

House Volunteer Fire Subcommittee Meeting  
Owatonna, Minnesota  
September 12, 1975 at Veterans' Club

MINUTES:

Rep. Al Patton, chairman, opened the meeting.

PRESENT: Representatives Al Patton, Donald Moe, Richard Parish, John Biersdorf.  
John Mandeville, Exec. Sec.

Rep. Patton explained that the purpose of the meeting was to hear comments from the members of the volunteer associations on proposed legislation and also their comments on legislation which they would like to see drafted.

Rep. Biersdorf introduced the members of the volunteer subcommittee.

Mayor John McGaheran welcomed the members of the Volunteer Fire Subcommittee & staff.

Mr. John Mandeville, Exec. Sec., summarized a memo by the staff concerning the subject of volunteer pensions which provided background information.

Vern Ahlers, Owatonna, expressed the views of his association. He stated that they are in favor of a bill to get the limits off -- that this provision should be in a bill by itself. Feels there is no need for special legislation for each town. Owatonna has permission to pay up to \$800 per year of service but at present they pay \$700, with a minimum of 20 years service and a maximum of 40 years service; minimum age to collect lump sum benefit is 50 years.

Kenneth Blumenreder, treasurer, discussed how Owatonna handles its investment program. He stated that every 6 months they get bids from the financial institutions; that the highest bidder is given the money to invest. They have \$155,000 in certificates; that they prefer to invest the money locally.

The relief association has the authority to invest its money. The money is all invested in one institution for a short period of time.

Relative to 20 year vesting and whether this should be changed to 5 years, 10 years or 15 years, they do not feel at the present time that the 20 years should be reduced.

C. Cunningham, Waseca, stated that before a medical discharge is granted, a member has to have a written medical discharge from the doctor and that the disability has to be fire department related. Regarding the question of portability, they would like to see some form of portability; either bring the money along or draw a fraction from each town served.

Vern Ahlers of Owatonna stated that Owatonna gives a medical discharge whether or not the injury is fire department related or not.

Bob Shaferton, Pine Island, stated that there is no additional benefits for service beyond 20 years; that a member has to be in the department for 10 years to draw a proportionate disability. There is no age limit; just paid for the first 20 years; anything after that is gratis. The average age in their department is about 40 years of age.

Steve Beckford, Hayfield, stated they are in favor of portability; need 20 years of service and age 50.

Rep. Moe advised that he would like to aim at equalizing benefits--members performing the same kind of work to get approximately the same kind of benefit; also enable members to transfer their service time from one pension fund to another; is considering a bill to give more authority to the local city councils and the relief associations themselves; wants to avoid special legislation.

It was brought out that a bill was being drafted relating to volunteer ambulance drivers. There was no immediate interest in this phase.