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State of New Hampshire

DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY
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March 24, 2023

His Excellency, Governor Christopher T. Sununu
and the Honorable Council
State House
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

REQUESTED ACTION

Pursuant to RSA 21-I:29-a II, the Department of Safety, Office of the Commissioner, requests authorization to disburse death benefits in the amount of \$100,000 to Mr. Steven O'Brien, of Strafford, New Hampshire, as the surviving spouse of deceased Strafford County Deputy Sheriff Kathleen O'Brien as a result of her death on or about October 2, 2023. After an investigation, pursuant to RSA 21-I:29-a, I have determined that her death constitutes a line-of-duty death. Effective upon Governor and Council approval. Funding source: 100% General Funds.

EXPLANATION

Pursuant to RSA 21-I:29-a, this request is to disburse death benefits to the family of Strafford County Deputy Sheriff Kathleen O'Brien, who died on October 2, 2023. The pertinent statute provides that:

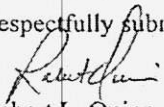
“[t]he commissioner of safety, ... shall obtain the available records related to the circumstances, cause, and manner of such death and the decedent's status as a ... police officer ... and shall make a determination of whether the death qualifies as a line-of-duty death and who is entitled to the death benefit.”

RSA 21-I:29-a, III. At the time of her death, Deputy O'Brien was employed by the Strafford County Sheriff's Department as a Deputy Sheriff. After reviewing the records gathered in the course of this investigation, I have determined that Deputy Sheriff O'Brien was killed in the line of duty, as defined in the statute:

“Killed in the line of duty” means a death, including suicide, of a police officer ... while in the performance of his or her duties as a result of incident, accident, or violence causing death or injuries which are the direct or proximate cause of death. Death by suicide shall be considered a work-related cause of death.

Based on the preponderance of evidence presented to me, I have concluded that Deputy O'Brien's death meets the definition of killed in the line of duty, and therefore her family is entitled to the death benefit. Pursuant to RSA 21-I:29-a II, in addition to any other benefits provided under this chapter, the State Treasurer shall pay a \$100,000 death benefit to the family of a police officer killed in the line of duty. Pursuant to that statute, the Governor, with the consent of the Executive Council, is authorized to draw a warrant for said sum out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated.

Respectfully submitted,


Robert L. Quinn
Commissioner of Safety