



March 9th, 2023

The Honorable Kaohly Vang Her
Chair, Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement
359 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Chair Her and Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement Members,

My apologies for not being able to attend tonight's meeting of the Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement (LCPR) in person.

I am the Fire Chief for the City of Albertville, and serve both as a member of the Minnesota State Fire Chief's Association (MSFCA) Executive Committee and as the Board of Directors Representative for Region 8 - North Suburban, which covers Anoka, Sherburne, and Wright Counties. I have served as the Liaison for the MSFCA to the Office of the State Auditor Volunteer Fire Relief Association Working Group for 4-years.

On behalf of the Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Association, I am writing you in support of the Working Group's 2023 Legislative Proposals.

As you know, the State Auditor Volunteer Fire Relief Association Working Group is a non-partisan group tasked with tackling issues related to Volunteer Fire Relief Associations across the State. Issues for the Working Group's discussion are funneled to us by individual Volunteer Fire Relief Associations, Elected Officials, the Department of Revenue, the Office of the State Auditor, and LCPR Staff. Every item that is moved forward from the Working Group is done so with unanimous consent.

The items in the Working Group's 2023 Legislative Proposals are:

- Increase the threshold at which an annual audit is required from the current \$500,000 in special fund assets or liabilities to \$750,000;
- Add definitions to the relief association statutes of "volunteer," "paid on-call," "part-time," and "full-time/career" firefighter;
- Update firefighter and relief association references to reflect the new definitions;
- Clarify when municipal ratification of a benefit level or bylaw change is required; and
- Clarify eligibility for supplemental benefits when a relief association dissolves.

One of the MSFCA's priorities over the past two-years is to clarify the definition(s) of "Firefighter" in State Statute, to accurately categorize the compensation, availability/scheduling, and pension characteristics of the State's Firefighters. We believe that adding these definitions, starting with the Relief Association Statues, will help bring clarity to future discussions on Firefighter initiatives.

Thank you for your discussion, and consideration, of the Office of the State Auditor Volunteer Fire Relief Association Working Group's 2023 Legislative Proposals.

Respectfully submitted,



Eric Bullen
FIRE CHIEF



Eric Bullen - Region 8 North Suburban Representative

Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Association (MSFCA)

Office: 800-743-0911

www.msfc.org

region8@msfca.org
