

**Volunteer Firefighter, EMT, and Search & Rescue Pension Fund Board Meeting**  
**Virtual Zoom**  
**January 5, 2023**

A meeting of the Volunteer Firefighter, EMT, and Search & Rescue Pension Fund Board was held at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 5, 2023 via Zoom.

Board members participating:

Mr. Gene Diedtrich (Chairman) (Newcastle)  
Mr. Lanny Applegate (Vice-Chair) (Cheyenne)  
Mr. Tracy Brown (Lingle)  
Mr. Kim Lee (Riverton)  
Mr. Jerry Munger (Wheatland)  
Mr. Eric Quinney (Evanston)  
Mr. Clint Becker (Douglas)  
Mr. Dennis McDonald (Afton)

Board members absent and excused: None

Wyoming Retirement System (WRS) Staff members participating:

Mr. David Swindell, Executive Director  
Mr. Ben Brandes, General Counsel  
Ms. Rachel Kelley, Staff Development & Executive Administrator  
Ms. Rachel Meeker, Audit Manager  
Mr. Adam Waddell, Principal Auditor

Others in attendance: Mr. Byron Matthews from the Fire Chief Association, Mr. Don Stevenson, Mr. John Ruthford from Carbon County Fire Warden

**1) Board Meeting Minutes from September 21, 2022.** The Volunteer Firefighter, EMT, and SAR Pension Fund minutes from September 21, 2022 Volunteer Meeting were considered.

**MOTION 01-05-2023 (#1):** Mr. Tracy Brown moved to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Dennis McDonald seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**2) Review of Financial Reports.** The financial statements for the months ending August 2022, September 2022 and October 2022 were reviewed, noting that plan assets as of October 31, 2022 totaled \$107,521,802.37. Chairman Diedtrich asked Mr. Swindell to explain the administrative costs incurred by the Volunteer Plan. Mr. Swindell explained that there are some common costs to all plans administered by WRS and those costs are applied on a monthly basis.

**MOTION 01-05-2023 (#2):** Mr. Eric Quinney moved to approve the financial reports as presented. Mr. Clint Becker seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**3) Review of Membership Reports.** The membership reports as of December 28, 2022 contained the following highlights:

Active Contributing Members: 2,329

Retirees: 1,390

Survivor pensions: 292

Monthly pension total: \$604,432.81

Smallest monthly pension: \$35.14

Largest monthly pension: \$752.17

Participating Departments. The Board reviewed the participating department report, noting 117 participating agencies.

Service Purchase reports. The Board reviewed the service purchase reports for the quarter. There is one pending service purchase as of November 2022.

Newly refunded and retired report. The Board reviewed the refunded accounts and new retirees for the September through December 2022 timeframe. There were 11 new retirements and 16 members refunded their accounts during the period.

Deceased members by plan report. The report shows 6 retirees and survivors who passed.

**MOTION 01-05-2023 (#3):** Mr. Lanny Applegate moved to approve the membership reports. Mr. Jerry Munger seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**4) Review of Pending Legislation. 23LSO-0462** Mr. Swindell provided an update to the Board on pending legislation for the upcoming 2023 session. 23LSO-0462 which provides \$9 million appropriation from the General Fund to the Volunteer Firefighter, EMT & SAR pension account was discussed. The bill also provides that once the final beneficiary in the Fire A plan has passed, that Volunteer Firefighter, EMT & SAR pension fund would receive 100% of the fire insurance tax revenue instead of the current 60%. This provision seems to seek a policy decision now on what to do when Fire A membership reaches zero, versus any near term fiscal impact. Mr.

Applegate commented that it is very important for volunteer board members contact the fire departments/districts and legislators in their areas regarding 23LSO-0462 and its impacts to the volunteer plan. Mr. Lee commented that Senator Salazar intends to sponsor the bill.

**5) Audit Report.** Ms. Rachel Meeker provided an overview of the Audit Report for the January 5, 2023 Volunteer Board Meeting, which included a report on the HollyFrontier Follow-up, 2021 Search and Rescue Update – Big Horn County and Dual Fire Membership project update. The Internal Audit Department (IAD) found that all active members of the HollyFrontier Refinery Fire Rescue were compliant with Plan attendance requirements for the calendar year 2021. The IAD performed an attendance audit of the Big Horn County Search and Rescue Agency and found that they are in compliance. WRS Employer Relations reviewed dual fire membership and identified 44 members who initially appear to have dual membership in the Fire B Plan and the Volunteer Fire Plan. IAD and WRS Legal Counsel have determined that volunteer EMTS who are participating in the Fire B Plan do not appear to have any conditions precluding them from participating in both plans. Fire B Plan members who are participating in the Volunteer Plan must be sponsored by different fire departments as firefighters otherwise these members cannot participate in both Plans. The IAD will provide a final report on the Dual Fire Membership Project at the next Volunteer Board Meeting.

**6) Legal Update.** Mr. Ben Brandes provided an update regarding his memo to the Volunteer Board on the subcommittee for rule development. Mr. Brandes is working with the AG's office to created proposed language to be included in the Volunteer Plan rules. The first item for consideration is the need for a general update and the inclusion of search and rescue personnel language into the Plan. The second item is the analysis and legal clarification of the term "entire time of employment" as stated in the Plan. The third item is the definition of spouse as it relates to the payment of death benefits to surviving spouses. Mr. Brandes will provide an update and potential rulemaking recommendation at the next Volunteer Board meeting.

#### **7) Other Matters.**

**Board Nominations** Chairman Diedtrich stated that both he and Mr. McDonald's board terms expire in 2023 and were due for reappointment. Mr. Kim Lee will nominate Mr. Diedtrich and Mr. McDonald's for reappointment as Volunteer Board Members at the Fireman's Association meeting the following day.

**MOTION 01-05-2023 (#4):** Mr. Clint Becker motioned to nominate Mr. Gene Diedtrich and Mr. Dennis McDonald for another term on the Volunteer Board. Seconded by Mr. Tracy Brown. Motion carried unanimously.

**8) Date and Location of Next Meeting.** Chairman Diedtrich led a discussion regarding the next Volunteer Board Meeting location and date. It was recommended that the next meeting be held on

Friday, March 31, 2023 at Svilar's Steak House in Hudson Wyoming at 7:00 p.m. The Board concurred.

**MOTION 01-05-2023 (#5):** Mr. Lanny Applegate motioned to have the March 2023 Board meeting at Svilar's in Hudson, Wyoming on Friday the 31<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Tracy Brown seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

The June 2023 meeting's date and location was discussed by the Board and Wednesday June 14 2023 was proposed. Svilar's was the location determined for the June 14, 2023 Volunteer Board Meeting.

**8) Adjournment.** There being no further business, the Volunteer Board adjourned at 1:54 p.m.