

Valparaiso Fire Territory Merit Board Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What is the Valparaiso Fire Territory (“VFT”)?** Created in 2013, the VFT is the result of an *Interlocal Agreement* between the City of Valparaiso and Center Township. The VFT provides fire and medical response services to the residents of Valparaiso and Center Township.

2. **What is the Valparaiso Fire Territory Merit Board?** It is a five-person board created by Indiana law to oversee the hiring, promotion/demotion, discipline and termination of Valparaiso Fire Territory (“VFT”) members.

3. **Why is the VFT establishing a Merit Board?** Under Indiana law, all fire territories that do not currently have a Merit Board were given an option to either have a Merit Board or opt-out. A majority of active VFT members voted to create a Merit Board.

4. **Who serves on VFT Merit Board?** The VFT Merit Board will consist of 5 members. Three will be the members of the Valparaiso Board of Public Works & Safety. The remaining two members will be approved by the active members of the VFT.

5. **What are the qualifications to serve on the VFT Merit Board?** A VFT Board member must:

- a) Be at least 21 years of age.
- b) Be current resident of the area covered by the VFT (which is all of Center Township and the area within the corporate boundaries of the City of Valparaiso) and have lived within the area covered by the VFT for at least 3 years.
- c) Be a person of good moral character.
- d) Not be an active member of any police or fire department.
- e) Not receive any compensation from the VFT.

6. **What is the term of service on the Merit Board?** The term is **four (4) years**. However, for the initial appointments, one person shall be appointed for a term of **two (2) years**. This will ensure staggered terms.

7. **Is there any compensation for services on the VFT Merit Board?** Per Indiana law, compensation may be paid to the VFT Merit Board members for each day of actual service. Currently, no compensation has been established. VFT Merit Board members will be reimbursed for expenses related to their service.

8. **How do I apply?** Submit a VFT Merit Board Nomination to the Valparaiso Fire Chief prior to the deadline. A form can be found on the City Website <https://www.ci.valparaiso.in.us/1723/Fire-Department> or by requesting a copy from Sam Camp (scamp@valpo.us).

9. **Is there a deadline to apply?** Yes. All nominations must be received by **February 7, 2025**.

10. **How are the Merit Board members selected?** All active members of the VFT will have an opportunity to vote as provided under IC 36-8-3.5-8.

11. **When and where will the Merit Board meet?** Although no final decision has been made, it is likely that the Merit Board will meet on an as-needed basis immediately following the Valparaiso Board of Public Works & Safety meetings, which are scheduled on the second and fourth Fridays of each month at 11:00 at Valparaiso City Hall.

12. **Who should I contact if I have any questions?** Any questions should be emailed to Sam Camp (scamp@valpo.us).