



**TOWN OF WESTFORD  
FINANCE DEPARTMENT**

TOWN HALL  
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**MEMORANDUM**

To: Board of Selectmen  
Jodi Ross, Town Manager

From: Dan O'Donnell, Finance Director

Subject: Article 9, MGL C 33, s. 59 Effect of Military Service on Salary, Seniority, and  
Leave Allowances of Public Employees  
October 16, 2017 Special Town Meeting

Date: September 21, 2017

Article 9 is requesting that the town adopt MGL Chapter 33, Section 59, effect of military service on salary, seniority and leave allowance for public employees. This is a brief overview of the financial impact to the town if this article is passed.

**Fire Department**

The Fire Department current has a firefighter (FF) called to active duty for a six-month period. The base pay for the ff currently deployed is \$77,724.45 per year, or \$6,143.70 per month. We are estimating the pay grade for the FF in the military to be an E3 which earns \$1,885.80 per month in base military pay. Over a six-month period, we are estimating that the town will expend an additional \$25,547.40  $((\$6,143.70 - \$1,885.80) \times 6 \text{ mos.})$  from the fire department budget to pay the difference in base wages between the military and town.

In addition, the town must also backfill the shifts. The fire department has a minimum staffing of 8 FF's to keep all three stations open, and there are 9 FF's assigned to each shift. The shift with the FF on active duty has only 8 FF's assigned to it. Therefore anytime another FF on that shift takes a vacation, sick, or personal day, another FF must be called in to fill that shift at an overtime rate. A top step FF makes \$29.66 per hour in FY18. If the town backfills 75% of the shifts using overtime, then the total cost to the town will be  $\$29.66 \times 1.5 \text{ (ot factor)} \times 24 \text{ hours} \times 91 \text{ shifts} \times .5 \text{ years}$ , or \$48,583.08.

## Fire Department Budget Impact:

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### FY18 Budget

Current budget for the deployed FF for 6 months: \$36,862.20

### Town's Current Military Leave Policy

2 weeks of paid leave for military \$2,491.44

Estimated overtime to backfill shift \$48,583.08

**Current Military Leave Policy Costs \$51,074.52**

**Supplement Needed – Current Military Leave Policy \$14,212.32**

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### Additional Estimated Cost of Adopting Article 9

FY18 expense of MGL C 33, s. 59 \$25,547.40

**Total Cost of Military Leave \$76,621.92**

**Supplement Needed – Proposed Military Leave Policy \$39,759.72**

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Our calculations show that the current military leave policy would have resulted in the Fire Department seeking a supplemental budget appropriation of \$14,212.32. By adopting MGL C 33, s. 59, the Fire Department will have to seek a supplemental budget appropriation of \$39,759.72 at the March 2018 Annual Town Meeting.

## Health Insurance Budget Impact

When the FF joined the military, he qualified to join the TRICARE health insurance. This is saving the town approximately \$8,450.22 for the 6-month period that he is called to active duty. Reservists are allowed to remain on the TRICARE health insurance when not active, and if he chooses to do so, the estimated savings for the fiscal year would be \$16,900.44. The FF deployed would have selected this health plan regardless of whether Article 9 is approved at Town Meeting. Also, this savings is not reflected in the Fire Department budget, and therefore will not impact the supplemental appropriation they would be seeking.

## Summary

The net cost of adopting the legislation for FY18 is estimated to be \$25,547.40. This is only accounting for the one known military leave that the town is aware about in FY18. There are two other active reservists employed with the town, and if they are called to active duty, then the estimates provided in this analysis would change accordingly.