

**RESOLUTION 24-37**

**A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE A FEASIBILITY STUDY ON THE PUBLIC SAFETY BRIDGE RETIREMENT SYSTEM UNDER TCRS**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Spring Hill Fire and Police Departments make up the sworn public safety officers within the city as defined in Tennessee Code Annotated § 8-34-101; and

**WHEREAS**, the existing Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System (TCRS) allows for a Public Safety Officer Bridge Program for early retirement of officers; and

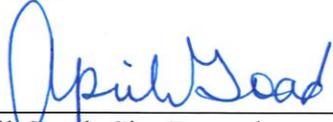
**WHEREAS**, it is in the interest of the City and both the Fire and Police Departments to research possible options and cost benefits of an early retirement option for public safety officers; and

**WHEREAS**, the Tennessee Legislature authorizes municipalities to participate in this program.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Spring Hill, Tennessee approves city staff to engage TCRS in fact finding and data collection regarding the TCRS Bridge Program and to report back findings and recommendations.

**Passed and adopted by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Spring Hill, Tennessee, this 5th Day of February, 2024.**

ATTEST:



April Goad, City Recorder

  
Jim Hagaman, Mayor

LEGAL FORM APPROVED:

  
Patrick Carter, City Attorney



**REQUEST:**            **Approval of Resolution 24-37**

**SUBMITTED BY:**   **Graig Temple, Fire Chief**  
                              **Don Brite, Police Chief**

**DATE:**                **February 5, 2024**

**RE:**                    **Permission to engage in research regarding the TCRS Bridge Program for Public Safety Officers**

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**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this resolution is to allow city staff to engage with TCRS Representatives regarding early retirement options for public safety officers (Firefighters and Police) through the TCRS Bridge Program.

**BACKGROUND:**

Firefighters and Police Officers perform demanding jobs under moments of extreme psychological, emotional, and physical stress. The inherent dangers of the jobs include physical harm, emotional trauma, PTSD, exposure to communicable diseases, job related cancers, and death. With the requirements of each line of work becoming more and more demanding, as calls for service and populations increase, it is incumbent upon the city to ensure that staff can function to the best of their physical and mental abilities. Career longevity is an important topic as the human body ages. Workers' compensation injuries with career ending consequences could increase thus affecting an employee's quality of life in retirement. The Bridge Program would allow Fire and Police Officers to retire as early as age 55, allowing for staff to separate from the city following a complete career and enjoy retirement the years more fully.

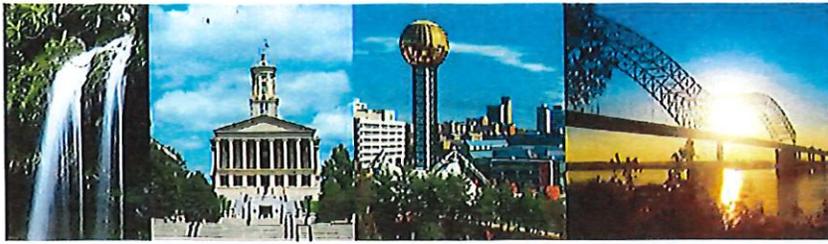
**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

Undetermined

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of Resolution 24-37 to:

1. Allow staff to collect data, research, and hold discussions with TCRS Representatives regarding the Public Safety Officer Bridge Early Retirement option and to report back to BOMA with findings and recommendations.



## Public Safety: 25-Year Actuarially Reduced Retirement in the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System (TCRS)

The Tennessee General Assembly enacted legislation that creates an early retirement option for police officers, firefighters, state correctional officers, emergency communications and medical services personnel, and local government correctional officers. This document contains general information on the impact the legislation has on retirement benefits provided to these groups of employees through the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System (TCRS).

*Note: The majority of legacy plan members can retire under existing 25-year early rules that were established prior to this legislation. If you are a member of the legacy plan and your employer does not offer 25-year early retirement to all employees, then please contact our office for an estimate.*



### What is the impact of the recent 25-year early retirement provisions?

Police officers, firefighters, state correctional officers, emergency communications and medical services personnel, and local government correctional officers retiring on or after the dates listed below shall be eligible for an early service retirement benefit option in any type of plan offered by TCRS, upon completion of 25 years of service and irrespective of the age of the member at the time of retirement. The service retirement allowance will be permanently reduced to be actuarially equivalent to the member's projected service retirement allowance. This benefit is available to the following members:

- Police officers and firefighters retiring on or after January 1, 2020.
- State correctional officers and emergency medical services personnel retiring on or after January 1, 2021.
- Local government correctional officers retiring on or after January 1, 2022.
- Emergency communications personnel retiring on or after January 1, 2023.

