

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2009

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HOUSE BILL 549

Short Title: Increase Fire and Rescue Pension. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Tucker; Brown, Faison, Gulley, Hughes, McLawhorn, Spear, Starnes, Stewart, Tarleton, Wainwright, and E. Warren.

Referred to: Pensions and Retirement, if favorable, Appropriations.

March 12, 2009

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO INCREASE THE MONTHLY PENSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE FIREMEN'S AND RESCUE SQUAD WORKERS' PENSION FUND AND TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO REPAY THE FIREMEN'S AND RESCUE SQUAD WORKERS' PENSION FUND IN FULL AND TO FULLY FUND THE ANNUAL REQUIRED CONTRIBUTION.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 58-86-55 reads as rewritten:

"§ 58-86-55. Monthly pensions upon retirement.

Any member who has served 20 years as an "eligible fireman" or "eligible rescue squad worker" in the State of North Carolina, as provided in G.S. 58-86-25 and G.S. 58-86-30, and who has attained the age of 55 years is entitled to be paid a monthly pension from this fund. The monthly pension shall be in the amount of ~~one hundred seventy dollars (\$170.00)~~ one hundred seventy-three dollars (\$173.00) per month. Any retired fireman receiving a pension shall, effective ~~July 1, 2008,~~ July 1, 2009, receive a pension of ~~one hundred seventy dollars (\$170.00)~~ one hundred seventy-three dollars (\$173.00) per month.

Members shall pay ten dollars (\$10.00) per month as required by G.S. 58-86-35 and G.S. 58-86-40 for a period of no longer than 20 years. No "eligible rescue squad member" shall receive a pension prior to July 1, 1983. No member shall be entitled to a pension hereunder until the member's official duties as a fireman or rescue squad worker for which the member is paid compensation shall have been terminated and the member shall have retired as such according to standards or rules fixed by the board of trustees.

A member who is totally and permanently disabled while in the discharge of the member's official duties as a result of bodily injuries sustained or as a result of extreme exercise or extreme activity experienced in the course and scope of those official duties and who leaves the fire or rescue squad service because of this disability shall be entitled to be paid from the fund a monthly benefit in an amount of ~~one hundred seventy dollars (\$170.00)~~ one hundred seventy-three dollars (\$173.00) per month beginning the first month after the member's fifty-fifth birthday. All applications for disability are subject to the approval of the board who may appoint physicians to examine and evaluate the disabled member prior to approval of the application, and annually thereafter. Any disabled member shall not be required to make the monthly payment of ten dollars (\$10.00) as required by G.S. 58-86-35 and G.S. 58-86-40.

A member who is totally and permanently disabled for any cause, other than line of duty, who leaves the fire or rescue squad service because of this disability and who has at least 10 years of service with the pension fund, may be permitted to continue making a monthly contribution of ten dollars (\$10.00) to the fund until the member has made contributions for a



1 total of 240 months. The member shall upon attaining the age of 55 years be entitled to receive
2 a pension as provided by this section. All applications for disability are subject to the approval
3 of the board who may appoint physicians to examine and evaluate the disabled member prior to
4 approval of the application and annually thereafter.

5 A member who, because his residence is annexed by a city under Part 2 or Part 3 of Article
6 4A of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes, or whose department is closed because of an
7 annexation by a city under Part 2 or Part 3 of Article 4A of Chapter 160A of the General
8 Statutes, or whose volunteer department is taken over by a city or county, and because of such
9 annexation or takeover is unable to perform as a fireman or rescue squad worker of any status,
10 and if the member has at least 10 years of service with the pension fund, may be permitted to
11 continue making a monthly contribution of ten dollars (\$10.00) to the fund until the member
12 has made contributions for a total of 240 months. The member upon attaining the age of 55
13 years and completion of such contributions shall be entitled to receive a pension as provided by
14 this section. Any application to make monthly contributions under this section shall be subject
15 to a finding of eligibility by the Board of Trustees upon application of the member.

16 The pensions provided shall be in addition to all other pensions or benefits under any other
17 statutes of the State of North Carolina or the United States, notwithstanding any exclusionary
18 provisions of other pensions or retirement systems provided by law."

19 **SECTION 2.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of
20 State Treasurer the sum of five hundred twenty-two thousand one hundred ninety-one dollars
21 (\$522,191) for the 2009-2010 fiscal year to repay the Firemen's and Rescue Squad Workers'
22 Pension Fund in full for funds not transferred to the Fund in 2001 with interest since 2001 at
23 the valuation rate.

24 **SECTION 3.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of
25 State Treasurer the sum of three hundred seventeen thousand dollars (\$317,000) for the
26 2009-2010 fiscal year to provide the additional amount needed for the annual required
27 contribution.

28 **SECTION 4.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2009.