



Supplemental State Aid Work Group Meeting Agenda: March 10, 2022

- I. Call to Order**
Chair Auditor Blaha.
- II. Review and Approval of Work Group Meeting Minutes**
Exhibit A. Draft February 10, 2022, Meeting Minutes
- III. Overview of Supplemental State Aid and Work Group Scope**
- IV. Public Testimony on Supplemental State Aid Allocation Options**
Currently Scheduled:
 - Cory Fischer, Chief, Hanska Fire Department
 - Joe Enge, President, Brainerd Fire Relief Association
 - Jason Sufka, Treasurer, Ramsey Fire Relief Association
 - Ryan Muchow, Chief, Fergus Falls Fire Department
 - Jordan Schaefer, Treasurer, Trout Lakes Fire Relief Association
 - Rodger Coppa, Chief, Plymouth Fire Department
 - Sam Meixell, Treasurer, Sherburn Fire Relief Association
 - Chris McClroy, Treasurer, Maple Lake Fire Relief Association
 - Terri Boese, Clerk/Treasurer, City of Dassel
- V. Questions and Review of Written Testimony**
Exhibit B.
- VI. Other Business**
- VII. Next Meeting**
TBD
Virtually via Zoom
- VIII. Adjournment**

Individuals with disabilities who need a reasonable accommodation to participate in this event, please contact Rose Hennessy Allen at (651) 296-5985 or (800) 627-3529 (TTY) by March 8, 2022.



Exhibit A

2-10-22 Approved Minutes

Members Present

Julie Blaha, State Auditor
Doug Anderson, Public Employees Retirement Association Executive Director
Roger Carlson, Minnesota State Fire Department Association Representative
John Ehret, State Fire Marshal Division Representative
Todd Greseth, Minnesota Association of Townships Representative
Marshall Hallock, League of Minnesota Cities Representative
Bruce Hemstad, Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Association Representative
Laurie Hokkanen, League of Minnesota Cities Representative
Jim McCoy, Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Association Representative
Corey Nellis, Minnesota State Fire Department Association Representative
Kristie Strum, Department of Revenue Representative

Members Excused

Mike Scott, Minnesota Association of Townships Representative

Office of the State Auditor and Legislative Support Present

Ramona Advani, Deputy State Auditor and General Counsel
Chad Burkitt, Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement Analyst
Rose Hennessy Allen, Office of the State Auditor Pension Director

I. Call to Order

Auditor Blaha called the meeting to order. She explained that the meeting was being recorded and streamed to the Office of the State Auditor (OSA)'s YouTube channel. The meeting agenda was accepted with no objections.

II. Review and Approval of Work Group Meeting Minutes

The members reviewed the January 12, 2022, meeting minutes that had been provided in advance. The meeting minutes were accepted with no objections.

III. Review of Requested Information

Work Group members reviewed information from the Minnesota Board of Firefighter Training and Education on the number of volunteer, paid on-call, combination, and career fire departments in Minnesota. Information was also shared on the number of relief associations that permit in their membership individuals who solely provide emergency medical services. Data on municipal contributions and relief association funding ratios was also provided.

IV. Discussion of Allocation Options and Data Needs

Auditor Blaha shared the list of options for the allocation of supplemental state aid organized by categories proposed during the last meeting. Work Group members discussed metrics by which the options could be evaluated. Additional metrics could include: how each option compares to the purpose of the aid program; the ease of administration (e.g., does the data needed to calculate aid amounts exist, is it reported); how much change would there be under each option; the impact on different fire department types; and whether the option is fair or equitable.



Work group members also discussed how much change in benefits would be needed to make an impact on firefighter recruitment and retention, and whether the options being considered for supplemental state aid allocations would have a measurable impact.

Work group members wondered how a ranking of aid amounts based solely on estimated market value, solely on population, and solely on call volume would compare to current allocations.

Work group members also asked to hear from communities on what they would do with more aid, what they would do with less aid, and whether some other form of compensation would be more helpful. It was agreed that an email would be sent seeking public testimony for the March meeting.

V. Other Business

There was no other business.

