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Subject:

ARTICLE 3

Firemen's Insurance and Inspection Fund

SECTION 23-9-310. Board of trustees of firemen's insurance and inspection fund.

In each city or town which has a regularly organized fire department under the control of the mayor and council or intendant and council of that city or town and in each unincorporated community having a population of two hundred fifty persons within an area of one mile radius in this State which has a regularly organized fire department under the control of a responsible authority or representative group of citizens in the community having in serviceable condition for fire duty fire apparatus and necessary equipment belonging thereto to the value of ten thousand dollars and upwards and having a total personnel of not less than ten men, including paid and volunteer members, deriving benefits from the provisions of this article, there must be appointed a local board of trustees, to be known as the trustees of the firemen's insurance and inspection fund, to be composed of three or five members.

HISTORY: 1987 Act No. 155, Section 5 (derived from former 1976 Code Section 38-57-10 [1947 (45) 322; 1952 Code Section 37-1151; 1962 Code Section 37-1151; 1978 Act No. 585, Section 3]).

SECTION 23-9-320. Composition of board of trustees in cities and towns; term of office of citizen members.

The board of trustees of the firemen's insurance and inspection fund in cities and towns, if composed of three, consists of the mayor, the councilman in charge of the fire department or the chairman of the fire committee, and the chief of the fire department. The board in cities and towns, if composed of five, consists of the chairman of the board of fire masters or the chairman of the fire committee, the chief of the fire department, the city or town treasurer, and two citizens, one to be appointed by the mayor and one to be appointed by the chief of the fire department, both to be confirmed by the governing body of the city or town. The term of office of the last two named members of the board is four years and until their successors are appointed and confirmed and qualify for office.

HISTORY: 1987 Act No. 155, Section 5 (derived from former 1976 Code Sections 38-57-20 [1947 (45) 322; 1952 Code Section 37-1152; 1962 Code Section 37-1152]).

SECTION 23-9-330. Composition of board of trustees in unincorporated communities; term of office of citizen members.

The board of trustees of the firemen's insurance and inspection fund in unincorporated communities is composed of the treasurer of the county in which the greater part of the community is located and any residents of the community as may be appointed by the treasurer, on a recommendation by a majority of the legislative delegation or delegations of the county or counties in which the community is located. The term of office of the members, other than the county treasurer, is four years, and they shall serve until their successors are appointed and qualify for office.

HISTORY: 1987 Act No. 155, Section 5 (derived from former 1976 Code Section 38-57-30 [1947 (45) 322; 1952 Code Section 37-1153; 1962 Code Section 37-1153]).

SECTION 23-9-340. Compensation of trustees; election of chairman and secretary; designation of treasurer.

All members of the board of trustees of each firemen's insurance and inspection fund shall serve without compensation. The board shall elect from its number a chairman and secretary who shall likewise serve without compensation. The treasurer of the city or town, or, for a fund for an unincorporated community, the county treasurer, shall act as the treasurer of the board and is custodian of all funds received as a result of the provisions of this article.

HISTORY: 1987 Act No. 155, Section 5 (derived from former 1976 Code Section 38-57-40 [1947 (45) 322; 1952 Code Section 37-1154; 1962 Code Section 37-1154; 1978 Act No. 585, Section 4]).

SECTION 23-9-350. Enactment of ordinance providing for building and inspection code required.

No city or town may enjoy any benefits under this article unless it has passed a suitable ordinance approved by the State Fire Marshal providing a building and inspection code for the proper erection and inspection of all buildings in the city or town so as to eliminate, as far as may be possible, the danger of fires arising from defective construction or the presence and existence of inflammable and combustible material and conditions.

HISTORY: 1987 Act No. 155, Section 5 (derived from 1976 Code former Section 38-57-50 [1947 (45) 322; 1952 Code Section 37-1155; 1962 Code Section 37-1155; 1978 Act No. 585, Section 5]).

SECTION 23-9-360. Fire inspector, fire inspections, and reports required; penalties for failure to comply.

Every incorporated city or town and every county in which is located any unincorporated community accepting the benefits of this article shall annually, by February first, designate some person as the fire inspector for the city, town, or county and this person shall quarterly, by the first day of

April, July, October, and January, make an inspection of every public building and business establishment located within the city, town, or county. Whenever the fire inspector finds in any building or establishment any combustible material or inflammatory conditions dangerous to the safety of the building or premises, he shall order the material or conditions removed. Quarterly reports must be filed with the State Fire Marshal, and one of these quarterly reports is considered an annual report and shall show in detail any hazardous or inflammable condition in connection with the condition of every public building, business establishment, or residence in the city, town, or county. If the requirements of this section are not complied with, the city, town, or county fire department is considered to have waived its rights for that year to the benefits to be derived under this article, and the treasurer of each county is directed not to distribute any benefits under this article to any city, town, or county fire department which has waived its rights to the benefits.

