

**Statement of J. W. "Bill" Sheehan at Public Hearing 07212020
Regarding Volunteer Firefighter and Fire Police Incentive Program**

I want to thank the Committee for their hard work thus far in developing this proposed ordinance. Through the efforts of the Town Attorney, the Town Labor Attorney and the Human Resources Director, I am sure this ordinance meets the criteria of the Federal Fair Labor Standard Act (FLSA).

However, I believe that the ordinance has some weaknesses regarding information necessary to permit the key elected boards (Board of Selectman, Board of Finance, and Representative Town Meeting) to properly monitor this program.

The only reports mentioned in the Draft Ordinance are an Incident Report for every dispatched incident addressed to the Director of Fire Services and a quarterly report by the Director of Fire Services that provides information regarding who gets paid the stipend. I assume the quarterly report goes to the HR Director although there is no mention as to who receives the report.

I recommend that the Committee include a requirement that the Fire Services Director report to the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, and Representative Town Meeting on the number of recipients of the stipend and the total amount expended each quarter along with a statement regarding the effectiveness of the program in incentivizing volunteer firefighters and fire police. The elected boards do not need to know any names, just numbers and dollars expended and success or failure of the incentive program.

I don't know if the recent agreement with the Waterford Ambulance Service (WAS) and the change in who responds to EMS Calls impacts this comment. Basically, the question is – Are any volunteer firefighters also employees of the WAS? If so, there needs to be a mechanism to ensure that a Volunteer does not get incentive credit as well as payment from the WAS. I do not see any such safeguard in the proposed ordinance.

In summary, I recommend outlining a safeguard procedure to prevent any incentive credit for a call that was also paid for by the Waterford Ambulance Service and providing a summary report to the elected boards on the status and success or not of the incentive program at a specifically defined interval (either quarterly or semiannually).

Thank you for your attention.

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