VI. Next Meeting

Thursday, March 10, 2022
2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Virtually via Zoom

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Exhibit B

Written Testimony

Date: February 18, 2022

From: Blaine Hill, Manager, City of Morris

Rose,

I won't be able to attend the meeting on March 10th.

There are a couple of things that I think should be considered when looking at the Morris Fire Department. First, we are heavily funded in Morris with Local Government Aid that is used for everything we do. This makes it more difficult to provide the funding for the basics of firefighting so we have implement fees for fires. Second, we pay an hourly rate for training, drilling and for going to fires. Third, equipment costs are high, particularly trucks. Fourth, Morris is the larger of the fire departments out in our area in West Central Minnesota, so we have primary responsibilities for accident coverage. Fifth, we provide mutual aid without reimbursement and again being bigger, we go to almost everything. We recently provided the ladder truck for the Clinton Minnesota elevator fire almost 40 miles away. We pumped water for about 24 hours continuously. Our ladder truck is almost 30 years old and a new one is over \$1 million. We don't know what we are going to do. Finally, our Fire Relief continues to invest their own funds with the aid payment from the state. We annual review the Annual Benefit amount and have been adjusting it about \$50 more per year every year for a number of years now. We are at \$2,300 which is pretty good for a community our size. This system seems to work, but we are at the mercy of their investments. A collapse in the market would cause problems. It should be a bit more stable.

We have been fortunate with recruiting and I'm amazed at the work they do. It is needed and funding should be available to make sure they continue on into the future.

Blaine Hill
City Manager
Morris

Date: February 19, 2022

From: Ellen Kling, President, Ceylon Fire Relief Association

Rose,

Our supplemental goes into our special fund to fund our retirement as none of our entities fund any of our retirement. That aid has helped our department to grow our retirement. But now that we are over the 500000 threshold we will now use some of that to pay our auditor fees as they doubled. We depend on that 2% money. No matter what you do, someone is not going to be happy. I think it needs to be 4%. If you follow the mn firefighter Facebook page, there is a lot of discussion on increased cost for operating a relief. I wish we could have access to pull tabs monies

but not an option in our area. Currently it works. We would love more benefit but at least we get something as some states have no retirement.

Ellen Kling
Ceylon Fire Relief President

Date: February 23, 2022
From: Anthony Rupp, Treasurer, New London Fire Relief Association

Good Morning Rose,

I am responding to the email that was sent out last week in regards to State Aid.

From my standpoint (been involved with our relief association for 16 years and I have been fire chief for 4 years) we can't let our State Aid drop. This would dramatically affect Rural Departments pension levels. Rural departments depend on that state aid to maintain benefit levels. I am sure you are well aware that investment options with low risk are very poor returns, so we rely on the state aid to maintain benefit levels. In my opinion Pension Fund Benefit levels are the only way to Retain Firefighters after numerous years of service. I have seen it throughout my career that they will stay on for the full pension amounts (in our department it is 20 years). It is an enticement for retention, without it there is no enticement other than a personal goal to get to a certain year of service. I have also seen firsthand what happens when pension levels drop (neighboring communities). Firefighters will calculate the pension levels and will walk in mass quantities if they know a drop would be coming even prior to being fully vested. This puts the relief associations in terrible situations along with their communities they serve. We can't allow the State Aid or Supplemental Aid to drop in any way for Rural Departments as it would be counter intuitive towards not only retention but also protection for all the communities and the Firefighters and families that have dedicated many years of their lives to serve.

In regards to the other email that was sent out, forcing investment with the State Funds. I do have some concerns for this in regards to rural department pensions. The last time I looked into investing with the State Fund there was stipulations to how much you could increase your pension levels and I believe there were increments of \$500 in pension levels. This is very detrimental to rural departments. Our local departments do small increases to help raise the pension levels for those near retirement (\$100 raises). If we had to do it in increments of \$500, then we would ensure we couldn't raise our pension levels for almost 10 years time. This is extremely unfair to small rural departments with lower asset amounts. The enticement for members to stay on for retention for increased pension level benefits in their later years of their career is lowered dramatically. This was the main reason we never joined years ago when we looked into it.

