

**Statewide Volunteer Firefighter Plan  
Advisory Board Meeting Notes  
January 26, 2023**

**Members Present**

- Ann Finn, Cities Representative
- Cal Larson, Cities Representative
- Marc Volk, Volunteer Firefighters Representative
- Steve Fenske, Townships Representative
- Jay Wood, Volunteer Firefighters Representative
- Anthony Scavo, Volunteer Firefighters
- Jeff Sanborn, Fire Chief Representative
- Rose Hennessy-Allen, State Auditor's Office

**Member Excused**

- Justin Nielsen, Volunteer Firefighters Representative
- John King, Volunteer Firefighters Representative

**Staff Present**

- Doug Anderson, PERA Staff
- David Andrews, PERA Staff
- Tracy Gebhard, PERA Staff
- Gemma Miltich, PERA Staff
- Gladys Rodriguez, PERA Staff
- Amy Streng, PERA Staff

**Others Present**

- Susan Lenczewski, Legislative Commission on Pension Retirement
- Chad Burkitt, Legislative Commission on Pension Retirement
- Ann Lenczewski, Lockridge Grindal Nauen P.L.L.P
- Angie Huss, Lockridge Grindal Nauen P.L.L.P
- Nyle Zickmund, City of Mounds View

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**1. Meeting called to Order and Introductions**

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. Members participated in person and interactive technology as permitted in Minnesota Statutes Section 13D.015. Introductions were made.

**2. Approval of Meeting Notes from July 26, 2022 and December 15, 2022**

*Larson moved to approve the July 26, 2022 and December 15, 2022, SVF Advisory Board meeting notes. The motion was seconded by Hennessy Allen and passed unanimously by roll call vote.*

**3. 2023 Legislative Item – Vesting Credit for Relief Associations**

Streng provided an update on HF 217, which modifies the current statute to allow for previous years of relief association service to count for vesting purposes in the SVF lump-sum plans. She explained technical changes to the definitions to member and volunteer firefighter and other modifications included in the bill.

The proposed amendments for HF 217 are as follows:

- Add definition for previous service to clarify that only non-concurrent service counts for vesting purposes.
- Add definition for Minnesota Volunteer Fire Department to ensure that all years of service with a Minnesota volunteer fire department are included.
- Add language to the definition of retirement benefit to maintain the requirement that a member has at least one year of service in the Plan to qualify for a benefit.

- Repeal of §353G.13., which governs portability for a lump-sum plan. The statute is no longer needed after the revision of this draft.
- Add language to the certification of previous years of service to require the fire chief to certify any previous years of service.

These amendments would not be effective until January 1, 2024, to allow PERA time to implement the changes.

Staff also worked with the LCPR to address several administrative concerns that were previously identified. The bill includes clarification of the effective date, implementation and the cost to the plan. This legislative change will impact current members of the lump-sum division of the SVF Plan. The only members not impacted are members who had deferred in the Volunteer Relief Association and then join the SVF Plan.

PERA counts a volunteer firefighter's service cumulatively when determining their vesting percentage, if the fire chief certifies previous years of service. Retirement benefits are paid only from the fire department SVF Plan account in which the volunteer firefighter is partially or fully vested.

Finally, if a member terminates service or retires from a department with a higher vesting percentage because of this change, there will be an actual cost impact to the department. However, the higher cost will have been anticipated in the development of prior funding requirements. All members are also assumed to be fully vested upon reaching retirement age.

*After discussion, Larson moved to approve the bill with the proposed amendment. The motion was seconded by Scavo and passed unanimously by roll call vote.*

#### 4. **Next Meeting Date- DTBD**

Meeting will be convene later in the summer.

#### 5. **Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.