

Statewide Volunteer Firefighter Plan
Advisory Board Meeting Notes
October 22, 2025

Members Present

- Anne Finn, Cities Representative
- Steve Fenske, Townships Representative
- Cal Larson, Cities Representative
- Steve Shykes, Volunteer Firefighters Representative
- Justin Nielsen, Volunteer Firefighters Representative
- Anthony Scavo, Volunteer Firefighters
- Justin Sorenson, Fire Chief Representative
- Rose Hennessy-Allen, State Auditor's Office

Staff Present

- Doug Anderson, PERA Staff
- Gladys Rodriguez, PERA Staff
- Amy Strenge, PERA Staff
- Jaime Voight, PERA Staff
- Sarah Broton, PERA Staff
- Jill Voss, PERA Staff

Others Present

Aleena Wilson, LCPR Staff
Susan Lenczewski, LCPR Staff

Member Excused

- Jay Wood, Volunteer Firefighters Representative
- John King, Volunteer Firefighters Representative

1. Meeting called to Order and Introductions

Strenge called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Members participated in person and interactive technology as permitted in Minnesota Statutes Section 13D.015. Roll call was taken to establish quorum. Introductions were made.

2. Approval of Meeting Notes from January 29, 2025

Larson moved to approve the meeting notes as presented. Motion was seconded by Finn and passed by consensus.

3. Advisory Board 2025 Control Book

Anderson gave an overview of the Control Book, which included a detailed summary of membership statistics, plan asset data, funding status, and other key information about the overall structure and administration of the plan.

4. SVF Incentive Plan Update

Anderson reported that 23 plans joined the SVF in 2024, resulting in an incentive payout of \$756,000. In 2025, 52 plans joined, with a total payout of \$1,719,000 based on resolutions received as of October 20, 2025. For 2026, 23 entities have submitted resolutions to date, resulting in a payout of \$740,000, with an estimated 10 additional plans expected to join before year-end. The total incentive pool paid to date is \$1,785,000.

At the previous meeting, staff asked the advisory board whether the formula should be modified. The Board reached consensus to leave it unchanged. Staff recommends maintaining the current approach, as the formula continues to work well and there is no need for adjustments.

5. SVF Administrative Legislative Proposal

Strenge noted that the 2026 legislative session will begin on February 17, 2026. In preparation, staff is developing recommendations for legislative changes. These recommendations have been organized into three categories—Deadlines and Consequences, Administrative Changes, and Policy Changes—as outlined below:

Deadlines and Consequences

- Transfer of Coverage(Both Defined Benefit Plans(DBP)and Defined Contribution Plans(DCP))
- Benefit Increases (DBP Monthly Plans)
- Benefit Increases (DBP Lump sum)
- Termination of Participation and Distribution of Benefits
- Failure to meet deadlines to enroll into PERA (Request for coverage)
- Failure to meet deadline for submitting Annual Service credit certification
- DCP Benefit Applications

Administrative Changes

- Definitions for Volunteer Firefighter, Service Credit for Pension Benefit Accrual or Contribution Allocation, Service Credit for Vesting, Lump Sum divisions, Plan Coverage Election
- Benefit Levels for Selection of Benefit Levels and Lump Sum Service Pension Levels Procedure
- Chances to the Defined Contribution Plans
- Biennial Funding Reports
- Authorized Disbursements
- Cost Analysis Requests for Benefit level increases

Policy Changes

- Monthly Plans
- DCP Plan to DBP Conversion

Staff will return with recommendations for Board approval in November.

6. SVF Discussion Topics

Anderson shared an issue that was brought to the Board in July 2025 by a fire department Captain who expressed concern that the Chief had granted service credit to two individuals the Captain believed were ineligible. The question raised was how such situations should be addressed. While this was not presented as a policy change, staff requested that the Chief verify the service credit for the members in question. From staff's perspective, no action is required, but the matter was reported to the Board for awareness.

Hennessy-Allen noted that the Relief Association occasionally receives similar questions regarding service requirements and eligibility. She explained that reports are typically filed with both the municipality and the association board to provide a double-check mechanism when concerns about reporting or eligibility occur.

Another question that has been raised is whether an individual can gain a full year of service from two different departments simultaneously. Staff has confirmed that this is allowed. Although it does not count as two years of vesting service, the individual may receive the full benefit from each plan, provided all requirements for each are met.

No additional topics were presented for discussion.

7. Next meeting date: to be determined

Staff will reconvene a meeting in November to discuss potential legislative initiatives for inclusion in the 2026 legislative agenda.

8. Adjournment

Larson moved to adjourn the meeting. Motion was seconded by Fenske and passed by roll call vote.

9. Meeting adjourned at 2:10 pm