Thanks,
Anthony Rupp

Date: February 25, 2022

From: John Kannas, Balsam Fire Department

Hi, here is my thought on the supplemental state aid. 1. The total annual benefit was about \$15,000 for Balsam about 20 years ago. Then it dropped to about \$13,000 when the supplemental benefit first came out. But varied as the formula changed. I think when the benefit for 20 years gets up to \$30,000 to \$40,000 it will help with recruitment and retention for the Balsam VFD. It is hard to compare now with what it was 42 years ago with no or very little pension. We have done an excellent job maximizing our annual return on investment. It is good to keep all the department members informed of the status of the funds. Most if not all members are not in it for the money. It is a community service. I was happy to be a volunteer firefighter for 30 years and Bob has now been on the department for over 40 years. To summarize, if there is going to be a supplemental State Aid, we, Balsam VFD should get its fair share. It seems the formulas favor the metro. Cities. Us country cousins get the short end of the stick.

John

Date: March 3, 2022

From: Aaron Johnston, Assistant Fire Chief, Coon Rapids Fire Department

Rose,

I am replying to your request for information on how a change to the supplemental aid calculation would potentially affect our Relief Association and its membership. As one of the top 10-15 relief associations in the state (based on fund value) we would potentially lose \$50k based on one assumption. This would be a lose of about \$1k per firefighter per year in pension value. Over 20 years this becomes \$20,000 + interest (7.5% historical rate of fund return) on the total fund would be a loss of about \$47,500.00 to each member over there 20 year career! This would be disheartening to our staff, but I am not sure anyone would leave the fire service because of it? The talk of this being a recruitment and retention issue is misleading to me! If departments are recruiting new firefighters based on a potential pension after ten or twenty years, then we have a bigger problem in the Fire Service.

This is going to come down to the "Haves verses the Have Nots" or "Metro V. Rural" fire departments in the end. We as a state and a Fire Service need to find a way to compensate our firefighters for their time and effort instead of relying on a volunteer system (free) for their community. While this system has worked in the past, it is quickly dying and the small rural communities are paying the price. We receive no additional funds from our city, the 2% monies and the supplemental state aid are the only revenues for our Deferred Compensation Fire Relief Fund.

Our Relief Board supports leaving the supplemental calculation as it is and find other ways to support rural outstate fire departments with other funding options.

Please let me know if you have any questions

Thanks

Aaron Johnston
Assistant Fire Chief
Coon Rapids Fire Department

Date: March 3, 2022
From: Nyle Zikmund, Administrator, City of Mounds View

Supplemental Aid Work Group – March 2022 Written Testimony/White Paper

Members;

Travels out of state limit my ability to present in person and thus, this written testimony.

Appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts with the working group. Volunteer pension plans are an important tool to aid in continuing the rich volunteer fire profession in our wonderful State of Minnesota. To that end I offer for your consideration the following information in the hopes it moves the discussion forward in keeping with our great volunteer system.

My observation/assessment is that it appears the working group has come to some conclusion that redistribution of the Supplemental Aid based on a formula change is unlikely as it is fraught with internal turmoil amongst the fire service and political conflict at the legislature as any change results in winners and losers.

As to the question of where the “formula” came from, as one involved in those discussions; the answer is that it was discussed and it was based on the following equity equation. Data provided by the State Fire Marshal details, year over year; departments protecting more people/property have higher call volumes than those will lesser. Subsequently, the larger the department, the more training demands, call volume, and other requirements. From the “[2018 Fire In Minnesota](#)”, (most recent) approximately 37 of the approximately 780 fire departments in the state reported 0 fire calls with nearly 250 reporting five or less fire calls. Any formula using population, property value, or call volume – or any combination of that – is likely to result in a similar distribution. A formula using per firefighter would have a dramatic shift from metro/ suburban to rural as the vast majority of the states 19,000+ firefighters are located in the vast geography of the state.

