

**Public Safety Memorial Fund Board**  
**Minutes**  
**March 3, 2022**

The Public Safety Memorial Fund Board held a WebEx meeting on March 3, 2022 at 1:00 p.m. at the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training located at 4190 Aumsville Hwy SE Salem, Oregon. The meeting was called to order at 1:03 p.m.

**Committee Members:**

Colette Peters, Chair, Corrections Representative  
DaNeshia Barrett, Law Enforcement Representative  
Matthew English, Corrections Representative

**Committee Members Absent:**

James Oeder, Fire Representative  
Terri Davie, Law Enforcement Representative  
Vacant, Public Member

**DPSST Staff:**

Suzy Herring  
Shelby Alexander

**Guests**

Holly Gaunt

**1. Introductions**

- *Chair, Colette Peters, began the meeting by introducing herself and announcing all individuals attending the meeting. Chair Peters welcomed new Board member, Matthew English.*

**2. \*January 27, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

Approve minutes

- *DaNeshia Barrett made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 27, 2022 Public Safety Memorial Fund Board (PSMFB) meeting. Matthew English seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

### **3. \*Austin Smith (DPSST #034581) – Saint Paul Rural Fire Protection District**

Presented by Suzy Herring

On February 3, 2022, Austin G. Smith and the Saint Paul Fire District responded to a reported barn fire in Saint Paul, Oregon. Volunteer Firefighter Smith was on the second responding engine and was assigned to protect the southern exposure. While Volunteer Firefighter Smith was pulling a hose line in preparation to flow water to fight the fire, a catastrophic explosion occurred, throwing Volunteer Firefighter Smith to the ground and debris for several hundred feet. Paramedics on scene gave immediate aid until Volunteer Firefighter Smith was transported to OHSU by Life Flight Helicopter. Volunteer Firefighter Smith died while on route to OHSU.

On February 3, 2022, the Saint Paul Rural Fire Protection District made initial contact with Fire Training Manager, Julie Olsen at DPSST, notifying the agency of the death of Austin G. Smith. The Saint Paul Rural Fire Protection District also provided DPSST with Smith's M-3, Notice of Death or Permanent Total Disability/Death Initial Application for Benefits.

- *Matthew English motioned to approve the determination that Volunteer Firefighter Austin Smith meets the statutory definition of a Public Safety Officer under the Public Safety Memorial Fund statute and approve action item 1 of the memorandum. DaNeshia Barrett seconded the motion. A vote was taken by unanimous consent and carried without objection.*
- *DaNeshia Barrett motioned to accept the death of Volunteer Firefighter Smith as a qualifying death as set forth in ORS 243.954 and approve action item 2 of the memorandum. Matthew English seconded the motion. A vote was taken by unanimous consent and carried without objection.*
- *Matthew English made a motion to approve Ashley Smith, wife of Austin Smith, as an eligible beneficiary of the Public Safety Memorial Fund benefits and approve action item 3 of the memorandum. DaNeshia Barrett seconded the motion. A vote was taken by unanimous consent and carried without objection.*
- *DaNeshia Barrett motioned to award Ashley Smith the lump sum benefit in the amount of \$25,000.00 and approve action item 4 of the memorandum. Matthew English seconded the motion. A vote was taken by unanimous consent and carried without objection.*

Suzy Herring announced that Austin Smith's spouse will receive the \$25,000 benefit. The check will be printed and delivered and DPSST will work through Saint Paul Rural Fire Protection District to facilitate this process.

Board member, DaNeshia Barrett, asked if the PSMFB is able to have flexibility in required documentation when referring to verifying pertinent information for approval. Suzy Herring explained that the PSMFB is able to request any further clarifying documentation as desired by the PSMFB in order to reach a final determination on an agenda item. The PSMFB agreed that it may be beneficial for DPSST to require further family verification documentation as necessary when constructing the initial case to the Board. Suzy Herring stated that DPSST will look into the request and make changes as desired by the PSMFB.

#### **4. \*Jerry Richardson (DPSST #08757); Supplemental Application for Benefits - Portland Fire & Rescue**

Presented by Suzy Herring

On August 10, 2018, Lieutenant Jerry Richardson was diagnosed with mesothelioma, after serving as a firefighter and fire paramedic for over 34 years. Soon after the diagnosis, Richardson began cancer treatment. On December 3, 2018, the Bureau of Fire and Police Disability and Retirement administered Jerry's claims for service-connected and occupational disability.

