

# **Public Safety Memorial Fund Board**

## **Meeting Minutes**

### **September 22, 2023**

The Public Safety Memorial Fund Board held a special meeting on September 22, 2023, at the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training located at 4190 Aumsville Hwy SE Salem, Oregon. The meeting was called to order at approximately 9:03 a.m.

#### **Committee Members:**

DaNeshia Barrett, Chair, Law Enforcement Representative  
Maria Caballero Rubio, Public Member  
Matthew English, Corrections Representative  
Scotty Nowning, Law Enforcement Representative  
Jennifer Cameron, Corrections Representative

#### **Committee Members Absent:**

James Oeder, Vice-Chair, Fire Representative

#### **DPSST Staff:**

Chris Brodniak, Professional Standards Division Director  
Suzy Herring, Private Security/Investigator/Polygraph Program Manager  
Shelby Wright, Executive Assistant to the Director  
Jennifer Howald, Legislative and Rules Coordinator

#### **Guests**

Brenda Lea Wilson, Spouse of Officer Kenneth Wilson

#### **1. Introductions**

- *Chair, DaNeshia Barrett, began the meeting by introducing herself and invited everyone in attendance to state their name and position for the record.*

#### **2. \*Kenneth Wilson (DPSST #23496) – Talent Police Department; Reconsideration of Initial Benefit Application**

Presented by Chris Brodniak

On July 4, 1997, Officer Kenneth Wilson sustained an injury to his right arm while arresting a combative suspect in Talent, Oregon, while working for the Talent Police Department. Officer Wilson underwent two surgeries to repair his arm while still working as a public safety officer until he was ultimately relieved of his duties by the Talent Police Department on April 27, 2000, due to his medical condition.

In June of 2002, the Public Safety Memorial Fund Board reviewed Officer Wilson's application for supplemental benefits and awarded Officer Wilson monetary benefits to cover the cost of mortgage, health and dental expenses for himself, wife and two children. The Public Safety Memorial Fund Board also awarded educational

scholarship benefits to Officer Wilson's daughter, Tara Wilson, from 2003-2006. The Public Safety Memorial Fund Board continued to review and award Officer Wilson and his family supplemental benefits for five years until no longer eligible in 2007 per ORS 243.956. In total, the Public Safety Memorial Fund Board awarded Officer Wilson and his family \$38,295.96.

On November 20, 2010, Officer Kenneth Wilson died due to unknown natural causes. Officer Wilson's death certificate states that end of stage renal disease, cardio myopathy, coronary artery disease and chronic obstructive lung disease were also contributing factors of his death.

On April 16, 2023, Brenda Lea Wilson, spouse of Officer Kenneth Wilson, submitted the initial application for Public Safety Memorial Fund benefits, requesting the initial death benefit of \$25,000.00, after Shelby Wright had received multiple phone calls from Brenda weeks prior regarding the fund.

On May 1, 2023, Shelby Wright received a voicemail from a woman named Cindy, who was calling to inquire about Brenda's application for benefits from the Public Safety Memorial Fund Board. On May 2, 2023, Cindy called again and alleged that the applicant has been known to scam other corporations for money. Cindy explained that she believes the applicant does not intend to use the PSMFB awarded benefit for its true purpose if approved and will spend the money frivolously. Cindy alleged that the deceased officer died as a result of drug and alcohol use and the applicant should not qualify to receive the initial death benefit.

On July 27, 2023, the Public Safety Memorial Fund Board reviewed Brenda's initial application for benefits. After consideration, the Public Safety Memorial Fund Board determined that although Kenneth Wilson met the statutory definition of a public safety officer and Brenda Lea Wilson would be considered an eligible beneficiary if benefits were awarded, his death did not equate to the statutory definition of a line of duty death, and therefore the Public Safety Memorial Fund Board denied Brenda's application for initial death benefits.

On August 1, 2023, DPSST on behalf of the Board, emailed Brenda Lea Wilson and sent a hard copy of the order denying the \$25,000 benefit.

On September 1, 2023, Brenda Lea Wilson contacted DPSST, requesting the Public Safety Memorial Fund Board's reconsideration of her application for initial death benefits.

Chair Barrett noted that DPSST worked with the Department of Justice regarding the processes of this reconsideration to ensure that all procedures were being complied with in accordance with Oregon Administrative Rule and Statute.

Chair Barrett noted that pursuant to ORS 243.966, a request for reconsideration of the Board's decision to deny benefits must be made no later than 30 days after entry of

the order. Member Matt English noted that the Board's initial letter of denial was sent to Brenda Lea Wilson on August 1, 2023, and the reconsideration request was submitted on September 1, 2023, which equates to 32 calendar days and therefore did not submit the request within a timely manner.

- *Member Matt English motioned that the request for reconsideration was not submitted within the required timeline as determined by statute. Chair Barrett seconded the motion. A vote was taken by all members by roll-call where the motion passed unanimously.*

*Brena Lea Wilson, Spouse of Officer Kenneth Wilson, joined the Public Safety Memorial Fund Board via WebEx at approximately 9:13a.m.*

The Public Safety Memorial Fund Board discussed whether to continue voting on all action items since the request for consideration was not met within the required timeline and ultimately decided to complete a vote on all action items as standard procedure.

Chair Barrett asked the Board if they had any additional items to note before voting on the request for reconsideration of Brenda Lea Wilson's application for initial benefits. Member Matt English noted that the additional information supplied by Mrs. Wilson in her request for consideration did not sway his opinion on Officer Kenneth Wilson's case and believes that Officer Wilson's death still does not meet the statutory definition of a line of duty death. Member Scotty Nowning agreed with Member English's remarks and noted that he too does not believe that Officer Wilson's death meets the statutory definition of a line of duty death.

- *Chair Barrett motioned that Officer Kenneth Wilson's death does not meet the statutory definition of a line of duty death, pursuant to ORS 243.954. Member Matt English seconded the motion. A vote was taken by all members by roll-call where the motion passed unanimously.*
- *Member Matt English motioned that due to the tardiness of the request for reconsideration and Officer Kenneth Wilson's death not meeting the statutory definition of a line of duty death, that the Board upholds their determination to deny Brenda Lea Wilson's application for the initial death benefit. Chair Barrett seconded the motion. A vote was taken by all members by roll-call where the motion passed unanimously.*

#### **7. Next meeting – October 26, 2023, directly following the Board on Public Safety Standards and Training meeting at 9:00 a.m.**

- *With no further items to discuss, Chair Barrett adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:16 a.m.*