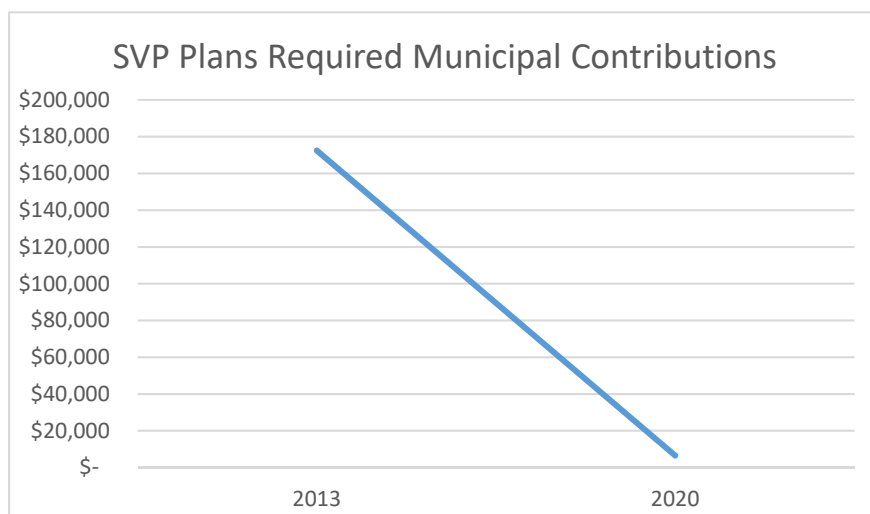
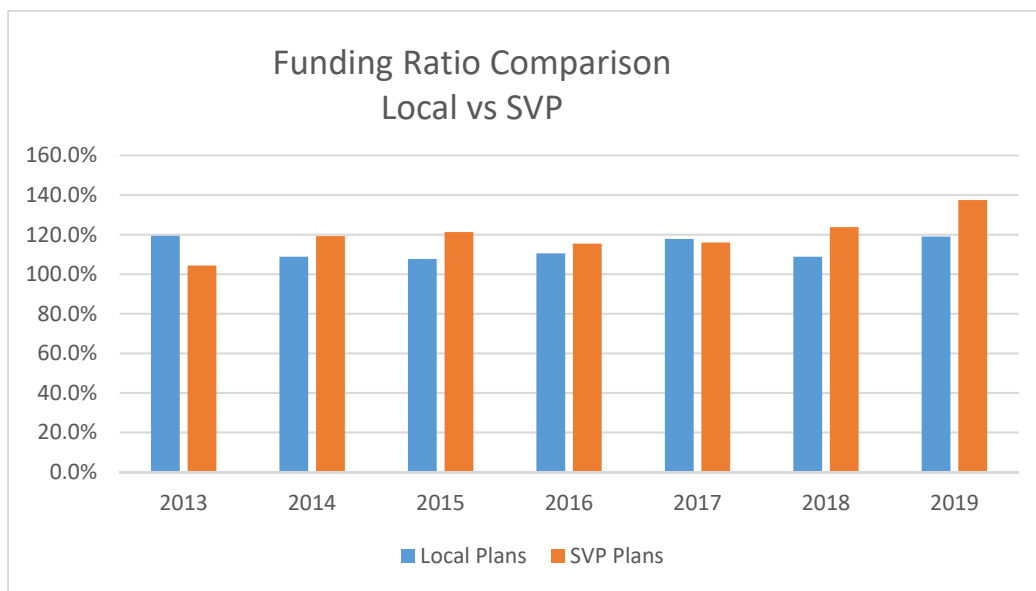
However, a redistribution based on per FF argues equity on a per FF basis but dismisses/discounts the substantial time commitment to ongoing training requirements, call volumes responded too, and other requirement burdens experienced by those members serving in high volume/high activity organizations.

