

**City of Norwich
Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Fund Committee Minutes
Special Meeting
October 13, 2020**

The Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Fund Committee held a virtual Special Meeting on Tuesday, October 13, 2020, at 2:00 p.m. utilizing the City of Norwich Turbobridge account.

1. Roll Call

a. Members Present:

Thomas Quinley, Yantic, Committee Chair
Brigid Marks, Human Resource Director, Committee Vice-Chair
Joshua Pothier, Comptroller, Committee Treasurer
Donald Leary, East Great Plain, Committee Secretary
John Salomone, City Manager
Shane Dupuis, Taftville
Karen Mankowski, Occum
Joseph Kochanski, Laurel Hill
Ronald Stolz, Citizen Appointee
Nate Kannas, P&P Board Appointee

b. Members Absent:

Richard Benoit, Taftville Past Chair
Daniel Dennis, Citizen Appointee

Thomas Quinley called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

2. Minutes: Minutes from the September 15, 2020 Special Meeting were reviewed.

- a.** Motion made by John Salomone to accept the minutes as presented, seconded by Karen Mankowski. Approved.

3. New Business:

- a.** Discussion/ review of cost estimates of proposed changes to VFFRF Plan ordinance:

Concern was expressed by the City Manager that the plans benefits would exceed the City Union contracted employee benefits (years to be vested, etc.) and there is concern about the City's fiscal condition, current COVID-19 impacts. However, he further expressed that he is a big supporter of the volunteers, this is a great recruiting and retention vehicle, potential concern about down the road impacts. Other Committee members pointed out that the proposed revisions would increase the City's contribution by approximately 0.03 mils per year to the people in the Town, that the volunteers are not paid employees and the volunteer fire companies need these revisions in order to attract and retain volunteers. The increase is risk insignificant as confirmed by an independent review performed by the actuary, Milliman. Concern about the timing of the request with respect to COVID and financial impacts, etc. Concern about the spousal benefit being different than the paid employees. The change in actuary firms and the accompanying formula enhancements and assumption changes resulted in the City's contribution decreasing ~ \$20K. Concern about the previously revised 25 years to become vested in the Plan versus the

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original 20-year requirement is a detriment to recruiting members who feel they may not be able to volunteer that long because they are now already in their 30's or 40's.

- Revising the normal retirement date from age 55 with 25 years of credited service to the previous age 55 with 20 years of credited service for members joining after January 1, 2015
- Revising the service cap from 30 years to the previous 40 years of credited service for members joining after January 1, 2015
- Increasing the benefit multiplier and the employee contribution rate from \$22 to \$24 per month.
- Increasing the survivor benefit percentage from 90 to 100 for all members.

These outlined changes and enhancements to the Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Fund will continue to save the City of Norwich significant Fire/EMS Service expenses over the coming years.

- i. Motion made by Ronald Stolz for the Committee to forward a favorable recommendation of the four (4) proposed changes to the Corporation Council for review in preparation for Ordinance Revision to be presented to the City Council for approval, seconded by Nate Kannas Approved 8:2 with John Salomone and Brigid Marks dissenting,

A motion was made by Joseph Kochanski to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Joshua Pothier. Approved. Meeting adjourned at 1442 hours.

Respectfully submitted,



Donald Leary, Secretary