HISTORY: 1987 Act No. 155, Section 5 (derived from former 1976 Code Section 38-57-60 [1947 (45) 322; 1952 Code Section 37-1156; 1962 Code Section 37-1156; 1978 Act No. 585, Section 6]).

SECTION 23-9-370. Membership in South Carolina State Firemen's Association required; supervision of operation of building and inspection code.

For the purpose of supervision and inspection and as a guaranty that the provisions of this article are administered as herein set forth, every fire department enjoying the benefits of this article must be a member of the South Carolina State Firemen's Association. The association may supervise and inspect the operation of the ordinance required in this article to be passed in each of the several towns and cities enjoying the benefits of this article.

HISTORY: 1987 Act No. 155, Section 5 (derived from former 1976 Code Section 38-57-70 [1947 (45) 322; 1952 Code Section 37-1157; 1962 Code Section 37-1157]).

SECTION 23-9-380. Annual certificate of existence of fire department; penalty for failure to file.

The clerk of any incorporated city or town and the treasurer of the county in which is located the greater part of any unincorporated community accepting the benefits of this article as required herein shall annually, by October thirty-first, make and file with the State Fire Marshal on a blank to be furnished by the State Fire Marshal his certificate stating the existence of the department, the number of steam, hand, or other engines, hook and ladder trucks, and hose carts in actual use, the number of organized companies, and the system of water supply in use for the department, together with any other facts the State Fire Marshal requires. If the certificate required by this section is not filed with the State Fire Marshal by October thirty-first in any year, the city, town, or community failing to file the certificate is considered to have waived and relinquished its rights for that year to any benefits distributed under this article by the county treasurer.

HISTORY: 1987 Act No. 155, Section 5 (derived from former 1976 Code Section 38-57-80 [1947 (45) 322; 1952 Code Section 37-1158; 1962 Code Section 37-1158; 1978 Act No. 585, Section 7]).

SECTION 23-9-390. Designation of volunteer fire department as regular, organized fire department; annual certification to governing body of local municipality; annual certification to State Fire Marshal.

Any volunteer fire department having a headquarters station within or without a municipality, which is duly organized and has the officers which normally comprise the membership of a regular, organized fire department, with ten or more active members, is designated a regular, organized fire department.

The chief of the department shall annually certify to the governing body of the municipality or the county, dependent upon where the headquarters station is located, the names of all officers and active members. The clerk of the governing body shall in turn certify the names of the active members and the officers to the State Fire Marshal.

HISTORY: 1987 Act No. 155, Section 5 (derived from former 1976 Code Section 38-57-90 [1962 Code Section 37-1158.1; 1964 (53) 2057; 1978 Act No. 585, Section 8).

SECTION 23-9-400. Benefits to volunteer fire departments to be transmitted to governing body of area.

Any benefits accruing to an area serviced by a volunteer fire department which qualifies as a regular, organized fire department must be transmitted to the treasurer of the governing body of the area and distributed according to the provisions of this article.

HISTORY: 1987 Act No. 155, Section 5 (derived from former 1976 Code Section 38-57-100 [1962 Code Section 37-1158.2; 1964 (53) 2057; 1978 Act No. 585, Section 9]).

SECTION 23-9-410. Distribution of funds collected on insurance premiums; use of funds.

The State Treasurer shall pay over the amount collected upon the premiums of the insurance business required to be reported under the provisions of Section 38-7-70 to the treasurers of the counties to which the premiums are allocated under the provisions of Section 38-7-70 in the respective portions resulting from the allocations. All monies so collected must be set apart and equitably used by each of the treasurers solely and entirely for the betterment and maintenance of skilled and efficient fire departments within the county.

HISTORY: 1987 Act No. 155, Section 5 (derived from former 1976 Code Section 38-57-160 [1947 (45) 322; 1952 Code Section 37-1164; 1962 Code Section 37-1164; 1978 Act No. 585, Section 14]).

SECTION 23-9-420. Time-frame for distribution of funds; determination of amount fire department is to receive; regulations for administration of funds.