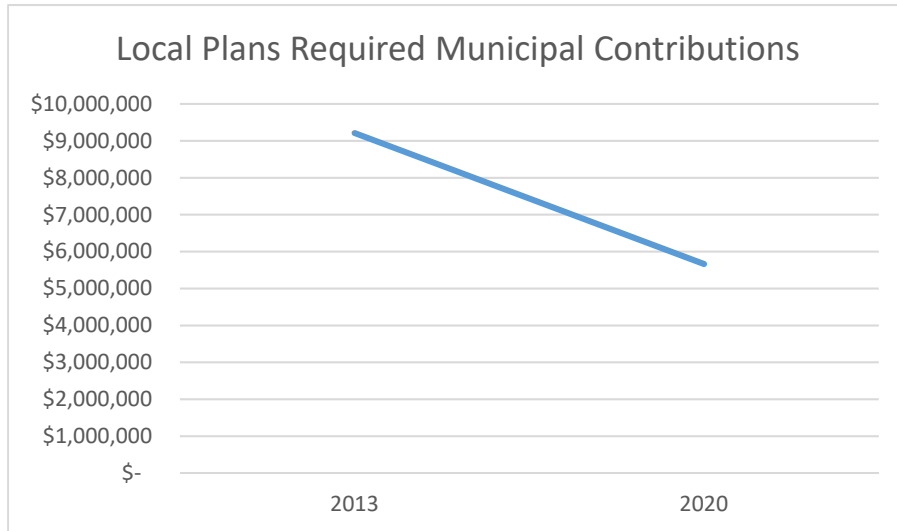
It should also be noted, that at the time the Supplemental Aid was created; Fire Safety Account revenues were increasing and monies allocated to the MBFTE were allowing the Board to fund basic firefighter (NFPA 1001) Firefighter I and II training as well as the certification cost, an approximate \$1,300 value per firefighter. Close to 1,000 “seats” have been and continue to be funded by the MBFTE. Of those 1,000, approximately 80% are volunteers from greater/outstate Minnesota. Many departments at the time (and many still do) had/have training budgets less than the funding

for even a single FF to complete the training and testing. The vast majority of the MBFTE funding is done on a per FF basis, and thus, is disproportionality distributed (to greater Minnesota) as compared to fire pension aid distribution (disproportionate to population/property areas).

Need for Aid – is Questionable:

The Supplemental Aid was historic in both the amount (30% more) and occurrence as it was the first new aid – going to all reliefs, in more than a century. History has now shown two things to have occurred since its inception; unprecedented surpluses (see charts below – Local Reliefs and State Plan Reliefs or SVP) of considerable portions, and a substantive reduction in required municipal contributions (see charts below). A more forensic analysis would also show there have been increases in benefits (as intended), but inconsistent in keeping up with the additional funding resources that have been provided. Note – source for Charts – OSA Compilation Reports, MN Dept. Revenue, PERA SVP Plan Data





Addressing the Surpluses:

The surplus issue was first discovered/revealed in 2018 as part of the data provided for the LCPR created Conversions and Dissolutions Work Group – and has grown in its magnitude since then.

Prior to any effort in acquiring more assets/fiscal resources; advocates and policy makers may want to work on assuring those additional resources already provided, migrate into the increased benefits for volunteer firefighters as envisioned.

Volunteer Fire Reliefs are the only public pension plans in the state with benefit levels determined at a local level. Arguably, in an environment of little training and understanding by pension plan administrators of public pension plan operation.

It seems probable that a formula could be developed whereby once a plan achieves full funding, a portion of that surplus is allocated to benefit increases on an automatic basis.

Determining How Much is Enough:

Advocates for more aid argue a correlation between pensions and recruitment and retention. PERA Director Anderson, at the February 2022 meeting; requested examples or details. State Fire Marshal representative Ehret shared a 3 year study completed in the past decade that provided a \$500 a year “stipend” for control group of volunteers that showed no conclusive data between the stipend and recruitment and retention.

It begs the question, if more is better, how much more will it take to be enough? 30% more was provided in 2013 with the primary result being the aforementioned surplus in assets and decrease in required municipal contribution but has shown it to be lacking specific to the envisioned and argued need for greater pension benefits.

As a former fire chief and now City Administrator for one of the larger, predominantly volunteer fire department operations in the state; we experienced a significant level of success in reducing

turnover; which goes a long way to addressing the recruitment problem, as a function of retention success.

