

RESOLUTION NO. 25-01

A RESOLUTION approving a policy regarding recruitment bonuses and incentives for employees of San Juan County Fire Protection District No. 3.

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners for San Juan County Fire Protection District No. 3 (hereinafter referred to as the “Board” and the “District”, respectively) has the authority to set administrative and personnel policies; and

WHEREAS, the Fire Chief is responsible for selecting and hiring personnel to fill vacancies within the District; and

WHEREAS, the District’s location in San Juan County is inherent to logistical challenges including the ability to travel into the District in a timely manner, low housing availability, and one of the highest costs of living in Washington State; and

WHEREAS, attracting qualified personnel for open positions within San Juan County can be challenging and often requires incentives; and

WHEREAS, the Board allows the Fire Chief to offer incentives that are not included in the regular pay and benefits package, provided that costs of such incentives do not exceed the adopted Personnel Expenses budget; and

WHEREAS, the District has a desire to employ qualified and experienced personnel that take permanent residency on San Juan Island, Washington; and


WHEREAS, the Fire Chief has prepared a draft Recruitment Bonus Policy No. 1043 (Attachment “A”) for consideration; and


WHEREAS, unless superseded by a formal employee/employer agreement, implementation and termination of the benefits described in this policy follow the same process for other benefits offered to employees.


NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Board of Fire District 3 Commissioners that Policy No. 1043 regarding Recruitment Bonuses (Attachment A) is hereby adopted.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Fire Chief is authorized to take appropriate actions to carry out the intent of this resolution, including the revision of existing policies and procedures to clarify the specific terms of this resolution.

ADOPTED this 10th day of June, 2025.


Dwight Colley, Chair


Warren Appleton, Vice-Chair


Alexa Rust, Member

ATTESTED BY:

Amy Taylor, Board Secretary

Attachment A

Recruitment Bonus Policy

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to attract and recruit highly competent applicants for open positions within the District. This policy is a tool meant to be used selectively to counter the competitive labor market.

POLICY

The District may use recruitment bonuses, incentives, reimbursements and other benefits (“Bonuses”) to attract highly competent, external candidates for open non-represented positions that need to be filled in a timely manner.

Nothing in this policy changes the “at-will” status of a non-represented position.

All Bonuses are distributed from the adopted Personnel Expenses budget. The value of Bonuses shall be determined by the Fire Chief in collaboration with the Finance Officer. The value of Bonuses shall not exceed the adopted Personnel Expenses budget without prior approval of the Board of District 3 Fire Commissioners. Additionally, the value of Bonuses shall be reviewed annually by the Board of District 3 Fire Commissioners.

Prior to the disbursement of any funds, all bonuses shall be accompanied by an employment acceptance letter outlining the agreed upon terms of employment, including said incentives, and signed by the employee and District.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Eligibility. Bonuses are negotiable, but shall not exceed the value for the following position types:

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| • Full Time Firefighter | Up to \$7,500 |
| • Full Time Clerk/Secretary | Up to \$7,500 |
| • Full Time Lieutenant | Up to \$10,000 |
| • Full Time Administrative or Logistics position | Up to \$10,000 |
| • Full Time Captain | Up to \$15,000 |
| • Full Time Department Head | Up to \$15,000 |
| • Full Time Executive Assistant | Up to \$15,000 |
| • Full Time Battalion Chief | Up to \$20,000 |
| • Other FLSA, Exempt, Appointed by Chief | Up to \$30,000 |
| • Other FLSA, Exempt, Appointed by Commission | Negotiated by Commission |

Recruitment. Bonuses for recruitment may be disbursed under the following limitations:

- 50 percent of the Bonus shall be paid on the regular pay day of the first fully completed pay period; with the remaining 50 percent of the Bonus paid on the first regular pay day after completing one full year of service.
- The employee may forego the 50/50 payment schedule and opt instead to receive full payment plus 10 percent on the first regular pay day after completing one full year of service.
- If the employee leaves for any reason prior to one full year of service, the employee shall not be entitled to any remaining bonus payment, nor will the employee be required to reimburse the District for any portion of the recruitment bonus already received.

Tenure and benefit accrual. For this policy, “tenured status” means the number of service years used to determine benefit accrual for employees.

Additional Bonuses may include adjustments to the “tenured status” for accrual of benefits for new hires. These may include sick leave, vacation leave, and associated allowances. Additional incentives are negotiable, however are generally limited to the following allowances:

- The tenure for new hires may be adjusted upward, but not exceed, the “15 year” accrual status, provided that the negotiated tenure status shall remain unchanged until the employee works the equivalent number of service years provided as the incentive. Once the employee achieves the equivalent number of service years, benefits shall accrue according to the regular schedule for accrual of benefits.
- The balance of sick leave for new hires may be adjusted upward, but not exceed, the equivalent of two years of sick leave.
- The balance of vacation leave for new hires may be adjusted upward, but not exceed, 160 hours.
- If an employee leaves for any reason prior to one year of service, the employee is not entitled to any remaining balance of their paid time off balances as a “cash out” or similar type of termination pay, regardless of whether the employee accrued balance or added as a condition of recruitment process.

Travel Expenses. Other allowances may include travel for the recruitment process. Approval of travel expenses for candidates are discretionary by the Fire Chief:

- Expenses are limited to mileage, food, and lodging required for selected candidates to personally attend the interview process.
- Expenses are limited to no more than three nights of lodging, three days of meals, three hundred miles of travel, and two ferry trips.
- Food and lodging are limited to in-state occurrences and are provided based on the most recent publication of the Washington State Office of Financial Management Per Diem Rate Schedule.
- Expense reimbursement requires the submittal of all receipts of expenses in accordance with the District’s Travel Reimbursement Policy.

Relocation Expenses. Reimbursement of moving and relocation expenses resulting from taking permanent residency on San Juan Island, Washington may be negotiated as a one-time allowance not to exceed actual cost up to \$25,000.

- Permanent residency must occur within one year of hire.
- Proof of permanent residency requires voter registration verification.
- Expenses are limited to contract expenses, mileage, food, lodging, and other incidental expenses related to permanent relocation into the District service area.
- Expense reimbursement requires the submittal of all receipts of expenses in accordance with the District's Reimbursement Policy. The employee shall take all reasonable steps to submit the paperwork required to facilitate a timely processing of the expenses.
- Employees seeking reimbursement shall be eligible upon verification of residency, no sooner than six months of full-time employment and no later than 12 months of employment.