

BRIGETTE K. SMITH
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STATE OF WASHINGTON
BOARD FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS & RESERVE OFFICERS
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The 210th regular meeting of the Board for Volunteer Firefighters and Reserve Officers was convened at 9:02 A.M. in Suite #112 in the James R. Larson Forum Building by Chair Ronald Ayres, with Board Member Ken Boad, Board Member Jay Hughes, Board Member Mark Waterpaugh, Board Member Martin Spani, Chief Stan Loertscher (Mason Co. FPD #13), Executive Secretary Brigette Smith, Confidential Secretary Nicole Stauffer, Payroll and Pension Specialist Irene Keiffer, and Claims Analyst Julie Ikenberry present.

The Board reviewed the October 19, 2007 minutes. It was moved by Boad, seconded by Spani and carried that the minutes be approved.

The agenda was reviewed.

FIRST HEARING OF THE PUBLIC

No one wished to speak.

OLD BUSINESS

Secretary Smith and Member Boad updated the Board on the progress of the Fire Service Leadership Forum Focus Group. At the November Fire Service Leadership Forum meeting, some of the individual group members were unable to give their association's opinion regarding the Focus Group's recommendation. As a result, the discussion had to be continued to the January meeting. Board members expressed their concern that waiting for the FSLF recommendation may reflect negatively on the Board because it could be perceived that the Board is not moving forward with the issue. As a result, Secretary Smith was asked to email Keith Merritt and encourage him to help the FSLF come to an agreement regarding the Pension Participation Standards at their January meeting so that, hopefully, the Board can review it at the February meeting.

Secretary Smith stated that she hadn't received any additional comments regarding the Buy-Back legislation and said that she would follow up with Roger Ferris, Executive Secretary of the Washington Fire Commissioner's Association, to see if it was still their intent to introduce legislation regarding the Buy-Backs.

Secretary Smith informed the Board that no additional comments regarding earlier retirements, other benefit enhancements (besides the feedback submitted through the survey), or feedback regarding the Pension Participation Standards had been received.

Executive Secretary Smith presented the results of the Benefit Enhancement Survey to the Board. She stated that there are still a few paper copies of the survey coming in, but she didn't anticipate that they would have a major impact in the results. Over 1,800 people took the survey, and the majority of the respondents were active volunteers in fire districts throughout the state. Someone in every county responded to the survey. The main results were as follow:

Rankings of the enhancements (#1 being the top choice for enhancements and #7 being the last choice):

1. Increasing the monthly amount
2. Giving a percentage bonus for each year served over 25 years
3. Lowering the maximum retirement age from 65 to 60

4. Receiving a bonus for years served as an officer
5. Reducing the early retirement penalty from 8% to 5% (or more)
6. Lowering the number of years of service required to receive a pension from 10 years to 5

Fee Increases:

1. Volunteers:
 - a. The most popular choice for a fee increase was to increase the fees by \$20-\$40 (22%).
 - b. 55% of the respondents would be willing to pay an increase of between \$1 - \$60.
 - c. 15% of the respondents would not want any kind of an increase.
2. Departments:
 - a. The most popular choice for a fee increase was to increase the fees by \$20 - \$40 (28%).
 - b. 56% of the respondents would be willing to pay an increase of between \$1 - \$60.
 - c. 13% of the respondents would no want any kind of an increase.

During their discussion, it was mentioned by the Board that they were surprised by the last three rankings. They expected to see a slightly different order, but that the top three rankings weren't really a big surprise. They commended the Board Staff on all of the work to make the survey a success. A lot of hard work and coordination went into the notification and development of the survey. The Board also discussed sharing the results with other organizations. Secretary Smith thought that the survey results could be very valuable and suggested waiting another week for the last of the paper survey results to come in. She would then set up a meeting with the other organizations and invite them to come and review the results with her. She could explain how the survey was conducted and answer any questions. In addition, she could ask if there are any individual, organizational specific information that she could provide to them. The Board agreed that a meeting would be a good way to open the lines of communication and help to make the survey a useful tool for all of the fire service.