However, isolating the pension as the singular cause is nearly impossible to do as other factors come into play, and situations change with time making it similarly difficult to compare.

That said, I am confident in stating the pension was successful in our example of substantially controlling “turnover” and retaining members for long periods of time. However, this was only accomplished in cooperation/partnership via increased contributions from the municipalities, all voluntary; based on a per FF basis calculation and targeting an equal amount to that of our fire state aid (2% and supplemental).

Other Factors/Options to Consider:

Pensions can and do make a difference in retention and to some degree recruitment. Virtually every study, if not all; of the volunteer fire pension system in Minnesota applauds the program, while simultaneously criticizing the decentralized administration and sub-standard return rates. To that end, the State Volunteer Plan was created in 2013 with nearly one quarter of fire reliefs now having joined.

The State Plan is no longer “experimental” with one singular plan leaving – due to a consolidation with a department that did not belong. By every measure, the State Plan demonstrates significant advantages over those locally administered; greater investment return, significant reduction in administration fees (hundreds of dollars versus thousands of dollars), and substantial reduction in plan administration (no administration duties for the relief). The first two arguably equate, for the majority of plans; more revenue than another 30% of supplemental aid would provide and not require any additional money or time and talent to advocate for more money. Simply joining the state plan will save thousands in annual audit fees and generate a much greater return for many reliefs; in combination - substantive improvement based solely on a decision to join the plan.

Can we Trust the SBI and PERA:

Teachers, Firefighters (career and volunteer), Troopers, Legislators, Sherriff’s and their Deputies, Correction Officers, Local and County Government employees, and local Law Enforcement have all trusted the SBI for decades. Those same individuals, have trusted PERA, MSRS or TRA as their plan administrators – for decades. Policy makers have to analyze the data, and if more state funds are requested for delivery of local services; it is not unreasonable for them to “maximize” those dollars where history has provided a proven track record. As taxpayers, we challenge our legislators to be responsible custodians of those resources.

Possible Options/Considerations/Improvements to the Volunteer Firefighter delivery and accompanying Volunteer Pension System.

1. Prioritize benefit (surplus issue) increase as top priority – utilize funds already in existence.
2. Allocate turn backs from departments migrating to career to the minimum aid program.
3. Seek redistribution of un-needed aid (PERA P & F allocation) to supplemental aid and target to plans under \$XXX in assets, in essence – expand the minimum aid recipient pool.
4. Incentivize plans to join SVP given their excellent performance record in asset management, virtually total elimination of all administrative duties by plan, and substantial reduction in administrative costs to the plan which in turn act as a contribution.

Minimum Aid and Supplemental Aid:

As the working group members know, Supplemental Aid is one of three state pension aids funding Minnesota Volunteer Fire Relief Associations. Minimum Aid and the “2%” aid comprise the other two. There is broad understanding of the 2% aid but less so of the Minimum aid and Supplemental Aid.

Minimum Aid

Minimum Aid was created in 1996 to address funding for the smallest fire reliefs and using a per FF distribution calculus as that provided the greatest equity based on data available at the time. The funding source was general fund money – amortization aid scheduled to turn back as the targeted fund had reached its funding goal. This was the first new aid since the creation of fire aid in 1885. At the time, it represented around a 10% increase to the total volunteer pension aid but had a much more dramatic impact as it was targeted to the smallest reliefs. The new aid set a funding level of \$260 per FF as compared to most being under \$100 per firefighter prior to the aid. The genesis for this change was driven by fire service groups in response to Senator Steve Morse’s advocacy to provide additional aid to the smaller reliefs.

Supplemental Aid

Supplemental Aid was fire service driven with the Minnesota Professional Firefighters spearheading an effort to secure general fund money directly into the PERA P & F fund to ease pressure on employer and employee contributions. The Minnesota State Fire Chiefs joined in the effort with \$5.5 million targeted for volunteer reliefs. This equated to a 30% increase for all plans. This aid is also general fund money.

