

2020 Honorarium Review Sub-Committee

Town of Easton CT

225 Center Road ▪ Easton, Connecticut 06612 ▪ Tel. (203)268-2833

The Honorarium Review Sub-Committee (the Committee) met on January 21, 2020 to review the Honorarium for Volunteer Firefighters and Emergency Service Personnel (the Honorarium) as per section 86-7 of the ordinance and based on direction from the Easton Board of Selectmen. The purpose of the review is to determine the effectiveness of the Honorarium and whether or not to adopt changes to the town ordinance based on State of CT Substitute House Bill No. 5125, Public Act No. 19-36, An act increasing the property tax abatement for certain first responders.

The Committee findings are as follows:

Effectiveness: Both departments indicated that the program does help to increase the participation by its active members. During the course of the year members are notified of both their training and call/shift participation levels. Members often will then increase their participation levels to ensure that they reach certain threshold levels of their abatement or the full amount. The town also benefits from this increased participation through increased billing by EMS as they bill for their services. Members participating in required training benefit the town as well as both organizations as these members tend to be more efficient and effective on scene.

Recommendations: The state of CT has enacted a bill to increase the amount of abatements for first responders. This is State of CT Substitute House Bill No 5125, Public Act No 19-36. Easton adopted the Honorarium ordinance on 4/28/03. At that point the maximum amount to be earned for a member of either EVFC or Easton EMS was \$1000. If you were a member of both you could earn \$2,000. The \$1,000 amount had not been increased or indexed for inflation until 19-36 was enacted. The increase would raise the amount to \$1,500 for the period 07/01/19 through 06/30/21 and then increase it to \$2,000 going forward effective 07/01/21. The committee estimates that the increase to the budget for the time period that the increase to \$2,000 is reached would be

approximately \$24,000 in total for both organizations. This is based on the Honorarium average over the period of 2016 through and including 2019. A spreadsheet is attached to support this calculation. It is the Committee's recommendation that the Town of Easton modify the existing Honorarium ordinance to reflect the increase in the Honorarium as reflected in Public Act No 19-36.

The Committee also contacted Easton Selectman Robert Lessler and asked for his assistance in reviewing the existing language of the ordinance for clarity and for a recommendation on language that would help to incorporate changes to the Honorarium reflecting the increased amount of the Honorarium per Public Act No 19-36. Mr. Lessler provided recommendations which were discussed and accepted by the Committee. Those changes have been incorporated in the revised draft version of the ordinance that is attached.