

**MINUTES
FOR THE REGULAR MEETING
CALIFORNIA UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BOARD
Docket No. 5667**

Open Session

The Appeals Board meeting convened at 1:00 p.m., July 13, 2021, in Sacramento with Chair Marty Block presiding.

1. Roll Call: <u>Members</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Marty Block, Chair	X	
Dan Reeves, Vice-Chair	X	
Mike Eng	X	
Michael Allen	X	
Laura Kent-Monning	X	

2. Approval of the Minutes:

The June 16, 2021, Meeting Minutes were approved unanimously.

3. Approval of the Closed Session Minutes

The June 16, 2021, Closed Session Meeting Minutes were approved unanimously.

4. Chair's Report:

Chair Block welcomed the Board Members and recently-hired CUIAB staff to the first in-person Board meeting conducted since the beginning of the pandemic. Chair Block reminded that most of the Board's work is not done during the meetings, but in-between meetings. The Board resolved 500 appeals in the past month.

Chair Block thanked Members Eng, Allen and Kent-Monning for their work on the Board's recent Newsletter.

5. Board Member Reports:

Vice-Chair Reeves welcomed Member Kent-Monning and CUIAB staff to their first in-person Board meeting since the onset of the pandemic.

Member Eng expressed his appreciation for the staff who performed the in-office work during the pandemic, enabling the Board to continue its work.

Member Allen thanked CUIAB staff for their work and dedication during the pandemic and all who contributed to preparing CUIAB's Newsletter. The Newsletter is accessible through CUIAB's website.

Member Kent-Monning thanked Mariluz Worden, Mirella Aguirre, Greg Crettol and Member Allen for their work on the Newsletter. Member Kent-Monning expressed her support for continuing CUIAB's identity verification "pop-up" events and thanked the staff who make these possible. Member Kent-Monning recognized Presiding Judge Rebecca Bach for her new role within CUIAB and her continuing work training CUIAB ALJ's.

6. Public Comment

No public comment.

7. Chief ALJ/Executive Director Report:

During June, daily appeal transmittals from the Employment Development Department declined from 200-300% above pre-pandemic levels to approximately 81% over pre-pandemic periods.

In June, CUIAB closed 10.3% of cases within 30 days and 16.1% of cases within 45 days. CUIAB prioritized resolving oldest cases and its average case age is approximately 74.2 days, compared to a national average case of 112 days.

CUIAB continues to move forward with recruitment and training. Interviews have concluded for ALJ's and the next ALJ training cohort will begin in August with Judge Rebecca Bach.

In June, the field offices closed over 33,000 cases through increased case assignments, team calendars, as well as volunteer efforts. CUIAB's pop-up identity verification project has been successful with approximately 60% of the invitees providing requested documentation. The remaining 40% will be set for hearing. Executive Director Cutri thanked the executive staff, the Sacramento field office and Member Kent-Monning for their assistance during the event and intends to conduct pop-up events at additional locations throughout the State.

CUIAB had no COVID-19 related office closures in the past month.

On June 25, the Fresno field office was vandalized. Law enforcement was consulted on the incident and no further action was required.

Executive Director Cutri congratulated Judge Michelle Kazadi on her appointment to the Los Angeles County Superior Court, and Judge Stephanie Sato on her appointment to the Alameda County Superior Court.

Vice-Chair Reeves confirmed that during June, CUIAB has increased the number of closed cases by approximately 35% over last year.

Member Eng thanked Director Cutri for his presence in the various offices during the pandemic. Member Eng inquired about the status of CUIAB's proposed regulatory changes and the public comment process. Director Cutri confirmed that the regulatory changes are under review and advised that information about the public comment process would be provided once the formal rulemaking process commences with the Office of Administrative Law.

Member Allen requested, and Director Cutri described the pop-up event processes that enable expeditious resolution of cases involving identify verification.

8. Presiding ALJ of Appellate Operations, Jodi Remke Report:

Presiding Administrative Law Judge for Appellate Operations, Jodi Remke, reported that during June, AO resolved 86.2% of its cases within 45 days and 91.6% within 75 days. To date, AO resolved 67.8% of its cases within 45 days.

Member Allen acknowledged and complimented the AO ALJ's on their work and continued assistance in cases.

Member Eng thanked PJ Remke and Gavin Powell for their work in ensuring copies of documents are maintained at the best quality available. He also expressed his gratitude for her work promoting CUIAB's compliance with DOL's timelapse standards.

9. Chief Information Officer, Jeff Willoughby Report:

CIO Willoughby advised that the final field office is in the process of being upgraded with higher network speeds.

CIO Willoughby thanked the CUIAB staff for their support as additional security measures are being implemented.

IT has developed an online hearing “check-in” for parties to utilize for their hearings, in effort to improve workflow and reduce the volume of calls necessary to the field offices.

Vice-Chair Reeves inquired about updates concerning CUIAB’s Appeals Modernization project. Executive Director Cutri advised that can be addressed in another forum.

Member Eng expressed his gratitude for the continuing IT work ensuring in-office computers are fully functional and inquired about the current status of the Appeals Modernization project as last updated on “The Buzz.” CIO Willoughby confirmed that CUIAB is completing sprint 7.

Member Kent-Monning inquired about public notice of the online hearing check-in functionality. CIO Willoughby advised that notice of this is included with the Notice of Hearing mailed to parties.

10. Chief Administrative Services, Robert Silva Report:

Chief Silva reported on the status of hiring. CUIAB anticipates hiring 6 new ALJ’s imminently and may hire up to 20 new ALJ’s. Since the last Board meeting, CUIAB hired three new support staff and anticipates hiring an additional five shortly.

On July 9, CUIAB received the FY 21/22 budget allocations from EDD’s Fiscal Programs Division. Field office budget requests for FY 21/22 have been consolidated and vetted by the administrative budget staff. Chief Silva will work with Executive Director Cutri in finalizing the field office budget requests and Chief Silva will prepare and present the FY 21/22 budget at the August Board meeting.

Chief Silva reported on utilization of surplus space in the Los Angeles Office of Appeals, office renovations currently underway at the Venture Oaks Building, and procurements for the field offices.

Member Eng inquired about CUIAB’s plans regarding changes to telework. Executive Director Cutri advised there are currently no plans to imminently alter CUIAB’s telework arrangements and its current implementation is consistent with

the Governor's directions regarding telework.

Member Kent-Monning asked about staffing level capacities to administer the pop-up events in the field offices statewide. Director Cutri advised that we do not anticipate requiring additional field office staff to conduct these.

Member Allen asked about retention rate statistics for the classifications in CUIAB. Executive Director Cutri will provide this information. At Member Allen's request, Chief Silva provided an overview of CUIAB's selection and hiring process for ALJ's and support staff.

Vice-Chair Reeves asked about CUIAB's potential plans to return to in-person hearings. Chief Cutri indicated that while the pandemic required a change to telephonic hearings, transitioning back to in-person hearings when feasible is preferable. Vice-Chair Reeves expressed his support to transition back to in-person hearings.

Chair Block informed that many states administer their appeals through primarily telephonic hearings even prior to the pandemic, and some have argued that telephonic hearings are preferable to in-person hearings. Vice-Chair Reeves indicated that he would like the Board to engage in this discussion when a return to in-person hearings becomes feasible.

Chair Block announced that California Secretary of Labor, Julie Su, has been confirmed by the United States Senate as the Deputy of Secretary for the Department of Labor.

Closed Session:

There was no Closed Session.

Adjournment