

CITY OF COOS BAY CITY COUNCIL

Agenda Staff Report

MEETING DATE	AGENDA ITEM NUMBER
June 27, 2026	4.b

TO: Mayor Benetti, Council President DiNovo, and City Councilors

FROM: Jeff Adkins, Fire Chief

THROUGH: Nichole Rutherford, City Manager

ISSUE: Consideration to Adopt Resolution 26-14 Authorizing Participation in the Medical Expense Reimbursement Plan for Certain Non-Represented Fire Employees

SUMMARY:

Approval of the resolution authorizes participation in the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) Medical Expense Reimbursement Plan (MERP) for certain non-represented Fire Department employees who were previously members of IAFF Local 2935.

The MERP program was negotiated as part of the recently completed successor bargaining agreement with IAFF Local 2935 and is intended to assist retired firefighters with post-retirement healthcare expenses prior to Medicare eligibility. The proposed resolution allows firefighters who later promote into management positions, such as Battalion Chiefs, to continue participation in the program under terms consistent with the IAFF collective bargaining agreement.

ACTION REQUESTED:

If it pleases Council, approve the resolution authorizing employee and City contributions to the IAFF Medical Expense Reimbursement Plan for eligible Fire Department employees.

BACKGROUND:

As part of the recently completed successor collective bargaining agreement between the City of Coos Bay and IAFF Local 2935, the parties agreed to implement a MERP for represented Fire Department employees.

A MERP is a post-employment medical benefit program intended to assist retired firefighters with healthcare-related expenses after retirement. Eligible expenses may include health insurance premiums, Medicare supplemental insurance, prescription costs, and other qualified medical expenses.

Firefighters often retire earlier than many other professions due to the physical demands of the job, commonly around age 55. However, Medicare eligibility does not begin until age 65. The cost of healthcare coverage during this gap period can create a significant financial burden for retired firefighters and their families. In many cases, retired firefighters seek additional employment solely to obtain medical insurance coverage until Medicare eligibility begins. The MERP program is intended to help bridge that gap by allowing contributions during employment that can later be used to reimburse eligible medical expenses during retirement.

Because the MERP was negotiated specifically for IAFF represented employees, firefighters who later promote out of the bargaining unit into management positions would otherwise lose the ability to continue participation in the program. The proposed resolution addresses that issue by authorizing continued

participation for eligible promoted fire employees, including Battalion Chiefs, under terms substantially consistent with the IAFF collective bargaining agreement.

The attached resolution outlines the contribution structure, payroll deductions, and sick leave payout provisions applicable to promoted employees participating in the MERP program.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:

No current impact. Future impact is anticipated to be minimal and will be incorporated into existing personnel benefit budgeting within the Fire Department.

ATTACHMENT(S):

- Resolution 26-14 Approving Employee Contributions and City Contributions IAFF Medical Expense Remimbursement Plan.pdf