

**Ordinance Establishing the Town of Harwinton
Emergency Services Volunteers' Benefit Program**

SECTION 1. PREAMBLE: This Ordinance is adopted pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Revised to 2003, section 12-81w.

SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS: As used in this Ordinance, these terms shall be defined as follows:

(1) "Active Member" means a member in good standing certified by the Chief of the Harwinton Volunteer Fire Department, the Chief of the Harwinton West Side Volunteer Fire Company, the Chief of the Harwinton Ambulance Association, Inc., as to members of their respective organizations, or on or before the certification date, as eligible for benefits under this Ordinance.

(2) "Certification Date" means February 1 of each year commencing February 1, 2003, and each fiscal year thereafter.

(3) "Eligible Volunteer" means each individual who volunteers his or her services as an active member of the Harwinton Volunteer Fire Department, the Harwinton West Side Volunteer Fire Company or the Harwinton Ambulance Association, Inc.

(4) "Benefit" means the property tax abatement or payment in lieu of property tax abatement, described in this Ordinance.

(5) "Volunteers' Benefit Program" means the "Town of Harwinton Emergency Services Volunteers' Benefit Program" as established by this Ordinance.

SECTION 3. BENEFIT. Each eligible volunteer shall be entitled to a benefit not to exceed \$1,000.00 under either of the following options:

(1) By a property tax abatement for the fiscal year immediately following the certification date; or

(2) By a payment in lieu of tax abatement benefit by August 1 of the fiscal year immediately following the certification date.

SECTION 4. BENEFIT LIMITATIONS: The benefit shall be subject to the following limitations:

(1) Volunteers who participate in more than one organization may aggregate their service points, but may not exceed the maximum benefit allowed.

(2) Benefits will be paid on a maximum 1000 point system with four benefit bands:

- a. Band 1 shall be the maximum benefit if a volunteer achieves a total amount of points between 1000 and 600 points.
- b. Band 2 shall be 75% of the maximum benefit if a volunteer achieves a total amount of points between 599 and 400 points.
- c. Band 3 shall be 50% of the maximum benefit if a volunteer achieves a total amount of points between 399 and 200 points.
- d. Band 4 shall be 25% of the maximum benefit if a volunteer achieves a total amount of points between 199 and 100 points.
- e. No benefit shall be provided if a volunteer achieves a total amount of points less than 100 points.

(3) No benefit may be awarded or paid to a delinquent taxpayer until his or her taxes are brought current. A taxpayer may use the tax abatement benefit only for the current year's taxes.

(4) Those persons with taxable real or personal property assessed on the grand list for the prior year shall only be eligible for the tax abatement. If a taxpayer conveys, transfers or otherwise disposes of such property before July 1, and acquires no replacement property, he or she may elect the payment in lieu of tax abatement. Only persons with no assessed property or whose property assessment is insufficient to support the full amount of the tax abatement may elect the payment in lieu of tax abatement. The election must be filed with the Harwinton Emergency Services Committee on or before February 1 of each year.

(5) Benefits are not transferable or assignable, and may not be accumulated from year to year.

SECTION 5. PROCEDURE: The procedure for certifying eligible volunteers shall be as follows:

(1) The qualifying period shall run annually from January 1 through December 31, the respective Chiefs of the Harwinton Ambulance Association, Inc., Harwinton Volunteer Fire Department and the Harwinton West Side Volunteer Fire Company shall, on or before February 1 of the following year, submit their certifications of eligible members and their earned points to the Harwinton Emergency Services Committee.

(2) The Harwinton Emergency Services Committee shall submit the final combined qualifications of volunteers to the Office of the First Selectman on or before March 1.

(3) The Board of Selectmen shall certify the list of tax abatements and payments to the Board of Finance, Town Treasurer and Tax Collector on or before April 1.

(4) The performance of the program shall be subject to review and renewal on an annual basis. Performance review will occur at a meeting of the Emergency Services Committee called for certification.

SECTION 6. ELIGIBILITY: The Harwinton Volunteer Fire Department, Harwinton West Side Volunteer Fire Company and Harwinton Ambulance Association, Inc., shall determine the criteria for certification of eligibility for their respective members. Eligibility criteria shall be presented for audit by the Harwinton Emergency Services Committee in February annually.

SECTION 7. FISCAL LIMITATIONS: This Ordinance shall be construed as creating a discretionary benefit and not an entitlement. Notwithstanding the provisions of this Ordinance, if the Town fails to appropriate the funds necessary to fund the cash benefit for a given fiscal year, the cash benefit and the tax abatement shall be suspended for that fiscal year. If the Town funds the cash benefit at less than the full amount, then the cash benefit and the tax abatement shall be reduced in proportion to the actual funding level. Any cash benefit or tax abatement suspended or reduced shall not accumulate and shall be deemed to have been rescinded.

SECTION 8. EFFECTIVE DATE: This Ordinance shall take effect as of the grand list of October 1, 2002, and benefits shall be awarded for the initial benefit year commencing January 1, 2002, upon publication of a summary of the Ordinance

in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes Revised to 2003, section 7-157(b).

Adopted by Town Meeting: February 18, 2003

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Effective date: As of January 1, 2002

Recorded in the Harwinton Town Records, Volume 7, Page .

AMENDED BY ORDINANCE 115