

**INFORMATION SHEET ABOUT
THE PROPOSED CONVERSION OF THE SERVICE AWARD
PROGRAM FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS
OF THE VILLAGE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE**

- ❑ On June 18, 2019, registered voters residing in the Village of Rockville Centre will have the opportunity to vote “yes” or “no” to convert the current defined contribution Service Award Program for volunteer firefighter members of the Rockville Centre Fire Department to a defined benefit program. If approved by voters, the defined benefit Service Award Program would be effective January 1, 2020.
- ❑ Service Award Programs are simple, modest pension-like programs which, by financially rewarding active volunteer firefighters, are intended to help recruit, retain and reward active volunteer firefighters.
- ❑ Under the proposed defined benefit Service Award Program, most volunteers will be paid greater Service Awards than they would be paid under the existing defined contribution program, but they will not be paid the maximum Service Awards allowed under the New York State General Municipal Law.
- ❑ Under the proposed defined benefit program, a volunteer will earn a year of service credit by accumulating, during a calendar year, a New York State Law mandated minimum number of ‘points’ for attending drills, responding to calls, completing training courses, attending company meetings, completing a one-year term as an officer, etc. The system for earning points in the proposed defined benefit program will be the same system that is being used in the current defined contribution program.
- ❑ For each year of active volunteer firefighter service credit earned after calendar year 2019, a \$20 monthly lifetime “Service Award” will be paid under the defined benefit program to the volunteer beginning at age 65. Volunteers will be paid their defined contribution program account balances during 2020.
- ❑ Under both the existing defined contribution and the proposed defined benefit programs, a volunteer generally must earn 5 years of service credit to become vested in his/her service award benefit. If a volunteer ceases being active before earning 5 years of service credit, the service award benefit earned by the volunteer will be forfeited. Service credit earned by volunteers in the defined contribution program will be transferred to the proposed defined benefit program for vesting purposes only. The program account balances of all volunteers who participate in the existing defined contribution program will be 100% vested as of December 31, 2019.
- ❑ Similar to the existing defined contribution program, Service Award benefits will also be paid from the defined benefit program if a volunteer becomes totally and permanently disabled or dies prior to age 65. In the defined benefit program, a volunteer must have attained a vested status to be covered by the death benefit provision of the program. The death/disability benefit is a lump sum payment equal to the actuarial value of the volunteer’s earned Service Award in the defined benefit program.