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State of New Hampshire

DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY
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COMMISSIONER

June 22, 2022

His Excellency, Governor Christopher T. Sununu
and the Honorable Council
State House
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

REQUESTED ACTION

Pursuant to RSA 21-I:29-a II, the Department of Safety, Office of the Commissioner, requests authorization to disburse death benefits in the amount of \$100,000 to Mrs. Carlene Whitcomb, of Littleton, NH 03561 as the surviving spouse of deceased Fire Instructor Jeffrey Whitcomb as a result of his death on October 2, 2021. After an investigation, pursuant to RSA 21-I:29-a, I have determined that his death constitutes a line-of-duty death. Effective upon Governor and Council approval. Funding source: 100% General Funds.

EXPLANATION

Pursuant to RSA 21-I:29-a, this request is to disburse death benefits to the family of Fire Instructor Jeffrey Whitcomb, who died on October 2, 2021. The pertinent statute provides that:

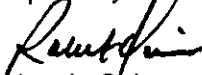
“[t]he commissioner of safety, ... shall obtain the available records related to the circumstances, cause, and manner of such death and the decedent's status as a firefighter...[and] may cause further inquiry to be made, and shall make a determination of whether the death qualifies as a line-of-duty death and who is entitled to the death benefit.”

RSA 21-I:29-a, III. “If the commissioner of safety...determines by a preponderance of the evidence that the death is a qualified line-of-duty death, the commissioner shall submit an item to the governor seeking approval of payment of the benefit.” RSA 21-I:29-a, III (e). For the purposes of this statute, a firefighter is considered to have been killed in the line of duty if he or she dies “while in the performance of his or her duties as a result of incident, accident, or violence causing death or injuries which are the direct or proximate cause of death.” RSA 21-I:29-a, I(f).

After reviewing the records gathered in the course of this investigation, I have determined that Instructor Whitcomb's death is more likely than not related to the performance of his duties as a Fire Instructor for the State of New Hampshire.

Pursuant to RSA 21-I:29-a II, in addition to any other benefits provided under this chapter, the State Treasurer shall pay a \$100,000 death benefit to the family of a police officer or firefighter killed in the line of duty. The Governor, with the consent of the Executive Council, is authorized to draw a warrant for said sum out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated.

Respectfully submitted,


Robert L. Quinn
Commissioner of Safety