On November 19, 2021, Lieutenant Jerry Richardson with Portland Fire & Rescue lost his battle with cancer and passed away in hospice care. On January 27, 2022, the Public Safety Memorial Fund Board (PSMFB) considered the initial application for Public Safety Memorial Fund benefits submitted by Portland Fire & Rescue and Heather Richardson, spouse of Jerry Richardson. Ultimately the PSMFB determined that Lieutenant Richardson's death was a qualifying death as defined by ORS 243.954. As a result, Heather Richardson was awarded the lump sum benefit of \$25,000.

On February 1, 2022, Heather Richardson submitted the supplemental application for benefits, requesting further reimbursement for mortgage payments.

- *Matthew English made a motion to approve action item 1 on the memorandum and award Heather Richardson with discretionary benefits for mortgage payments. DaNeshia Barrett seconded the motion. A vote was taken by unanimous consent and carried without objection.*
- *Matthew English motioned to approve action item 2 on the memorandum and award the entire requested amount of discretionary benefits for mortgage to Heather Richardson. DaNeshia Barrett seconded the motion. A vote was taken by unanimous consent and carried without objection.*

Suzy Herring announced that Jerry Richardson's spouse will receive the discretionary benefit as supported by statute. The check will be printed and delivered and DPSST will work through Portland Fire and Rescue to facilitate this process.

Suzy Herring gave an update to the PSMFB, informing them of the PSMFB's current budget for the biennium. After deliberation, the PSMFB decided that it would be beneficial to add a budget update to each meeting agenda in order to fully comprehend the budget expenses and can refer to it when making future decisions. Suzy Herring confirmed that she will work with DPSST staff in order to facilitate this request.

#### **5. \*Brian Gaunt (DPSST #37820) – Beaverton Police Department**

Presented by Suzy Herring

On August 10, 2021, Sergeant Gaunt met with another Beaverton Police Officer in a conference room and were in close contact with one another for an unknown length of time. Within 24 hours of the meeting, the other Beaverton Police Officer tested positive for COVID-19. By August 20,

2021, Sergeant Gaunt was showing symptoms of COVID-19 and officially tested positive for COVID-19 on August 26, 2021. Sergeant Gaunt was admitted to the Kaiser Westside Hospital in Hillsboro, OR on August 29, 2021.

Statement received by Beaverton Police Department, disclosed on October 24, 2021, Sergeant Gaunt passed away, after spending almost an entire month in the hospital due to COVID-19 complications.

On January 27, 2022, the Public Safety Memorial Fund Board (PSMFB) considered the initial application for Public Safety Memorial Fund benefits submitted by Beaverton Police Department and Holly Gaunt, spouse of Brian Gaunt. Ultimately the PSMFB determined that Sergeant Gaunt's death was a qualifying death as defined by ORS 243.954. As a result, Holly Gaunt was awarded the lump sum benefit of \$25,000.

On February 24, 2022, Holly Gaunt submitted the supplemental application for benefits, requesting further reimbursement for mortgage payments as well as health and dental coverage benefits for herself and three children.

- *DaNeshia Barrett made a motion to approve action item 1 on the memorandum and award the discretionary benefits for mortgage, dental and health benefits for Holly Gaunt and her three children. Matthew English seconded the motion. A vote was taken by unanimous consent and carried without objection.*
- *Matthew English motioned to approve action item 2 on the memorandum and award the entire requested amount of discretionary benefits for mortgage as well as dental and health coverage benefits to Holly Gaunt and her three children. DaNeshia Barrett seconded the motion. A vote was taken by unanimous consent and carried without objection.*

Suzy Herring announced that Brian Gaunt's spouse will receive the discretionary benefit as supported by statute. The check will be printed and delivered and DPSST will work through the Beaverton Police Department to facilitate this process.

There was a final discussion with the members surrounding the three day required timeline for notification of death or permanent disability. Suzy Herring will be doing research on the required timeline and will bring her findings to the next meeting for discussion of process change or potential legislative change if necessary.

#### **6. Next meeting – April 27, 2022, following the Board on Public Safety Standards & Training meeting**

Meeting adjourned at 1:36 p.m.