### For purposes of this law, what are the applicable definitions of a police officer and firefighter?

Tennessee Code Annotated § 8-34-101 defines "Police officer" to include any person employed by a political subdivision participating in TCRS who is actively engaged in police work as well as any commissioned member of the Department of Safety and any agent of the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation. "Firefighter" means any person employed by a political subdivision participating in TCRS who derives his or her primary livelihood from firefighting work.

For purposes of this law, what are the applicable definitions of state correctional officers and emergency medical services personnel?

A "state correctional officer" is defined as a person who is employed by the Department of Correction and satisfies the requirements of Tennessee Code Annotated § 41-1-116. For local government correctional officers, the definition includes persons who oversee those who have been arrested and are awaiting trial or who have been sentenced to serve time in jail or prison.

This law also applies to emergency medical services personnel as defined in Tennessee Code Annotated § 68-140-302. "Emergency medical services personnel" means individuals certified or licensed by the emergency medical services board in accordance with various categories and classifications of licenses or certificates that the board establishes.

"Emergency communications personnel" is defined in Tennessee Code Annotated § 8-36-308 as a person employed as an emergency communications worker, public safety dispatcher, emergency communications telecommunicator, or emergency call taker.

What does actuarial equivalent of a service retirement allowance mean?

Actuarial equivalent means the benefit is permanently reduced because the member retired before reaching eligibility for a full (unreduced) retirement benefit.

Does this legislation change when a member is eligible for the bridge benefit?

No. For police officers and/or firefighters previously eligible for a bridge benefit, the legislation does not impact the start date for the bridge benefit. The earliest the bridge benefit will begin is at age 55, regardless of whether the police officer and/or firefighter chooses to retire on the reduced allowance after 25 years of service. Additionally, this new law does not provide a bridge benefit if the employer has not adopted the bridge benefit provision.

Has mandatory retirement changed?

For most employees this legislation does not change the mandatory retirement age of 60 that some employers have adopted for police officers and/or firefighters, and it does not change the mandatory retirement benefit improvement which includes a bridge benefit.

Do local governments have to take any action to offer the 25-year reduced retirement option?

No.

If I retire after 25 years of service on the reduced allowance, will my allowance increase to a service retirement allowance later?

No. If a member chooses to retire on the reduced allowance after 25 years of service, the allowance will be reduced permanently.

Does this legislation mean I am eligible for the Age 55/25-Year Service Retirement?

No. To be eligible for an unreduced service retirement allowance under the Age 55/25-Year Service provision, your employer must have adopted the 55/25 provision, and you must meet both the age 55 and 25 years of service requirements.

I am an employer in the Legacy plan. What is the difference for me in adopting the 25-year early provision vs. the provisions of this legislation?

The 25-year early provision, if adopted by the employer, applies to all of an employer's employees and provides employees with the ability to receive a reduced retirement allowance upon 25 years of service.

This new legislation only applies to police officers, firefighters, correctional officers, and emergency communications and medical service personnel employed by an employer participating in TCRS and does not require the employer to adopt any resolutions.

### Key Terms

The following are definitions of terms used in this document. These provisions are not impacted by the legislation that implements a 25-year actuarially reduced benefit option.

**Mandatory Retirement:** Requires retirement on the first day of the month following the month in which the member attains a certain age. This age may be between 60 or 62, depending on the election of the employer.

**Bridge Benefit:** If the employer elects a mandatory retirement age earlier than age 62, the current age requirement for Social Security benefits, a supplemental bridge is payable to the member. This bridge benefit is payable from age 60 or the mandatory retirement age to age 62. For example, if an employer has elected a mandatory retirement age of 60, the supplemental bridge will be payable to the member from age 60 until age 62. The benefit is temporary and in addition to the member's monthly retirement benefit.

