for that clarification. I'll ask staff to prepare a summary and email that response out for further clarification. Because I think we've configured it a certain way, Carol, I don't think we have necessarily a system dysfunction like you're suggesting. Or lack of function. I don't think we've configured it that way. But we'll clarify. Thank you for that comment.

**Sue Birch:** Our next meeting is the Board Retreat on January 31, 2019.

**Sue Birch:** Meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.