

Public Safety Memorial Fund Board

Minutes

February 2, 2026

The Public Safety Memorial Fund Board (PSMFB) held a special meeting on February 2, 2026, 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 10:04 a.m.

Committee Members:

Jennifer Cameron, Chair, Law Enforcement Representative – (Teams)
Chris Heppel, Vice-Chair, Fire Service Representative – (Teams)
Mark Daniel, Law Enforcement Representative
Scotty Nowning, Law Enforcement Representative – (Teams)
Michael Reese, Corrections Representative – (Teams)

Committee Members Absent:

Mo Young, Public Member from Board

DPSST Staff:

Marie Atwood, Professional Standards Division Director
Jennifer Howald, Administrative Rules Coordinator
Juan Lopez, Executive Assistant to Marie Atwood

Guests

1. Introductions

- *Chair Cameron began the meeting by inviting everyone in attendance to state their name and position for the record.*

2. *Approve October 23, 2025, Meeting Minutes

- *Member Daniel motioned to approve the October 23, 2025, meeting minutes. Vice-Chair Heppel seconded the motion. A vote was taken by roll call where the motion was carried with a unanimous vote.*

3. Budget Update

Presented by Marie Atwood

Division Director Atwood noted that the 2025-27 revenue is \$380,533, current expenditure limitation is \$310,444, and additional limitations can be requested in the future. As noted two meetings ago, the funds were not renewed this biennium. Jennifer Howald specified that DPSST did not receive a new allocation of funds, and simply maintains the ability to utilize existing funds, continuing to spend downwards. Additionally, funds were only distributed for the months of August, \$2,574, and October, \$33,717.

**4. *Officer John Christopher Kilcullen, DPSST #35147; Eugene Police Department;
Supplemental Application for Discretionary PSMF Benefits**

Presented by Marie Atwood

On April 22, 2011, Police Officer John Christopher Kilcullen was involved in a fatal incident in Springfield, Oregon. Officer Kilcullen was shot and later died from a gunshot wound received while performing his duties as a police officer for the City of Eugene.

On April 28, 2011, the Public Safety Memorial Fund Board (PSMFB) considered the initial application for PSMF benefits submitted by Kristie Sampson-Kilcullen, spouse of Officer Kilcullen. Ultimately the PSMFB determined that Officer Kilcullen's death was a qualifying death as defined by ORS 243.954. As a result, Kristie Sampson-Kilcullen was awarded the lump sum benefit of (\$25,000).

Since 2011, Mrs. Sampson-Kilcullen has continually submitted supplemental applications for benefits requesting further reimbursement to continue health and dental coverage for herself and two daughter(s), each of which was approved by the PSMFB.

On December 15, 2025, Mrs. Sampson-Kilcullen's submitted a supplemental application for benefits, requesting further reimbursement for health and dental coverage for one of her daughters, DOB January 4, 2007, for the months of January 2026 through June 2026 (6 months). The application states that her daughter is dually enrolled at Oregon State University and Linn-Benton Community College for Fall 2025:

Cost of additional medical and dental benefit reimbursement for Holly and one of her children

Grace (Age 18)

\$395.00 (medical premium cost per month)

\$44.00 (dental premium cost per month)

x 6 months

Total= \$2,634.00

Requested Reimbursement: \$2,634.00

- *Chair Cameron motioned to approve award benefits for Kristie Kilcullen, as requested. Member Daniel seconded the motion. A vote was taken by roll call where the motion was carried with a unanimous vote.*
- *Chair Cameron motioned to approve the full award amount of \$2,634.00 to Kristie Kilcullen, as requested. Vice-Chair Heppel seconded the motion. A vote was taken by roll call where the motion was carried with a unanimous vote*

**5. *Battalion Chief Michael Merlino, DPSST #08324; Sutherlin Fire Department;
Initial Application for Discretionary PSMF Benefits**

Presented by Marie Atwood

In January 2024, Battalion Chief Michael R. Merlino was diagnosed with anaplastic thyroid carcinoma after serving as a firefighter and fire paramedic for more than 30 years. An

occupational disease claim was filed for the onset of these symptoms while Merlino was still employed at Douglas County Fire District No. 2.

On October 23, 2025, the Public Safety Memorial Fund Board (PSMFB) considered the initial application for PSMF benefits submitted by Kameron Merlino, spouse of Chief Michael Merlino. Ultimately the PSMFB determined that Chief Merlino's death was a qualifying death as defined by ORS 243.954. As a result, Kameron Merlino was awarded the lump sum benefit of (\$25,000).

On November 15, 2025, DPSST received Merlino's Supplemental Application for Benefits, requesting mortgage reimbursement from January 2026 to January 2027 (12 months), and health/dental coverage for the months of January 2026 through June 2026 (6 months).

Cost of benefit reimbursement for Kameron Merlino:

\$1564.70 (mortgage payment per month)

x 12 months

Total = \$18,776.40

\$727.08 (medical premium per month)

\$55.88 (dental premium per month)

x 6 months

Total = \$4,697.76

Requested Reimbursement Amount: \$23,474.16

- *Vice-Chair Heppel asked if this request aligns with what the PSMFB has reviewed historically.*
- *Jennifer Howald replied that she does not have the historical knowledge of the mortgage payments aspect of this case. Director Atwood commented that mortgage benefits are covered by the PSMFB, but that staff would have to review amounts and award frequency.*
- *Vice-Chair Heppel asked if benefits assistance is covered up to five years.*
- *Jennifer Howald replied "yes," specifically for health and dental benefits, while mortgage assistance is only for the first twelve (12) months after death.*
- *Member Reese motioned to approve award benefits for Kameron Merlino, as requested. Member Nowning seconded the motion. A vote was taken by roll call where the motion was carried with a unanimous vote.*
- *Chair Cameron motioned to approve the full award amount of \$23,474.16 to Kameron Merlino, as requested. Member Nowning seconded the motion. A vote was taken by roll call where the motion was carried with a unanimous vote*

6. Next Meeting – April 23, 2026, directly following the Board on Public Safety Standards and Training meeting at 9:00 a.m.

With no further items to discuss, Chair Cameron adjourned the meeting at approximately 10:28 a.m.