**Age 55/25-Year Service Retirement:** This is an enhanced provision that provides the mandatory retirement at age 60 for all public safety officers including a bridge benefit. Additionally, it adds the option of an unreduced service retirement benefit to these members upon attainment of age 55 with 25 years of public safety officer service. The bridge benefit begins at the date of retirement or age 55, whichever is later, and continues until the age the member meets the requirements for Social Security benefits, currently age 62.

### Contact Us

Call (800) 922-7772 Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. CT

Visit [www.RetireReadyTN.gov](http://www.RetireReadyTN.gov)



@RetireReadyTN

*RetireReadyTN offers retirement readiness education and retirement counseling to all members regardless of career stage. Members are encouraged to meet with a local RetireReadyTN Plan Advisor for assistance with retirement planning and to discuss other financial planning needs. To schedule a meeting, contact us at (800) 922-7772 or visit [RetireReadyTN.gov](http://RetireReadyTN.gov).*



## 2021 Tennessee Code

### Title 8 - Public Officers and Employees

### Chapter 36 - Retirement Benefits

### Part 3 - Early Service Retirement

### § 8-36-301. Eligibility

**Universal Citation:** TN Code § 8-36-301 (2021)

- a. Any member in Group 1 shall be eligible for early service retirement upon satisfying one (1) of the following:
  1. Attainment of fifty-five (55) years of age with the applicable years of creditable service as set forth in § 8-36-204; or
  2. At any age less than fifty-five (55) years of age with twenty-five (25) years of creditable service; provided, that this provision shall be optional for political subdivisions participating under chapter 35 of this title.
- b. Any member in Group 2 shall be eligible for early retirement upon satisfying one (1) of the following:
  1. Attainment of fifty-five (55) years of age with ten (10) years of creditable service; or
  2. If the member is employed by a political subdivision which has not authorized unreduced service retirement benefits pursuant to § 8-36-201(b)(1)(B), at any age with thirty (30) years of creditable service.
- c. Any member in Group 3 shall be eligible for early service retirement upon attaining fifty-five (55) years of age with eight (8) years of service.

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## 2021 Tennessee Code

### Title 8 - Public Officers and Employees

### Chapter 36 - Retirement Benefits

### Part 3 - Early Service Retirement

### § 8-36-303. Setting of Retirement Date

**Universal Citation:** TN Code § 8-36-303 (2021)

- a. Any member eligible to retire may set the effective date of the member's retirement at any date within one hundred fifty (150) days before or after the date the member's application is filed with the board; provided, that such effective date of retirement follows the date of such member's separation from service and that the member at the time so specified for the member's retirement shall have completed the applicable eligibility requirements as hereinabove set forth.
  
- b. A member may submit only one (1) retirement application even if the member has service credit in one (1) or more of the four (4) defined benefit plans administered by the retirement system pursuant to Chapters 34 37 of this title. The retirement payment plan and beneficiary selected by the member on the retirement application shall be the same for all of the plans and may not be changed or revoked, except as provided in part 6 of this chapter. The retirement system shall pay benefits from each of the applicable plans on the member's effective date of retirement; provided, that the member has met the eligibility requirements of the particular plan for a retirement allowance. If on a member's effective date of retirement the member has not met the eligibility requirements for a retirement allowance from a particular plan, the retirement system shall commence payments from that plan once the member meets the eligibility requirements of the plan.

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## 2021 Tennessee Code

### Title 8 - Public Officers and Employees

### Chapter 36 - Retirement Benefits

### Part 3 - Early Service Retirement

### § 8-36-304. Computation of Allowance

**Universal Citation:** TN Code § 8-36-304 (2021)

The early service retirement allowance calculated under this part shall be computed as a service retirement allowance in accordance with part 2 of this chapter on the basis of the member's average final compensation and creditable service at the time of early service as follows:

1.
  - A. For a Group 1 member retiring under § 8-36-301(a)(1), reduced by four tenths of one percent (0.4%) for each month by which the member's date of early retirement precedes such member's service retirement date. If the member's creditable service is less than ten (10) years, the reduced benefit shall be further limited in accordance with the following:

Creditable Service	Percent Reduced Benefit Due
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at least 4 years	10%
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at least 5 years	25%
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at least 6 years	40%
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at least 7 years	55%
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at least 8 years	70%
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at least 9 years 85%

at least 10 years 100%

B. For a Group 1 member retiring under § 8-36-301(a)(2), the actuarial equivalent of the benefit as reduced under subdivision (1)(A) which would be payable at fifty-five (55) years of age;

2.

