

February 23, 1993
REPORT TO THE HONORABLE
MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

PARAMEDIC RETIREMENT BENEFITS

On February 9, 1993, a question was raised regarding a "buy-in" into the City's Retirement System for Hartson paramedics should they become City employees if the paramedic contract is awarded to the City of San Diego Fire Department.

It is my understanding that the Retirement "buy-in" contemplated would allow Hartson paramedics who become employees of The City of San Diego to buy retirement credits back to their initial service date with the City's paramedic contract (which could cover employment under Hartson's or Medevac's contract). I have no information as to how this proposed benefit would be structured or funded.

There are no provisions in the San Diego City Charter or San Diego Municipal Code which provide for the proposed benefit. For vesting purposes, however, the Charter requires a minimum of ten (10) years of continuous service for a general member service retirement at age 62 or twenty (20) years of continuous service for a service retirement at age 55. For safety members the Charter requires ten (10) years of continuous service for a service retirement at age 55 and twenty (20) years of continuous service for a service retirement at age 50.

Should the City desire to establish a benefit whereby transferring paramedics would be able to "buy-in" to CERS, the City will need to follow the full formal process of a benefit change. At a minimum, that process necessitates recitation of the proposed benefit, an actuarial review, meet and confer with the employee groups, approval by the Retirement Board and City Council and ultimately approval by the membership. Compliance with appropriate Internal Revenue Code Rules will also be required. In addition, should the City Council desire to allow the transferring paramedics the opportunity to use their pre-City service towards their vesting requirements under the Charter then an amendment to the Charter may also be required.

Respectfully submitted,
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