



City of Charleston

Joseph P. Riley, Jr.
Mayor

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Councilmembers
FROM: Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr.
DATE: June 27, 2007
RE: Our Fallen Firefighters

I appreciate all your help and support during this most difficult time. I know that your attendance at the memorial service last Friday was a source of comfort to the families of our nine brave and fallen firefighters and to our entire fire department.

I would like to update you on the different activities that are happening:

- Benefits: Our Human Resources staff has already met with 8 of the 9 families to explain their benefits which will include life insurance policies from the city and the state, workmen's compensation, and retirement benefits. We have also obtained the services of a list of attorneys who have volunteered to help the families through the probate process, as well as financial advisers who have volunteered to help at no charge the beneficiaries plan for the future. I have attached a summary of all the benefits available to the families of the fallen heroes.
- Grief Counseling: We will provide a wide range of grief counseling services to the families and to the firefighters who have lost their comrades. We are working with state and national groups to marshal all the resources needed to plan and execute a comprehensive program.
- Donations: We have received more than \$600,000 to date and the number is increasing daily. All funds received will go to the families of the firefighters. The generosity of our citizens is remarkable.
- Investigation: The joint investigation of the fire continues and includes federal, state, and county agencies, as well as the City Police Department. I believe that it will be some time before they reach final conclusions and that most aspects of the investigation will not be made public until then.



P.O. Box 652, Charleston, South Carolina 29402

843-577-6970 Fax 843-720-3827

5. Site of the Fire: I believe that the City should purchase the property that was the site of the fire. That property is now sacred ground and should not be commercially redeveloped. I will have a proposal for you at the July meeting to acquire the property and develop plans for a permanent memorial to our brave firefighters. We are receiving many suggestions from our citizens and others and I will be talking with you more about them.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please call me. I know you share my pride in our fire chief and his firefighters and the sympathy we feel for all of the family members and friends of our nine fallen heroes.

Benefit and Insurance information for dependents of the City of Charleston firefighters:

S. C. State Retirement System

- Life Insurance
 - Money equivalent to one-year's salary
- Under age 55 with 1-14 years of service credit -Refund of contributions to the S.C. State Retirement System
- Under 55 with 15 or more years of service credit or 55 with at least five years of earned service – Beneficiary's choice of Refund of contributions or monthly annuity.
- PORS members - Accidental Death Program – 50% of annual earnable compensation divided by 12 equals the survivor monthly annuity.
 - Employees pay 6.5 percent of their salary into the state's pension program
 - Seven of the nine firefighters were active employees who had not retired through the State's TERI program. Their beneficiaries will receive a refund of the employee's contributions made into the system or monthly annuity.
 - Two of the firefighters had retired through the TERI program. Depending on what they chose as a benefit, their beneficiaries will either receive (a) a refund of the employee's contributions or (b) the continuation of the employee's retirement check.

City of Charleston's ING Reliastar Insurance

- Basic Life Insurance Benefit
 - Money equivalent to two-year's salary because of accidental death. Normally, this would be one-year's salary in cases of natural death.
- Optional Life Insurance Benefit
 - Completely optional by employee, depending on whether the elected to receive the coverage and pay the related premium.
 - Money equivalent to two, four or six year's salary, depending on insurance level chosen. Again, this amount would normally be one, two or three year's salary.

City of Charleston Dependent Health Insurance Coverage

- Health insurance normally ends for dependents of employees unless they elect to continue coverage through COBRA and pay the full premium.
- City of Charleston has agreed to offer dependents the option of health insurance coverage through September, completely paid by the City.

S.C. Workers' Compensation Death Benefit

- Money based on a formula tied to the employee's salary.
- \$2,500 funeral expenses

S.C. Firefighters' Association

- Line of Duty Death Benefit
 - \$25,000 for the employee's beneficiary
 - \$10,000 for each dependent child, if the employee has dependent children
- Accidental Death Benefit
 - \$3,200 paid within 30 days of death

U.S. Department of Justice Public Safety Officer's Benefit Program

- Eligible to receive one-time payment of \$295,000, but must submit applications.
 - City of Charleston has applications to help dependents submit the required information.