§ 374. Procedure for retirement. a. Every application for a retirement allowance or other benefit provided by this article shall be executed and filed with the comptroller. Each such application shall contain such information as the comptroller shall deem necessary.

b. The comptroller shall have exclusive authority to determine all applications for any form of retirement or benefit provided for in this article. He shall examine into the facts of each such application, and to that end, shall have full power and authority to:

1. Employ experts and specialists, and

2. Require the attendance of the applicant and other witnesses, and

3. Require the production of all books, papers, documents and other records pertaining to such inquiry, and

4. Administer oaths and take testimony.

The comptroller shall have the power to issue subpoenas, under his hand, returnable anywhere in the state. Any such subpoena shall be served in the same manner and have the same force and effect as a subpoena issued in an action pending in the supreme court.

c. After making his determination on any application the comptroller forthwith shall mail a written notice thereof to the applicant. Such notice shall be mailed to the address given in such application.

d. At any time within four months after the mailing of such notice, the applicant or his counsel may serve a written demand upon the comptroller for a hearing and redetermination of such application. After the service of such demand, the comptroller shall hold a hearing upon such application at which the applicant may be represented by counsel. The comptroller shall have the same power upon such hearing as upon the original application. After such hearing the comptroller shall make his final determination. A copy thereof shall be mailed to the applicant and his counsel, if any. Such final determination shall be subject to review only as provided in article seventy-eight of the civil practice law and

rules.

e. To aid him in passing upon applications for retirement, the comptroller shall use the medical board appointed pursuant to the provisions of section seventy-four of this chapter. Such medical board shall:

1. Arrange for and pass upon all medical examinations required or allowed under the provisions of this article, and

2. Have full power and authority to investigate statements and certificates submitted by or on behalf of a claimant in connection with any application for accidental death benefit, disability retirement or restoration to service thereafter, and

3. Have full power and authority to administer oaths and require sworn statements and testimony with respect to matters under its jurisdiction. The comptroller may designate other doctors to conduct the medical examination required or allowed hereunder. The medical board, in any case in which it shall deem it advisable, may require any such doctor to conduct any such examination and to report in writing his findings thereon to the medical board. The medical board shall thereupon consider such report. Upon completion of its examination in investigation and after the consideration of the report, if any, of any such other doctor, the medical board shall submit to the comptroller a report of its findings and proceedings which shall include the report, if any, of such other doctor. The report of the medical board shall be admissible in evidence upon any hearing before the comptroller or in connection with any examination or investigation conducted by him pursuant to this article.

f. The comptroller, in any particular case, may designate one of his deputies or any other person to perform the duties imposed upon him by this section.

g. In connection with the proceedings authorized by this section the comptroller shall not be bound by common law or statutory rules of

evidence, or by technical or formal rules of procedure.