Nyle Zikmund
Mounds View City Administrator
2401 Mounds View Boulevard
Mounds View, MN 55112
Nyle.zikmund@moundsviewmn.org
612-860-7442

Date: March 7, 2022

From: Dave Myers, Secretary, Cohasset Fire Relief Association

Hello Rose,

My name is Dave Myers. I am the Chief of Cohasset Fire. I just read the email looking for input on how state aid is divided up or handed out. If Cohasset were to receive more state aid we could increase our benefit level. Our city currently does not make an annual contribution to our retirement fund. State aid is the only money that we receive each year other than what we gain from investment performance. The only time the city makes a contribution is when we are not solvent which is rare. I believe only once in my seventeen years on the department has the city been required to contribute to the fund. Pretty self-explanatory what less aid would mean to the department. I'm not 100 percent sure how aid is allocated currently but if call volume is not part of it, adding that would make a difference for us. We run a fairly high amount of calls compared to

most other departments in our county. As far as recruitment and retention, more state aid would make becoming a member of the department more attractive and help retain the folks that sign up. At this point our two neighboring departments have a higher retirement benefit and run significantly less calls. Our city is fair when it comes to hourly pay but having the ability to raise that through state aid would only be beneficial. Thank you for the opportunity to comment! If you would like any more information feel free to reach out.

Sincerely,
Dave Myers
Cohasset Fire

Date: March 9, 2022

From: Brandon Lunde, Secretary, Wanamingo Fire Relief Association

As a volunteer firefighter, there is most certainly a strong desire to serve your community and utilize your strengths in helping others benefiting both loved ones and strangers alike. This is a quality that I am proud to say is shared among the numerous firefighters in this great nation, truly from “sea to shining sea”. Though I have served my community for a relatively short period (roughly 7 years), I have been able to see the dedication and commitment from the young and old volunteers in our department. I listen to the stories of days gone about how firefighters had to learn by trial and error and how much things have improved over the years. Thankfully, with the improvements to training and equipment, victims of fires, medical emergencies, and disasters have the best chance of survival possible. Unfortunately, however, this has led to an increase in training hours and time commitment by all firefighters and their loved ones to maintain an adequate and modern fire department. Given the danger and importance associated with this form of volunteer work, I find it remarkable and noble that this continues to be accomplished on a volunteer basis. Unlike many departments, the organization I am part of does not offer any type of monetary compensation, such as pay per call, for this sacrifice and determination to serve. We are simply proud to be there on what is many times the worst day of somebody’s life. There is, however, a token of appreciation following the countless hours of service when one has decided they have done all they can do to serve. The firefighter’s pension fund.

While a firefighter gets an enormous level of satisfaction from serving others and the privilege of being able to help others when they are needed, a firefighter’s family is donating the time of their loved one as well. They do not get to actively help others but loan out their loved ones to help out. Increasing expectations from the public, state, and federal authorities lead to higher demands for the firefighters of today. This oftentimes equates to missing numerous meals with family, cutting short the time tossing a football with a child, working during a child’s birthday, showing up late to your “normal job”, and sacrificing many other everyday activities because of the enormous amount of training requirements and call volumes. The pension is a great way to not only compensate the firefighter for risking their life, consuming countless hours of their life, and often weighing on their mental well-being but to also provide retirement benefits for their family as well. The term, “going to the pasture to graze” is such a great way to describe what a well-deserving community servant should be doing with their loved ones following years of service. The least the State can do is fairly distribute pension funds to all these community servants in this great state.

Living in a town of 1000 people, we require a much larger percentage of our population to staff a modern fire department. We most certainly do not have the luxury of a large pool to choose from. Though our small community does not have as many firefighters serving on our department as a large city, it still takes a “small army” to do all the required duties to safely and efficiently battle a raging blaze, conduct a rescue, or provide medical assistance to one in need. I am proud to say the level of care we provide while performing these duties meet or exceed the expectations from our community, which likely matches that of our brothers who serve on other departments, large and small. An additional challenge faced by small communities is the increased number of residents required to leave town to work on a day-to-day basis. This impacts the daytime response to emergencies and fires. While I can attest outstate Minnesota is full of prideful and resourceful community members, they are most certainly not blind to inequity being faced in the distributing of pension funds for the fire service. There is truly no argument that the amount of funds received upon retirement for large departments is often 10 times greater than that received by smaller departments. A revised, more fair distribution of funds would not only better serve the values of diversity, equity and inclusion but simply be the right thing to do. As we strive to shift society to support equality, I find it ironic that does not apply to the distribution of firefighter pension funds.

