

§ 58-86-55. Monthly pensions upon attaining the age of 55 years.

(a) Any member who has served 20 years as an "eligible firefighter" 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-five dollars (\$175.00) per month. Any retired firefighter receiving a pension shall, effective January 1, 2025, receive a pension of one hundred seventy-five dollars (\$175.00) per month.

(b) Members shall pay fifteen dollars (\$15.00) 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.

(c) 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-five dollars (\$175.00) 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 fifteen dollars (\$15.00) as required by G.S. 58-86-35 and G.S. 58-86-40.

(d) 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 fifteen dollars (\$15.00) to the fund until the member has made contributions for a total of 240 months. The member shall upon attaining the age of 55 years be entitled to receive a pension as provided by this section. 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.

(d1) Benefits shall be paid in the following manner when a member is killed in the line of duty and the requirements of Article 12A of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes are met:

- (1) If the member had been receiving a monthly pension fund benefit prior to being killed in the line of duty, there shall be paid to the member's principal beneficiary, if only one principal beneficiary is eligible and has not accepted a return of contributions, an amount of one hundred seventy-five dollars (\$175.00) per month beginning the month following the member's month of death, payable until the beneficiary's death. If the member became a member prior to July 1, 2018, and had not designated a principal beneficiary prior to being killed in the line of duty, there shall be paid to the member's living spouse upon the spouse's application to the Board, an amount of one hundred seventy-five dollars (\$175.00) per month beginning the month following the member's month of death, payable until the spouse's death.
- (2) If the member had been receiving a monthly pension fund benefit prior to being killed in the line of duty and the beneficiary is not payable as described in subdivision (1) of this subsection, a lump sum payment equal to the difference between the amount paid into the member's separate account by or on behalf of the member and the amount received by the member as a pensioner will be paid to the eligible beneficiaries, or if there are no eligible beneficiaries, shall be paid to the member's estate.
- (3) If the member had not yet begun receiving a monthly benefit prior to being killed in the line of duty, there shall be paid to the member's principal

beneficiary, if only one principal beneficiary is eligible and has not accepted a return of contributions, an amount of one hundred seventy-five dollars (\$175.00) per month beginning the month following the month the member would have attained age 55, or if the member had already attained age 55, beginning the month following the member's month of death, payable until the beneficiary's death. If the member became a member prior to July 1, 2018, and had not designated a principal beneficiary prior to being killed in the line of duty, there shall be paid to the member's living spouse upon the spouse's application to the Board, an amount of one hundred seventy-five dollars (\$175.00) per month beginning the month following the month the member would have attained age 55, or if the member had attained age 55, beginning the month following the member's month of death, payable until the spouse's death.

- (4) If the member had not begun receiving a monthly benefit prior to being killed in the line of duty and the beneficiary is not payable as described in subdivision (3) of this subsection, a lump sum payment equal to the member's contributions will be paid to the eligible beneficiaries, or if there are no eligible beneficiaries, a return of the contributions shall be paid to the member's estate.

A beneficiary under this subsection shall not be required to make the monthly payment of fifteen dollars (\$15.00) as required by G.S. 58-86-35 and G.S. 58-86-40 after the member has been killed in the line of duty.

(d2) Repealed by Session Laws 2016-108, s. 1(f), effective July 1, 2018.

(e) A member who, because the member's residence is annexed by a city under Part 2 or Part 3 of Article 4A of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes, or whose department is closed because of an annexation by a city under Part 2 or Part 3 of Article 4A of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes, or whose volunteer department is taken over by a city or county, and because of such annexation or takeover is unable to perform as a firefighter or rescue squad worker of any status, and if the member has at least 10 years of service with the pension fund, may be permitted to continue making a monthly contribution of fifteen dollars (\$15.00) to the fund until the member has made contributions for a total of 240 months. The member upon attaining the age of 55 years and completion of such contributions shall be entitled to receive a pension as provided by this section. Any application to make monthly contributions under this section shall be subject to a finding of eligibility by the Board of Trustees upon application of the member.

(f) The pensions provided shall be in addition to all other pensions or benefits under any other statutes of the State of North Carolina or the United States, notwithstanding any exclusionary provisions of other pensions or retirement systems provided by law. (1957, c. 1420, s. 1; 1959, c. 1212, s. 1; 1961, c. 980; 1971, c. 336; 1977, c. 926, s. 1; 1981, c. 1029, s. 1; 1983, c. 500, s. 2; c. 636, s. 24; 1985 (Reg. Sess., 1986), c. 1014, s. 49.1(b); 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1099, s. 1; 1991, c. 720, s. 48; 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 653, s. 1; 1995, c. 507, s. 7.21A(g); 1997-443, s. 33.25(a); 1998-212, s. 28.21(a); 2000-67, s. 26.18; 2002-113, s. 1; 2002-126, s. 28.7; 2003-284, s. 30.19; 2004-124, s. 31.18; 2005-276, s. 29.26; 2006-66, s. 22.19; 2007-323, s. 28.21; 2008-107, s. 26.25; 2013-284, s. 1(a); 2014-64, s. 3(a); 2016-108, s. 1(b), (d), (f); 2018-85, s. 9(a); 2022-6, s. 17.3; 2022-16, s. 6.1; 2024-29, s. 11.3; 2024-42, s. 3(b), (d).)