



# SUTTER COUNTY

## DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Building Inspection  
Code Enforcement

Planning  
Environmental Health

Fire Services  
Engineering

Road Maintenance  
Water Resources

**BOARD MEETING: MAY 22, 2018**

**PWSS REVIEW: MAY 10, 2018**

**TO: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**FROM: JOHN SHALOWITZ, FIRE SERVICES MANAGER**

**SUBJECT: ADOPT A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN ESTABLISHED METHOD OF REIMBURSEMENT OF SUTTER COUNTY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS FOR EXPENSES INCURRED FOR SERVICES RENDERED**

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**Recommended Action:** That the Board of Supervisors adopts a resolution and pay methodology for reimbursing volunteer firefighters within Sutter County for expenses incurred while rendering service.

**Background:** Historically, Sutter County Volunteer Firefighters were compensated for their responses to emergency incidents and department scheduled trainings through a point system that was handled by each of the volunteer firefighter associations. Sutter County budgeted a total of thirty thousand (\$30,000) dollars for this program; ten thousand (\$10,000) dollars to each of the three volunteer associations, and the associations were responsible for compensating the volunteers for their service. With this structure, volunteers were being compensated at different rates at different stations. In 2017, the Fire Services Manager was contacted by one of the association treasurers requesting that the association no longer be responsible for the reimbursements.

The Sutter County Fire Services Manager investigated all the reimbursements that were taking place within the Sutter County Fire Department, East Nicolaus Fire Department, and Pleasant Grove Fire Department, and found that all agencies were compensating differently. After further investigation by the Fire Services Manager, a previous agreement between the County and the associations could not be located. The Fire Services Manager contacted neighboring agencies to see how the volunteer firefighters were being reimbursed for services and found that a set stipend per call for service and trainings was the easiest and most seamless way to reimburse the volunteers for expenses incurred.

**Discussion:** The proposed reimbursement that the Sutter County Volunteer Firefighters would receive help the volunteer firefighter recoup the costs for transportation, clothing, meals, bedding, and home utility costs that are incurred. The reimbursement rate would be \$9.00 for every call for service that they respond to and \$11.00 for every department-scheduled training that they attend. These rates reflect what other surrounding fire jurisdictions are reimbursing their volunteer firefighters for expenses.

**Countywide Goals & Top Priorities Compliance:** The reimbursement for the volunteer firefighters meets Countywide Goal C by maintaining a strong commitment to public safety by compensating the volunteer staff for their commitment to the Sutter County Fire Departments.

**Prior Board Action:** No known prior Board actions exist on volunteer reimbursement for expenses.

**Board Alternatives:** No viable alternative recommendation exists. The Board may choose to not approve the proposed reimbursements resulting in the Sutter County volunteer firefighters not being reimbursed for the expenses, unlike any of the surrounding fire agencies and may jeopardize the number of volunteers available for response within the County, which would directly impact response times and level of care provided to the citizens of Sutter County.

**Other Department and/or Agency Involvement:** Sutter County Fire Administration will work closely with the Auditor-Controller's office to ensure the best practice for the quarterly reimbursements.

**Fiscal Impact:** The Funds for the proposed reimbursements are currently budgeted in the Adopted FY 2017-18 Budgets for Sutter County Fire (CSA-F), East Nicolaus Volunteer Fire department (CSA-C), and Pleasant Grove Volunteer Fire Department (CSA-D) and have been included in the recommended budgets for 2018-19 Fiscal Year. These reimbursements do not have any financial impact to the general fund.

**Standing Committee Review:** The Public Works/Support Services Committee reviewed this action at the May 10, 2018 meeting and recommended placement on the consent calendar for the Board of Supervisors.

**Attachment:** Resolution

Respectfully submitted,

  
Neal Hay, P.E.  
Director

BEFORE THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
COUNTY OF SUTTER, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUTTER )  
COUNTY SUPERVISORS AUTHORIZING )  
AN ESTABLISHED METHOD OF ) RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_  
REIMBURSEMENT OF VOLUNTEER )  
FIREFIGHTER EXPENSES FOR THE )  
SUTTER COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT )

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors recognizes that the proper operation of Sutter County Fire Department is dependent upon services received from its volunteer firefighters.

WHEREAS, the Board further recognizes that in rendering such service, the volunteer firefighter will incur expenses in the following areas:

1. **Transportation.** Automobile expenses incurred when traveling to and from emergency responses, drills, educational meetings, seminars, sleeper duty, stand-by duty, and station visits for familiarization with the equipment and facilities. The actual expenses incurred will include vehicle depreciation, gas, oil, lubrication, licensing, insurance, maintenance, tires, batteries, and traction devices.

2. **Clothing Expenses.** While the district does provide protective outer clothing, helmets, and boots for emergency situations, it does not provide underclothing, socks, shoes, street clothes, coats, and hats that are used by the volunteer when attending classes, traveling to and from emergencies, drills, sleeper duty, and stand-by duty. This clothing, supplied by the volunteer, is subject to additional wear and tear, damage, fire, staining, and soiling when used by the volunteer during emergency and non-emergency service to the district and the community. The volunteer must pay for the cleaning, laundering, repair, and replacement of such clothing.

3. **Food and Meals.** Volunteers, out of necessity, must buy meals and food to bring to the station while on stand-by or sleeper duty or to consume while enroute home from an emergency. This is food that would not normally be purchased if it were not for the service to the district and is in addition to the food regularly purchased by the volunteer and his/her family.

4. **Bedding.** The district requires that the volunteer, when on stand-by duty, furnish his/her own bedding. This requires additional expense to the volunteer for the cost of sheets, pillowcases, pillows, and blankets, and also for laundering and cleaning such items.

5. **Haircuts.** The fire district has a hair maintenance code for the safety of the volunteer. This code requires that the volunteer keep his/her hair to a relatively short length, thereby forcing the volunteer to obtain haircuts more frequently than might normally be the case.

6. **Home Utility Expense.** When a volunteer firefighter returns to his/her home after a drill or particularly after a response to a fire, the volunteer incurs additional home and utility expense for showers, heat, lights, and water. The volunteer firefighter also incurs additional home utility costs when studying, learning and reviewing fire district operating procedures and rules and regulations.

WHEREAS, the Board recognizes that the logistics of documenting these many out-of-pocket expenses is difficult. To require each firefighter to record these expenses and to require the district to consolidate and compile the records would be impractical and unreasonable if not impossible. The intent and purpose of the reimbursement method adopted by this resolution is to create a practical method of reimbursing expenses without creating an impractical records system.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT IS RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of Sutter County in order to avoid the cumbersome record-keeping requirements needed to reimburse volunteer firefighters for actual expenses incurred in the performance of duty to the department, hereby adopts the system for making payments to volunteer firefighters.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Sutter County will reimburse Volunteer Firefighters within Sutter County fire agencies on a quarterly basis at a rate of \$9.00 per call for service and \$11.00 per scheduled training that is attended.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sutter, State of California, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2018, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

\_\_\_\_\_  
DAN FLORES, CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

DONNA M. JOHNSTON, COUNTY CLERK

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
DEPUTY