There is also a cultural aspect to all of this. Is a metro firefighter more important than an outstate Minnesota firefighter? This would be like saying a metro politician is more important than an outstate politician! Is the same process utilized to determine compensation for our elected officials as firefighter retirement? Of course not - this would most certainly be crazy thinking. As every vote counts the same in a political system, every firefighter should count the same in our great state. When we respond to a severe car accident, outstate and metro firefighters operate in the same fashion with the same expectations. Oftentimes, the argument regarding call volume and population is leaned on by large departments to justify their unjust share of the pension funds – But it is clear not all calls are created equal. This metric is easy to run to, as numbers may cloud a mindset. However, 30 nursing home lift assists in a month likely require much less time than a hay shed fire. Again, not all calls are created equal, and not all firefighters respond to every call. It should also be noted that training requirements are most certainly not impacted by call volume. Departments with 100 calls per year face the same standards and expectations as a department fielding 500 calls per year. And until you have hugged a husband or wife trying to comfort them following doing CPR on their loved one, you do not truly understand we are all brothers and equals, no matter community size. Until you have crawled on your hands and knees through a burning building searching for anybody inside, you will not understand we are all brothers, no matter the community size. We all do the same job, with the same level of commitment, with the same expectations, and strive to do our best to make somebody’s worst day just a bit better if possible. By distributing the pension funds fairly, you would essentially be showing the value in all that serve, not just certain departments.

Like I started with in my message, none of us do this for the money – we do this for the people. We want to be there for you, your friends, and your family if they are traveling through our outstanding community. It is, however, only fair if the distribution of the retirement funds is done in such a way that is fair for all, not benefiting some who do the same job more than others. Please practice what you preach – All men (and women) are created equal – for this reason, distribution of funds should also be done in a fair manner. While I understand dollar for dollar may not be practical or fair, many metro departments receiving greater than 10 times the amount of smaller departments is most certainly not fair either. Please create a system that ensures fairness. One we can use to promote to all future

firefighters that all the training, call response, commitment, and drive to continually improve is worth it. This type of volunteer work takes a physical and emotional toll on one's self. Distributing this pension fund fairly is one way to show appreciation for all who make these sacrifices, departments large and small. This unjust way only shows large departments are thought of in higher regard than the "little guys". Please work toward a win-win solution and do the right thing – Create a distribution method that is fair and reasonable for us all!

Thank You,

Brandon Lunde
Wanamingo Fire and Rescue

Date: March 9, 2022

From: Mike Murphy, President, Apple Valley Fire Relief Association

My name is Mike Murphy with the Apple Valley firefighter's relief association, I understand some potential changes to the supplemental state aid could benefit us, if it was doled out by member numbers, or by run volume, as we are in the 2400 call range, however, the problem with the supplemental state aid is that there is only one pot of money, and if we get more of the supplemental money, someone else gets less, and vice versa. I don't know that this is a problem, I haven't heard of any reliefs complaining that they should get more or less supplemental aid, so I'm wondering what is wrong with the current system? I believe it works, everyone gets some of the supplemental aid, and it is appreciated, I would not like to lose the amount that Apple Valley gets, and I don't want to Robin Hood a different relief's supplemental money, as I believe that isn't right either. I think the systems in place today have been for a while, and work, so why is the working group trying to make changes? If the working group's objective is to get more money to outstate departments, they should lobby for some of the state surplus money for outstate departments. I am not against us not getting a bump from the surplus money that the outstate departments would, I am however against us losing some of the benefits we are already getting or taking from the benefits others are receiving. This is just our opinion, and would like the state supplemental aid to not be changed.

Sincerely,

Mike Murphy
Apple Valley Fire Relief Association President