The Board discussed the Actuarial Valuation. It was moved by Watenpaugh, seconded by Boad, and carried that the Board ask the Actuary to use a static mortality rate, which is in line with other retirement systems. It was also moved by Hughes, seconded by Watenpaugh, and carried that the Board use a smoothing rate consistent with other retirement systems, but not to exceed ten years. Secretary Smith was directed to consult with the Actuary's Office to determine the standard smoothing rate. Finally, it was moved by Boad, seconded by Spani, and carried, that the Board adopt a 15 year rolling amortization schedule, also consistent with other retirement systems. Chairman Ayres pointed out that he was concerned about a section in the Valuation which stated "A separate medical valuation is required to demonstrate the cost of the relief benefits on a projected basis, including an assumption for the trend rate (a measure of the rate of change over time of the per capita health care rates). The projected costs of the relief benefits would be significantly higher than the annual costs shown in this report". The Board expressed concerns that medical costs could greatly impact the stability of the fund if major claims were filed at the same time that benefit enhancements were implemented. After more discussion regarding planning for the future, and developing a ten year plan, Secretary Smith was directed to consult with the Actuary's Office and get an updated cost to increase monthly pension amounts. The Board will revisit this item at its next meeting once the new data is received. The Board asked that Secretary Smith prepare a written history of the monthly pension amounts and the fee increases for that meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

The Board reviewed a request from John Niels, Jr., Grays Harbor FPD #5, for a permanent partial disability award, for a knee injury received on June 10, 2003. It was moved by Boad, seconded by Hughes, and carried that the Board award Firefighter Niels a RPD Award of \$11,273.18 for his June 10, 2003 fire service injury.

The Board reviewed Secretary Smith's leave and pay records.

The Board reviewed and approved (Boad moved, Spani seconded) the administrative expenditure vouchers numbered (1610-1640) and various travel vouchers.

There was a motion by Boad, seconded by Hughes, and carried that the retirement pensions and lump-sum settlements listed below be approved effective on the listed dates (Hughes abstained from the vote on Doreen Carlson's and Gary Home's papers due to potential conflicts):

		<u>Effective Date</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Brown, Janet D.	Klickitat #2	10/1/07	220.00
Busherd, Jerry	Grant #5	12/6/07	66.50
Byrd, Donald	Pacific #1	11/25/07	2,900.93 Lump
Carlson, Doris K.	Spokane #4	1/01/08	70.00
Christenson, Kent	Redmond	5/06/06	4,950.88 Lump
Cochran, Wayne	Wahkiakum #4	1/23/08	212.80 @ age 62
Courson, Louise	Columbia #1	5/08/07	4,657.62 Lump
Dobie, Harold	Yakima #6	1/06/08 J/S	257.10
Drake, Don J.	LaConner	6/17/07	3,740.66 Lump
Essensa, David	Thurston #4	10/27/07	300.00
Evans, John B.	San Juan #2	11/1/07 J/S	36.63
Gallagher, Michael	Woodland	9/04/07	3,960.70 Lump
Glessner, Larry	Douglas #5	12/7/07 J/S	257.10
Gunter, Joan	Grant #11	7/14/07	73.50
Hagglund, Harold	Island #3	8/17/07	300.00
Hone, Gary W.	Spokane #4	10/1/08	228.00 @ age 62
James, Larry J.	Cashmere	12/7/07	228.00 @ age 62
Joslin, Brud	San Juan #5	12/27/07	202.50
LaFontaine, John	Lincoln #4	9/15/07	3,520.62 Lump
Linton, Jerry	Grays Harbor #2	10/10/06	61.18 @ age 62
McKinley, Ronald N.	Spokane #3	11/14/07 J/S	253.20
Mickelson, Linda	Cowlitz #5	10/17/07 J/S	198.36 @ age 62
Pflugrath, Robert	Chelan #6	9/28/07	180.00
Philbin, Harold F.	King #40	11/8/07	1,320.23 Lump
Sanislo, Bruce L.	Yakima #12	10/25/07 J/S	263.70
Schibig, Carl L.	Wapato	11/10/07	197.60 @ age 62
Smith, Michael P.	Mason #1	11/8/07	172.50
Thompson, Bill	Lewis #6	8/01/07 J/S	245.40
Wilme, Jr., Clifford	Ocean Shores	11/4/07	2,200.39 Lump
Wilson, James L.	Whitman #12	9/20/07	5,584.30 Lump
Yula, Jr., Ralph	Ocean Shores	9/14/07	4,180.74 Lump

SECOND HEARING OF THE PUBLIC

No one wished to speak

There was a motion by Board, seconded by Hughes, and carried that the meeting be adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Brigette K. Smith, Executive Secretary