

**Social Security Advisory Board
Minutes
Board Meeting
June 6-7, 2018**

Location: 400 Virginia Ave SW
Suite 625
Washington, DC 20024

Time: 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

SSAB Members: Kim Hildred, Chair
Henry Aaron
Nancy Altman
Lanhee Chen
Bernadette Franks-Ongoy
Jagadeesh Gokhale

SSAB Staff: Claire Green, Staff Director
Diane Brandt, Research Director
Anita Grant, Senior Advisor
Jenn Rigger, Senior Advisor
Joel Feinleib, Staff Economist
Bethel Dejene, Management Analyst
Caitlyn Tateishi, Management Analyst
Conway Reinders, Policy Analyst
Fatma Gdoura, Research Assistant

SSA OACT Participants: Stephen C. Goss, Chief Actuary, Office of the Chief Actuary
Karen Glenn, Deputy Chief Actuary, Office of the Chief Actuary

SSA Participants: Michelle King, Deputy Commissioner, Office of Budget, Finance, and
Management
Tiffany Flick, Acting Associate Commissioner, Office of Budget, Finance
and Management, SSA (via telephone)
Chad Poist, Director of Realty Management, Office of Facilities and
Logistics
Andrew Heller, Deputy Assistant Commissioner, Office of Portfolio
Management, SSA

GSA Participants: Gregory Wright, National Client Executive for SSA, General Services
Administration

NCSSMA Participants: Chris Detzler, President
Peggy Murphy, Vice President
Becky Archer, Executive Officer

Rachel A. Emmons, Washington Representative

On June 6th, the board met with Stephen C. Goss and Karen Glenn of the Office of the Chief Actuary (OACT) at the Social Security Administration (SSA) to discuss the findings of the 2018 Trustees' Report. A key finding from the report was that lower-than-expected disability applications and awards continued through 2017. This trend has continued into 2018: it was 4 percent lower than the same time in 2017. Despite this recent trend, the overall expected level of disability awards remains the same, even as awards continue to decline. The recent decrease was a factor in the projection that the DI Trust Fund will become depleted in 2032, rather than 2028, which was the projection last year. The board further discussed the projections and the factors that influenced the changes in the projections from last year's report.

The board then met with Michelle King and Tiffany Flick of the Office of Budget, Finance and Management, SSA. The presenters briefed the board on the FY 2018 Operating Plan, SSA's FY 2019 Budget, and the process of developing FY 2020's budget. The Consolidated Appropriations Act of FY 2018 provides SSA with \$12.8 billion in administrative funding. On May 4th, SSA released the agency's Operating Plan to Congress that focuses on the agency's top priorities which include: improving frontline operations, reducing the hearings backlog, program integrity, and IT modernization. The President's Budget for FY 2019 requests \$12.39 billion for administrative expenses. The agency expects to conduct 703,000 CDRs, 2.8 million SSI redeterminations and end the year with 717,000 hearings pending. SSA's FY 2020 budget is in the process of being developed. In terms of the process of developing the budget proposal, the agency's components first develop and submit their justifications. The component leaders then meet with the Commissioner to develop a comprehensive budget justification for submission to OMB.

The board met with representatives of SSA and the General Services Administration (GSA) to learn how and why SSA makes changes to its field office spaces, what so-called "trust fund" buildings are and why GSA is paid for those by SSA. They also presented on the status of the ongoing Altmeyer Building renovation project, for which SSA received a \$150 million appropriation as part of the 2015 budget reconciliation. SSA develops requirements for field and regional offices, and GSA then finds space that complies with those requirements. GSA maintains an occupancy agreement with each agency and a lease between GSA and the landlord. The Altmeyer building is now empty, and SSA is in the design phase with a focus to meet the needs of agency executives, and a plan to have workstations and conference rooms.

On June 7th, the board met with representatives of the National Council Social Security Management Associations (NCSSMA). The board discussed the order-of-preference list used by SSA field offices to assign representative payees to beneficiaries. NCSSMA expressed the sense that the list, which prioritizes family members over organizational payees, currently is operating sufficiently well when used appropriately by front-line staff. Board members noted a lack a training on selection and also noted

hearing complaints regarding the electronic representative payee system (ERPS), and the staff time involved in managing the workload.

The board also discussed the issue of so-called abandoned electronic appeals and the issues arising from incomplete applications. These incomplete applications were generated through the online appeals system. SSA agreed to review the possibly abandoned claims to determine if the abandonment was intentional. The cases were assigned to field offices to follow-up with claimants to determine if they wanted to follow through with the appeal. There is still no known solution to prevent these cases from arising in the future. Finally, NCSSMA noted that field offices had benefited from the increased information technology (IT) budget, as field office staff were rotating to headquarters to help set the requirements and function of the new system. While temporarily losing staff for this rotation was a hardship on understaffed offices, it was considered an investment in ensuring a better system.

The remainder of the board's meeting on June 7th was conducted in executive session.

I certify that the minutes written for the June 6-7, 2018 meeting of the Social Security Advisory Board are correct.



Kim Hildred
Chair - Social Security Advisory Board