VALLEY REGIONAL FIRE AUTHORITY
POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

SUBJECT: **HUMAN RESOURCES**	TITLE: **RETIREMENT MEDICAL BENEFIT**		
APPROVED BY:	CFAI REF	POLICY NUMBER:	**2183**
	[CFAI]	SUPERCEDES DATE:	**10/1/2018**
BRENT D. SWEARINGEN FIRE CHIEF		EFFECTIVE DATE:	**3/1/2021**
REVIEWED BY: MARK HORASKI		LAST REVIEWED:	**2/10/2021**

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1. To provide qualified employees who retire from VRFA service a defined contribution to apply toward the retired employee's medical insurance premium.

2.0 PERSONNEL AFFECTED

2.1. All VRFA personnel

3.0 REFERENCES

3.1. Board of Governance Resolution No. 170

4.0 POLICY

4.1. It is the policy of the VRFA to provide a defined contribution to qualified, retired employees, except LEOFF 1 employees, to apply toward all or part of the retired employee's medical insurance premium.

4.2. Employees must be at least fifty-three (53) years old on date of retirement, and they must have at least twenty-five (25) years of service within a State of Washington Department of Retirement Systems plan, OR a combination of age and years of service which equals seventy-eight (78) or greater. The final 5 years (60 service months) of service in the retirement plan must have been with the VRFA.

4.3. The benefit rate will be $550 per month and will continue for 12 years, or until the retiree becomes eligible for Medicare, or upon the employee's death – whichever occurs first.

4.4. The VRFA will make the payments by direct deposit into the retired employee's VEBA account.

4.5. The retirement date must be in either the current or the following year.

4.6. The retirement medical benefit is limited to five (5) employees annually. An additional three (3) employees will be allowed to participate if the notice of intent to retire in the following year is made during the first non-holiday business week after July 4th.

4.7. The application period will begin on the first Monday after July 4th and end on Friday of the same week for employees to submit their notice of intent to retire for the following year. If more than eight (8) requests are submitted during the application period, seniority by date of hire with the VRFA, including credit for previous employment with the Auburn Fire Department, Pacific Fire Department, or King County Fire Protection District #44 prior to the formation of the VRFA or due to the transfer of employment as part of the Lea Hill annexation, will be used to select which employees will be approved for the benefit. Employees not approved for the benefit during this five (5) day application period will be allowed to withdraw their notice without penalty. If less than eight (8) requests are received during the application period, the maximum number of participants for the retirement year will be limited to the number of requests received during the application period or five (5), whichever is greater, and will be approved on a "first requested, first approved" basis.

4.8. If during the year the participant limits in 4.6 or 4.7 have been reached, one (1) additional participant slot will be made available for use by a non-civil service employee.

4.9. Employees must provide at least ninety (90) calendar days' notice of retirement prior to the retirement date in order to be eligible to participate.

4.10. If an employee gives notice of retirement to the Fire Chief, is approved for the benefit, and subsequently does not retire on the date specified in the notice, the employee will permanently forfeit their eligibility for this benefit unless the employee's position has not been backfilled by the stated retirement date in which case the employee will be allowed to participate in the plan beginning two years after the stated retirement date.

4.11. Notwithstanding 4.10, upon mutual agreement between the Fire Chief or designee and the employee, a retirement date may be moved forward or backward by up to 90 days as long as the retirement will occurs in the same year as the original stated retirement date.

4.12. Twenty-four (24) hour shift personnel may only take nine (9) shifts of leave (including vacation and holiday leave) during the final quarter of service prior to retirement. Requested exceptions to this provision may be approved by the Fire Chief, on an individual basis, and as such, shall not become precedent setting.

4.13. The provisions in 4.12 became effective March 1, 2017.

5.0 DEFINITIONS

5.1. VEBA: Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association

5.2. Retirement Date: The employee's final day of employment with VRFA. For twenty-four (24) hour shift personnel, this will be the date that the employee's final shift begins.

6.0 PROCEDURE

6.1. Eligible employees who intend to retire and desire to participate in the Retirement Medical Benefit Program, will notify the Fire Chief, via electronic mail, and copy the Human Resource Manager, of their intent to retire. The notification of intent to retire will contain the retirement date and request to participate in the Retirement Medical Benefit Program.

6.2. At the conclusion of the July notification period, those employees approved for the Retirement Medical Benefit Program will be notified in writing.

6.3. Those employees not approved will be notified in writing of the reason(s) for the disapproval of participation in the Retirement Medical Benefit Program. The employee may then either withdraw their notification of intent to retire, without penalty, as described in this policy, OR notify the Fire Chief of his/her intent to retire without participation in the Retirement Medical Benefit Program.

7.0 ATTACHMENTS

7.1. None