A. For a Group 2 member retiring under § 8-36-301(b)(1), reduced by four tenths of one percent (0.4%) for each month by which the member's date of early retirement precedes such member's service retirement date.

B. For a Group 2 member retiring § 8-36-301(b)(2), reduced by four tenths of one percent (0.4%) for each month by which the member's date of early retirement precedes such member's attainment of fifty-five (55) years of age; and

3. For a Group 3 member retiring under § 8-36-301(c), reduced by four tenths of one percent (0.4%) for each month by which the member's date of early retirement precedes such member's completion of twenty-four (24) years of creditable service.

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## 2021 Tennessee Code

### Title 8 - Public Officers and Employees

### Chapter 36 - Retirement Benefits

### Part 3 - Early Service Retirement

### § 8-36-306. Alternative Early Retirement

**Universal Citation:** TN Code § 8-36-306 (2021)

- a. Any member in Group 1 shall be eligible for a retirement benefit upon completion of twenty-five (25) years of creditable service.
- b. If the member is less than fifty-five (55) years of age, such benefit shall be the actuarial equivalent of the retirement benefit which would be payable to the member at fifty-five (55) years of age.
- c. This section shall be optional for political subdivisions participating under chapter 35 of this title.

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## 2021 Tennessee Code

### Title 8 - Public Officers and Employees

### Chapter 36 - Retirement Benefits

### Part 3 - Early Service Retirement

### § 8-36-308. Eligibility of Emergency Medical Services Personnel, Police Officer, or Firefighter for Early Service Retirement Upon Attainment of 25 Years of Creditable Service

**Universal Citation:** TN Code § 8-36-308 (2021)

- a. Notwithstanding this part or any law to the contrary, a person in a position covered by the definition of emergency medical services personnel in § 68-140-302, police officer or firefighter who is a member of the retirement system, regardless of the person's, police officer's or firefighter's participation in the legacy pension plan, the hybrid plan, or any other alternative plan, is eligible for early service retirement upon attainment of twenty-five (25) years of creditable service. The retirement allowance, as provided under this section, must be computed as the actuarial equivalent of the benefit that would have been payable under a service retirement allowance.
- b. No person in a position covered by the definition of emergency medical services personnel in § 68-140-302, police officer or firefighter is required to retire pursuant to subsection (a). Subsection (a) applies only to emergency medical services personnel as defined in § 68-140-302, police officers or firefighters who retire on or after January 1, 2020, and does not constitute a change in formula under § 8-36-702.

c.

1. A political subdivision employing a person in a position covered by the definition of emergency medical services personnel in § 68-140-302, police officer or firefighter, who voluntarily chooses to retire pursuant to subsection (a), may require the person in a position covered by the definition of emergency medical services personnel in § 68-140-302, police officer or firefighter to pay any insurance coverage otherwise provided to members who are one hundred percent (100%) vested in the service retirement benefit pursuant to § 8-36-201 from the time the person in a position covered by the definition of emergency medical services personnel in § 68-140-302, police officer or firefighter voluntarily chooses to retire pursuant to subsection (a) until the date that the person in a position covered by the definition of emergency medical services personnel in § 68-140-302, police officer or firefighter would have become one hundred percent (100%) vested in the service retirement benefit pursuant to § 8-36-201.
2. A person in a position covered by the definition of emergency medical services personnel in § 68-140-302, police officer or firefighter, who voluntarily chooses to retire pursuant to subsection (a), is entitled to any insurance coverage otherwise provided to members who are one hundred percent (100%) vested in the member's service retirement benefit pursuant to § 8-36-201 on the date that the person in a position covered by the definition of emergency medical services personnel in § 68-140-302, police officer or firefighter would have become one hundred percent (100%) vested in the service retirement benefit pursuant to § 8-36-201.

d. Subsection (c) does not apply to a municipality, as that term is defined in § 7-84-103, that is a member of the state retirement system and provides health insurance benefits in accordance with chapter 27, part 6 of this title.

e. For purposes of this section, "police officer" means a sheriff, sheriff's deputy, or police officer employed by this state, a municipality, or political subdivision of this state whose primary responsibility is the prevention and detection of crime and apprehension of offenders.

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