All monies or other benefits received and distributed under the provisions of this article by a city, town, or county treasurer or other financial officer

must be distributed to the trustees of the local fire department designated by the county treasurer or other financial officer to receive the benefits within forty-five days after the receipt of the monies or other benefits in the initial year and within thirty days each year thereafter. Each designated fire department shall receive an amount of the tax computed on the basis of the assessed value of improvements to real estate within the service areas of the fire department, and all monies must be administered by the trustees under the regulations adopted by them.

HISTORY: 1987 Act No. 155, Section 5 (derived from former 1976 Code Section 38-57-170 [1947 (45) 322; 1951 (47) 433; 1952 Code Section 37-1165; 1962 Code Section 37-1165; 1978 Act No. 585, Section 15]).

SECTION 23-9-430. Payment by county treasurers to State Firemen's Association of portion of proceeds received from tax on fire insurance; use of funds.

For the purposes of Section 23-9-370 and to defray the expenses thereof, each county treasurer shall pay over to the treasurer of the South Carolina State Firemen's Association the sum of five percent of the gross proceeds received annually by each county, town, or unincorporated community from the one percent tax on fire insurance allocated to the city, town, or community. The sums so paid must be expended for the sole purpose of the betterment and maintenance of skillful and efficient fire departments within the county.

HISTORY: 1987 Act No. 155, Section 5 (derived from former 1976 Code Section 38-57-180 [1947 (45) 322; 1952 Code Section 37-1166; 1962 Code Section 37-1166; 1978 Act No. 585, Section 16]).

SECTION 23-9-440. Special provisions affecting boards of trustees of firemen's insurance and inspection fund applicable to certain cities.

In cities which have adopted the provisions of Title 61 of the 1962 Code of Laws of South Carolina, the provisions of Sections 23-9-410 to 23-9-430 are subject to the provisions of Title 61.

HISTORY: 1987 Act No. 155, Section 5 (derived from former 1976 Code Section 38-57-190 [1949 (46) 293; 1952 Code Section 37-1166.1; 1962 Code Section 37-1166.1]).

SECTION 23-9-450. Disbursements of funds from firemen's insurance and inspection fund; approval.

Before any disbursements exceeding one hundred dollars of the funds of any firemen's insurance and inspection fund are made by the treasurers of the counties, they shall first submit to the supervising trustees of the South Carolina State Firemen's Association a statement of how the funds are to be expended and shall receive from the trustees their written approval of the manner and method by which the funds are to be disbursed, so that the South Carolina Firemen's Association shall know that the funds are being expended solely for the benefit of the firemen of each particular fire department in the State. If a proposed disbursement is to be expended legally and in accordance with the law, it is mandatory upon the supervising trustees to give their approval. Failure upon the part of any treasurer to comply with the foregoing makes him liable on his official bond.

HISTORY: 1987 Act No. 155, Section 5 (derived from former 1976 Code Section 38-57-200 [1947 (45) 322; 1952 Code Section 37-1167; 1962 Code Section 37-1167; 1978 Act No. 585, Section 17]).

SECTION 23-9-460. Purposes for which funds may be expended; restrictions on use.

No funds of firemen's insurance and inspection fund may be divided among the firemen of any fire department in cash. When any fire department by a majority provides for the expenditure of any funds for the collective benefit and enjoyment of the entire department, it is mandatory for the local trustees and the state trustees of the South Carolina State Firemen's Association to approve the expenditure. None of the funds may be expended in any manner for any purpose for which any city, town, unincorporated community, or county may be legally liable.

HISTORY: 1987 Act No. 155, Section 5 (derived from former 1976 Code Section 38-57-210 [1951 (47) 433; 1952 Code Section 37-1168; 1962 Code Section 37-1168; 1978 Act No. 585, Section 18]).

SECTION 23-9-470. Funds to be use for purposes prescribed in; to reduce amounts required to be distributed.

No funds from the firemen's insurance and inspection fund may be withheld or used for any purpose except as prescribed in this article, and no agency of the State, including the State Fiscal Accountability Authority, has the authority to reduce the amounts required to be distributed to counties and municipalities under the provisions of this article.

HISTORY: 1987 Act No. 155, Section 5 (derived from former 1976 Code Section 38-57-220 [1979 Act No. 190, Section 9]).

Code Commissioner's Note

At the direction of the Code Commissioner, references in this section to the offices of the former State Budget and Control Board, Office of the Governor, or other agencies, were changed to reflect the transfer of them to the Department of Administration or other entities, pursuant to the directive of the South Carolina Restructuring Act, 2014 Act No. 121, Section 5(D)(1), effective July 1, 2015.

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