WRC
An Coimisiún um Chaidreamh san Áit Oibre
Workplace Relations Commission

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Ref No: CAM-100951-23

Local Authorities/SIPTU (Retained Firefighters)

Following a prolonged period of industrial action, the Workplace Relations Commission was requested to assist the parties to explore a resolution of the above dispute. In that context the Commission explored all issues with the parties in a concerted effort to assist them to find agreement.

The Commission confirms that the parties have verified that they believe the proposed terms below represent the best outcome that can be achieved in the circumstance. In that regard the Commission notes that the Union has agreed to ballot all staff on the settlement terms contained within this proposal and the Commission acknowledges the Union's agreement to its request to suspend industrial action pending the outcome of the ballot.

In all the circumstances the Commission, in the strongest terms, urges all involved in this dispute to give the utmost constructive consideration to this proposal.

Proposal

Pay Scale

There will be new pay scales for retained firefighters with four points on the scale (Appendix 1) reflecting the following;

Point 1. Entry point
Point 2 Year 2-4
Point 3 Year 5-7
Point 4 Year 8+

Available time

Based on an annual 52 weeks excluding 4 weeks annual leave, Retained Firefighters will now be required to be available and attend alerts 24 weeks in the year on a week on/week off basis. Within this provision Retained Firefighters will have the flexibility to swap days with colleagues with the approval of the station officer and subsequently make up the 24 weeks at a later date. Across the 24

weeks where the Retained Firefighter is rostered-off they can, if they so wish, attend incidents. The week on/off roster will commence as soon as the crewing levels are sufficient to allow for it and recruitment will be a priority in this regard.

Guaranteed pay

The guaranteed pay is made up of the following and will be broken down to be paid as regular income in the weekly/fortnightly pay cycle as appropriate.

Drill Hours

The maximum number of drill hours on an annual basis will be 96 i.e. 48 weeks by 2 hours per week. Each drill hour will be paid at €46.80 per hour. Therefore 85% of the 96 drill hours equal to €3819.00 will be paid for attendance at drill nights as regular income in the weekly/fortnightly pay cycle as appropriate. Any attendance above the 85% will be paid at the same rate subject to a maximum total of 96 hours in an annual period.

Promoting Community Fire Safety

Reflecting the active role undertaken by firefighters when they attend incidents, in educating community members on the importance of fire safety and identifying the fire risks and the proper precautions that should be taken to protect their homes and their families, an annual payment of €936.00 be paid as regular income in the weekly/fortnightly pay cycle as appropriate.

In addition, each fire station will be allocated a total bank of hours equal to 40 hours per firefighter. These hours to be allocated by the station officer to structured community fire safety projects to be undertaken by individual fire fighters.

Attendance at incidents

Each Retained Firefighter will receive an annual incident attendance payment equal to €1,755 which equates to 75 hours at current basic rate to be paid as regular income in the weekly/fortnightly pay cycle as appropriate. There will be a requirement on the Retained Firefighter to attend for the required number of hours. Payments for attendance at incidents in excess of 75 hours will be made in accordance with existing arrangements.

Retainer

The retainer will be adjusted as set out by the Labour Court. The parties will engage on the issue of a further adjustment to the retainer in advance of the forthcoming Public Sector Pay talks and this engagement will inform the discussions at those pay talks. The Commission notes Minister O'Brien's stated commitment to advocate for the Retained Firefighters during the upcoming pay talks.

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Annual leave

In addition to the annual payment of the retainer, annual leave is confirmed as being 8% of earnings.

Public holidays

Public Holidays will be paid as provided for in the relevant legislation.

Payment for Premium hours

Premium hours for call outs to start at 8.00 pm and finish at 8 am Monday to Saturday. This change will bring a benefit in premium payments to all Retained Firefighters.

Staffing

The Management side commit to the recruitment of 400 new Retained Firefighters which will provide for approximately 50 additional promotional posts.

There will be minimum crew of 12 in every fire station and crewing above this will be determined on the basis of a risk assessment and appropriate business case.

Driver Mechanic

The Management side commit to the retention of the Driver mechanic role within the structure of the retained fire service and it is accepted that the driver mechanic will undertake the incident command roles at incidents on completion of the compulsory relevant training.

Retirement age

The Commission notes the intention of the union side to pursue a voluntary increase in the current retirement age. The Commission further notes that Management will not object to the pursuit of same within the confines of current public sector policy on retirement in emergency services. Management will, where appropriate, advocate in support of this.

DSP payments

The Commission notes the intention of the union side to pursue recognition by the Department of Social Protection of the unique position of retained firefighters with regards to payments made by DSP to Retained Firefighters. The Commission further notes that Management will, where appropriate, advocate in support of this.

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Driving Licence

Where Retained Firefighters are required to obtain a C Class licence as part of their role in the retained fire service, the cost of same will be initially borne by management. However, should a Firefighter leave the service within one year of obtaining the licence the cost of this training will be recouped.

Implementation

There will be a review every six months on recruitment and implementation of the agreement including new policies.

Pay Slips

Management will provide detail on all payments within payslips.

Dress Uniform

Each Retained Firefighter will be issued with a Number 1 Dress Uniform

HR related matters

The Commission notes that it is agreed that policies will be developed and standardised in relation to all relevant HR matters to include sick leave and all forms of statutory leave including maternity and parental leave for example.

Implementation of Agreement

Subject to acceptance of this proposal the payment elements will fall to be implemented with effect from the weekly/fortnightly pay cycle closest to 1 July 2023.

Aoibheann Ní Shúilleabháin
Deputy Director of Conciliation, Advisory & Mediation

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Appendix 1

Based on the above proposal the following payment schedule will apply based on current pay agreements*

	Years	Retainer	Drill hours	Fire safety	Incidents	Additional Holiday	Total Fixed
Firefighter	0 to 1	€ 11,019	€ 3,819	€ 936	€ 1,755	€ 521	€ 18,050
	2 to 4	€ 12,001	€ 3,819	€ 936	€ 1,755	€ 521	€ 19,032
	5 to 7	€ 13,213	€ 3,819	€ 936	€ 1,755	€ 521	€ 20,244
	8+	€ 14,317	€ 3,819	€ 936	€ 1,755	€ 521	€ 21,348
Sub Officer Driver/Mechanic	0 to 3	€ 15,841	€ 3,819	€ 936	€ 1,755	€ 521	€ 22,872
	4 to 7	€ 17,527	€ 3,819	€ 936	€ 1,755	€ 521	€ 24,558
	8+	€ 19,061	€ 3,819	€ 936	€ 1,755	€ 521	€ 26,092
Station Officer	0 to 3	€ 20,225	€ 3,819	€ 936	€ 1,755	€ 521	€ 27,256
	4 to 7	€ 22,454	€ 3,819	€ 936	€ 1,755	€ 521	€ 29,485
	8+	€ 24,480	€ 3,819	€ 936	€ 1,755	€ 521	€ 31,511

*The above table reflects only payments provided for in this proposal. RFF will continue to accrue earnings in accordance with existing arrangements for attendance at incidents above 75 hours, clothing allowance, etc. Holiday pay will also apply in respect of these earnings.