

August 24, 1981 Meeting
Holiday Inn
New Ulm, Minnesota

Disability Subcommittee

MINUTES

The Disability Subcommittee chairman, Rep. Frank Rodriguez, opened the meeting. Sen. Frederickson, from the New Ulm area, welcomed those attending the meeting to New Ulm.

PRESENT: Senator Spear and Senator Frederickson
Representatives Frank Rodriguez, Reding, Sarna

Larry Martin, Exec. Sec., went over a staff memo entitled "Comparison of Various Provisions Governing Local Police and Salaried Firefighters Relief Association Disability Benefits".

The following testified in behalf of the various police and fire associations:

Tom Dickinson, Secretary of the Minneapolis Firefighters Relief Association, advised that there are 139 members on disability benefits; that if every disabled member over 65 years of age were eliminated, there would be a savings of \$45,000 per year. Forty-one of those disabled had less than 20 years of service. He stated that the light duty jobs which were available 20 years ago have been done away with and that civilians are now hired for these jobs:

Relative to the question as to whether disability time would count toward a service pension, Rep. Rodriguez advised that he will find this out from the city attorney's office.

Tom Gelbmann, President of the St. Paul Firefighters Relief Association, advised that St. Paul does have light duty jobs. A disabled firefighter can come back to the position he had originally upon examination by the doctor. Mr. Gelbmann will obtain a list of the light duty jobs available in St. Paul.

Dick Ruedy, St. Paul Police, President of the St. Paul Police Federation, advised that they have experience with light duty employment for those who are still disabled and are doing a light duty job adequately.

Mike Holman, Secretary of the St. Cloud Firefighters Relief Association, discussed temporary disability problems and the need for light duty employment.

Leo Humme, Austin Fire, discussed the problems with civil service-light duty jobs--"40 hour week is a raise in pay over a 56 hour week". There are no light duty jobs in the Austin Fire Department.

Chuck Anderson, West St. Paul Police Department, discussed disability prevention, inadequacy of disability benefits. West St. Paul a disability benefit of \$75 per month or \$900 per year.

Dave Niebur, Minneapolis Police Federation, stated that \$900 disability benefit is not enough and is appealing to the pension commission for a solution to the problems.

Tom Moore, Richfield Fire, discussed the problems with an insurance carrier--will not allow the employer to take the disabled person back in some instances.

August 25, 1981 Meeting
New Ulm, Minnesota

Disability Subcommittee Meeting

MINUTES

Rep. Rogriguez, chairman, opened the meeting.

PRESENT: Senators Spear and Frederickson
Representatives Rodriguez, Reding, Sarna

Continuation of testimony of the previous 8/24/81 meeting:

Chuck Nalipinski, New Ulm Police, advised that they have no trouble with the disability benefits.

William Gafford, President of the New Ulm City Council, advised that there is no need to take any disability rights away; does not want any changes in the pension fund.

Ron Kastner, Secretary of the Minneapolis Police Relief Association, stated that the Legislature should maintain control over the disability area; that those funds which have an inadequate disability level should be brought up to a better level. The Minneapolis disability benefit is 40% of the current salary of a first grade patrol officer.

Gus Welter, Secretary of the Volunteer Firefighters Association, stated they have the same problems as the paid firefighters have.

Tom Dickinson, Minneapolis Fire, discussed some of the problems with Workers Compensation and disability benefits offsets. They do not have data on who is getting workers compensation.

It was suggested that Doug Seaton, House Research, be invited to the September meeting to give the members some background information on Workers Compensation.

Dave Niebur, Minneapolis Police Federation, benefits should be handled on a state level rather than a union level.

The following problems were brought up at the meetings: light duty employment, safety programs, disability prevention, benefit inadequacies, benefit offsets, definition of disability benefits, employers using disability program to lay off employees, definitions of firefighter, police patrol officer, firefighter supervisor, chief.

The September 8 and 9, 1981 meetings will be held in Duluth. Members will be specifically requested to testify.

Eleanor Diebel
Secretary

Rep. Leo Reding
Commission Secretary