

Gray Firefighter's Union Local 5007
PO Box 1567
Gray, ME 04039

March 16, 2023

Office of the Town Manager
24 Main St.
Gray, ME 04039
Mr. Nate Rudy,

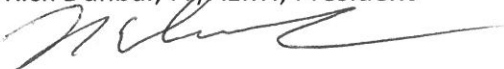
As you are aware, recruitment and retention of qualified personnel is the primary problem facing not only Gray Fire Rescue but public safety departments nationwide. Not since 2020 has GFR been able to fill its roster of available full-time positions, due to a critically small labor pool and steep competition amongst local departments to attract employees. From one town to the next, the job function varies minimally, but basic attractors like wages, overtime, and benefits run the gamut. In recent years, a fruitful relationship between GFR, leadership, yourself, and the town has created a department with excellent culture, emergency apparatus, and forward momentum. Unfortunately, for potential employees to experience what GFR has to offer, it has to be on their radar in the first place. A fire department in Southern Maine that does not offer MainePERS falls to the bottom of a prospective employees' list.

Firefighting and EMS are physically and psychologically demanding careers. The nature of MainePERS retirement plans has always been an incentive to fire/rescue workers in a field that risks more than most. Beyond retirement benefits, MainePERS adds both disability and death benefits currently lacking from the existing 457 plan that are essential in our line of work. Since 2020, GFR has seen nine full-time employees leave the department; of the seven who stayed in fire/EMS, all went to local departments with MainePERS plans.

Today, the seven existing members of Gray Firefighter's Union Local 5007 are pleased to unanimously and wholeheartedly support your proposal to offer a MainePERS 25-year 3C plan to the public safety department. We deeply value our positive relationship with yourself and look forward to providing any further support you need to secure this essential benefit.

Respectfully,

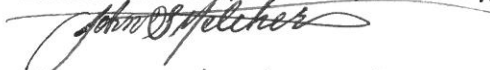
Lt. Rick Dunbar, FF/AEMT, President



Lt. Hannah Bewsey, FF/Paramedic, Vice President



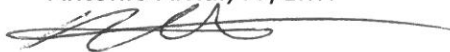
Lt. John Melcher, FF/AEMT, Secretary/Treasurer



Chris Monahan, FF/Paramedic



Antonio Alviar, FF/EMT



Seth Muzichuck, FF/EMT



Caleb Cyr, FF/EMT

