

# Red Wing Fire Department Relief Association

-- Incorporated February 16, 1892 --

◆ 420 Plum Street ◆ Red Wing ◆ Minnesota ◆ 55066 ◆ 651/388-7142 ◆

## **Special Meeting of the Red Wing Fire Department Relief Association Board**

23 April 2024 at 1800

Red Wing Fire Department Station 2

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## **MEETING MINUTES**

1. Call to Order – Called to order by President Kinney at 1809
2. Pledge of Allegiance – Led by President Kinney at 1809
3. Roll Call – a quorum was present:
  - a. Present: President Kinney, Secretary Knott, Trustee Mason, Treasurer Nelson, Trustee Redman, & Vice President Zenner
  - b. Absent: Chief Warner & Mayor Wilson
4. Approval of the Agenda - Mason moved, Nelson seconded, to approve the agenda – passed at 1811
5. New Business
  - a. Deferred Member Compensation – Discussion regarding interest for members who entered deferred status after the adoption of the 2016 By-Laws but before the adoption of the 2023 By-Laws: President Kinney reviewed the By-Laws from 2010, 2016, and 2023. He discussed the requirements for Board members to act as fiduciaries to the Association. He then ran through a history of the manner in which deferred members accounts were handled according to the By-Laws since the 2010 revision: In the 2010 By-Laws, at the time of transition to deferred status, the Association would purchase a certificate of deposit set to mature when the member was eligible to apply for their benefits; in the 2016 By-Laws, interest was explicitly removed for deferred members; in 2023 interest for deferred members was restored using a “separate vehicle.” The minutes from the meeting during which the 2016 By-Laws were adopted were reviewed, noting that the Board was authorized to make some changes to the By-Laws at time of adoption, but that no one then, or subsequently, mentioned deferred member interest, and no action was taken to change it (aside from a mention at the December, 2021, Board meeting minutes in that the Board discussed “looking into changing” the By-Laws to allow the earning of interest by deferred members). He also reviewed the 2016 By-Laws revisions themselves, how the Association had hired someone to make the changes based on input from the Board, and how he had

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discussed this with prior Board members as well as board members from other Associations who had used the same person to draft by-law changes. He reviewed several association by-laws drafted by the same person during this period, and noted that the trend at the time was to eliminate interest for deferred members in order to build the Special Fund balance in order to boost payments to current members and to reduce fees. He noted that the person who drafted the changes for the Association passed away unexpectedly and the draft changes were delivered to the Board, who then presented them to the Association for voting (see above review of minutes from when the By-Law changes were approved). He also noted that the idea that deferred members were continuing to accrue interest appeared to have arisen from the way in which the deferred accounts had been set up when they moved to deferred status, which was reflected in account statements; however, it was noted that, after a change in personnel setting up the deferred accounts, that they were then set up properly reflecting that no interest should be credited. Kinney then ran through the history of correspondence by e-mail and U.S. Mail with the deferred members after the Association was required to reimburse the Special Fund for the improper payment of interest to Mike Jacobson after the State Auditor's office discovered the error of his overpayment, and which deferred members were and were not affected. He noted that he had received an inquiry some months later from one deferred member who asked about the possibility of getting paid for the interest that they thought had been credited to their deferred account, and that they had expressed interest in attending the Association meeting in February to raise the issue, but had not ultimately attended. They had spoken with Kinney and with Rose at the State Auditor's office and had drafted a proposed "settlement" letter that they thought would permit the payment of the interest. In reviewing the correspondence and the letter, he also related his discussions with Rose at the State Auditor's office, noting that he had gotten somewhat different information from Rose, and that she was not definitive in her responses about whether or not a future audit might require the Association to reimburse the Special Fund from the General Fund in such a circumstance. However, she had definitively answered if it would be possible to include the Jacobson payment in any potential "settlement," allowing us to recoup the money to the General Fund, and that her answer to that question was "no." There was general discussion regarding whether or not the members who entered deferred status during the period of the

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2016 By-Laws were entitled to interest, and the unanimous consensus was that they were not—that the 2016 By-Laws were clear on this point. There was also unanimous consensus among the Board that the perception that deferred members were accruing interest was due to an error in how the accounts were initially set up, but that this was a clerical error, not a policy act or a commitment by the Board or the Association to make those payments, and that this error had been explained in the correspondence that was sent to the affected members after the audit. It was also noted that the accounts were now correctly configured. At 1918 Nelson moved and Zenner seconded that the Secretary draft a letter for the President to sign on behalf of the Board responding to the deferred member's inquiries regarding whether or not the Board would support paying interest to the affected deferred members, advising them that the Board does not believe that the record supports that interest is owed to members who entered deferred status during this period. This motion passed unanimously at 1921.

- b. Retired Member Presentation Gift Purchases – Kinney noted that we have two members (Hallock & Sperlak) retiring this year who will have 20 or more years of service, and that it has been the policy of the Association to purchase presentation gifts of engraved fire axes for such retiring members. He asked for authorization to spend approximately \$600 apiece for these. There was some discussion regarding the sourcing and style of the axes and manner of presentation, but there was consensus that we should do so. Kinney moved and Mason seconded at 1934 to authorize the purchase of the axes for the two retiring members; this passed unanimously at 1935.
6. Adjournment – Nelson moved and Redman seconded to adjourn at 1937. This passed unanimously.

## **Upcoming Association Activities:**

- Summer Feed – June 19, 2024, at Colvill Pavilion
- Board/Budget Meeting – December 4, 2024, at Station 2