

In attendance: N. Gorski, L. Annino, Jr, J. Young (by phone), R. Regolo
BOFC, KVFC, KAA: Todd Hajek, Mike Haaga, Tom Shipman, Brianna Shipman, Ben Chasse, Dick Bauer,
Jen Liptak, and Dan O’Sullivan. Visitor: J. Samperi

1. The meeting was called to order at 7 pm.
2. KVFC/KAA Volunteer Incentive Program
Gorski presented a summary sheet indicating the total number of potential beneficiaries, broken out by age, alongside the current and proposed benefits:
 - LIFE INSURANCE BENEFIT: No proposed changes
 - SERVICE RECOGNITION PLAN: Changes were listed, most notably that benefit accrual age limit would be extended from age 65 to age 75. Associated costs were presented using both 20 and 30-year amortization.
 - ABATEMENT: introduction of a stipend in lieu of tax abatement.

The first responder team answered questions from the selectmen:

1. RE benefit period: There was clarification of the total 10-year total guaranteed benefit period for recipients and/or beneficiaries.

2. RE: how the enhanced plan will help attract and retain volunteers:

KAA’s O’Sullivan explained how the team worked to improve upon the existing three-tiered recognition plan in order to better incentivize across the age scales and maintain the optimal demographics -- a balance of new recruits – young and older – and long-serving members.

Extending the accrual period to age 75 would address the need to retain older first responders; 70 % of ambulance calls are performed by members over 65. He described the change in the abatement - a proposed stipend in lieu of abatement – as critical in attracting the youngest volunteers. The three-tiered package would incentive all new recruits, including retirees and new members of all ages.

Selectman Young applauded the introduction of the stipend, and questioned the application of \$40,000 in the budget to fund changes. Citing an email exchange suggesting that the pension plan was not an attractive incentive as support, she proposed increasing the stipend or other up- front compensation for all, rather than the increasing the town pension obligation. There was discussion and some clarification of actual anticipated cost increases for the pension plan change – which come primarily from the volunteers accruing benefits beyond age 65 -- and of the fact that volunteers already at pay status would not benefit from proposed changes.
[Young left meeting at 6:32]

Annino clarified that the \$40,000 was a target put in the budget based on the anticipated number of responders impacted by the new benefit. He supports the proposed stipend as an incentive for new recruits and recognized the value of the three-tiered package and its appeal across the group. He voiced his support, in principle, of the proposal, applauded the effort, and indicated that it is ready to move forward for codification and administrative development.

Chiefs Bauer and Shipman underscored how this three-tiered package addresses the varying needs of the volunteers across the board and reemphasized the importance of maintaining the

demographic balance that includes young new recruits, older new recruits, and experienced veterans.

Motion by Gorski, to approve the proposed changes to the First Responder Service Recognition Plan pending review by:

- **Actuarial services**
- **Auditor**
- **Labor attorney – stipend in lieu of tax abatement**
- **Town attorney – pension plan changes**

Discussion: Annino emphasized that the revised program needs to be subject to an independent financial analysis to determine actual costs, formally codified, and processed through proper channels, including review and approval by Board of Finance. The First Responder team expressed some frustration about the pace of the approval process and encouraged the BOS to communicate a sense of urgency moving forward. Handouts regarding NEXT STEPS, FIRE and AMBULANCE ANNUAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS and TOWN RESPONSIBILITIES were noted but not discussed.

The motion, seconded by Annino, passed unanimously.

Commissioner Darin acknowledged the contributions of first responders present – Todd Hajek, Mike Haaga, Tom Shipman, Brianna Shipman, Ben Chasse, Dick Bauer, Jen Liptak, and Dan O’Sullivan. It was noted that the town’s attention to this plan has an impact on the morale of all first responders.

3. Adjournment

Annino moved adjournment at 6:46 p.m. The motion, seconded by Gorski, passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Elizabeth Doyle Disbrow on 3/25/2022.