

State of Maine
LOSAP Board of Director's

September 18, 2017

Attendees: Bill Gillespie, Brent Libby, Tim Nichols, Bill Hussey, and Fred Brewer

Excused absent: Jeff Brackett

The meeting was called to order by Bill Gillespie at 10:15am

The secretary's report was read and accepted.

Bill introduced our two guests for this meeting. Thomas Green of Green's Insurance Consulting. Tom handles the LOSAP program for the Berwick Fire Department. Keith Brandstand of VFIS attended with Tom to explain the LOSAP program through VFIS.

Tom expressed his thanks for the invitation to speak and feels that they can bring a lot to the table in developing our LOSAP program here in Maine. Tom explained that he has a lot of experience working with VFIS both in a business capacity and a personal experience as a volunteer firefighter himself. With his close to 40 years of experience he plans on receiving his LOSAP benefit when he reaches the age of 65. Tom feels that a LOSAP program will have a great impact on our recruitment and retention issue because firefighters will have a retirement plan in place giving them some incentive to stay within the fire service. He explained that nationally volunteer firefighter's numbers are down. In his own department there is a mix of career and volunteers. There is an understanding that career firefighters are expensive and this is a way to keep the cost down and keep volunteers in the ranks.

Keith explained that they have 15,000 clients throughout the United States and Canada and they handle the LOSAP that went into place in 1980. They currently have 270 million dollars in the LOSAP program for members. There are 500 plans in 33 states right now and 22 dedicated associates that work on them. He stated that the program itself can vary depending on the needs of the State.

Bill mentioned that nothing has been done on this level before in the state of Maine and he has some information from South Portland and Berwick but as of right now nothing is in place and it is the goal of this committee to get it up and running. He is hoping that at some point will be able to get some state funding

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but thinks it will start out as a Municipality. He stated that there are 7,000 to 9,000 firefighters in the state right now and wants to get this pitched to them. Senator Thibodeau wants to understand what is going to be needed from the state level and what can be done for funding.

Bill was asked if there was a timeline that is being looked at to get this into place and he stated there isn't right now but would like to have something in place within a year and needs to get the Chiefs and Firefighters buy-in to make this work. Keith asked Bill if he is looking at one set plan or one with many options and stated that he would caution on having the firefighters contribute to the plan themselves because of tax implications and offered to send Bill information on that. Keith went over one plan of getting a set amount per month for however many years of service. He stated that there is also a defined contribution plan and that is easier to administer for the municipality. He stated that there is not right answer for the LOSAP. There are a few different plans that work, including one in Michigan where they have a state match of 2 million so the state knows their liability.

Bill said he sees it being more as what the town is willing to put into it versus a defined plan with a certain amount to ensure that the Chiefs and towns are involved and okay with it. Keith said one effective thing is to not keep it a secret and when someone retires and gets a check make a big deal of it. Bill was asked if a company will be managing it and he said yes, he would like to have it done that way. Tom said that there also needs to be a point system in there as well that is attainable but has certain requirements to get this retirement as well. There was a discussion of whether or not previous service will be taken into consideration.

A statewide program was mentioned as a great way to go because as firefighters have moved from one town to another the program would continue. A minimum death benefit was discussed as well. This is a thank you for the service that is being put in.

Bill stated that the first thing that needs to be done is development of the program and the way that it needs to be going and the funding for it. A draft plan is needed to have a direction. Bill asked if every town can contribute a certain

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amount and was told that there is a minimum and a maximum. Tom said that their town is given a certain amount of money and there is a point system and the firefighters know will get it back later.

Keith said that he will get more information to Bill via email and Bill said he will give him the contact information for the board so they can discuss this together and see if they can at least get a point system defined. Bill said he thinks a major hurdle is getting all the information to the firefighters in the state. A discussion then consisted of ways to try to get all the information out via social media, etc. Tom stated that could assist with the marketing to get the information out there and just needs some contacts, etc.

Bill then discussed the roster and the fact that a lot of the email addresses were incorrect so gave out a form to be filled out. Bill said that on the association by-laws he was questioning whether or not anything had been put through for LOSAP when it was developed and is trying to understand whether or not should start up their own by-laws for this program. He stated that he could ask Bill Vickerson to attend the next meeting to see what can be done. Bill said that he will also reach out to the AG's office and see what is needed to define the by-laws.

There was a discussion of an all-day meeting to go over everything because there is so much information. Bill reiterated that the points system is really good and a certain dollar amount for a certain amount of years and that feedback from the associations would be great. The committee discussed firefighters being invested after 5 years of service and a points system for calls, trainings, fundraising, meetings, and collateral and the length of service being 20 years.

Submitted

Bill Gillespie