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FDNY vs. NYPD

City hopes to boost heroes' pensions

By KENNETH LOVETT

in Albany

and MURRAY WEISS in N.Y.

City officials are looking to bump up the pensions paid to the families of firefighters and police officers buried in the World Trade Center rubble, The Post has learned.

The city paid lost police and firefighters round-the-clock overtime for a month after the destruction of the Twin Towers.

Pensions for fallen cops and firefighters' survivors are 100 percent of the final year's pay.

But under current law, that overtime could not count toward survivors' pensions because it was paid to the officers after their deaths on Sept. 11 ended their employment.

But a bill quietly being circulated at the state capital by city officials would give the mayor the option to incorporate the overtime paid after Sept. 11, which could mean thousands more a year in pensions for the families.

The legislation would also boost death benefits for civilian city workers who died in the terrorist attacks.

While those in uniform support better pensions for the widows, some expressed unhappiness at one provision of the city's proposed legislation.

The city wants to deduct the overtime paid to the lost cops and firefighters from benefits awarded to families.

When the towers went down, the firefighters and officers under the rubble were paid the overtime because they were considered missing in action.

Union members believe the city is looking to recoup the money to deal with mounting budget pressures.

But a city official denied that, saying that, in the long run, the improved pensions will greatly benefit spouses.



HELL NO, WE WON'T GO! Inflamed firefighters vent their rage near ground zero yesterday.

N.Y. Post: Bolivar Arriano

Fed-up firefighters defend their sacred turf



WITH their fingers they dig, they heave chunks of concrete, they claw for unsettled souls who are in there somewhere.

They search for fallen brothers with whom they have fought side-by-side against the dancing beast called fire.

"I found one of my best friends on Monday at 8:30 at night," said firefighter Lt. Phil Ciaravino.

"But we are not just looking for cops and firefighters, we are looking

for everybody who deserves a decent burial."

Lt. Phil was angry about the city pulling firefighters out of ground zero.

He was at the site yesterday protesting a clumsy call and then marched onto City Hall to make his voice heard louder.

It is not a good day when we have great cops forced to arrest great firefighters.

"No, it wasn't a good day," said a senior police official who asked specifically that his name not be used.

"This is not how cops and firefighters do this. This order was a screw-up in the Giuliani office which so far has done so magnificently. But today? Just stupid."

Firefighter Rich Radziewicz of Ladder 102 told me: "The city is telling us they are scaling us back because it is hazardous down there."

"What the hell do you think we do for a job? Yes, it's hazardous. That's what we do, hazardous. But we have to find those people."

There is anger and heat in the ranks — which may not be easy to cool.

Said firefighter Radziewicz: "They are telling us to get out of there."

"Look, the Fire Department, never, never leaves anyone, anywhere at a disaster scene. We want to reclaim their bodies, civilians, firefighters, cops, everyone."

Firefighter George Grammas of 102 Truck

said: "The city probably thinks the clearing effort is going too slowly. It's about money."

"Do you think we want overtime to look for bodies? Are you crazy?"

Lt. Ciaravino: "Who gives a s--- about money when there are people's bodies buried in there?"

Then Grammas: "I know what they want to do. They want to get a couple of big construction companies in there."

"Then they will just scoop and drop bodies and body parts into the landfill in Staten Island. That's not what we do."

Lt. Ciaravino: "Nobody scoops and drops when we are down there. Those who are lost are treated with great respect by us."

"Nobody is allowed to do that when we are

around. We won't tolerate it."

Carmen Suarez was teary-eyed.

Her husband Ramon, a cop from Transit District 4, went back into the south tower at the World Trade Center eight times to rescue the desperate until millions of tons of steel collapsed.

"I still say he is missing, not lost. But I want him to be treated with respect when we find him," she said.

Her husband's partner, Stephen Rentas, put it as brutally simply as you can: "Scoop up bodies and drop them in a landfill," he said with an edge of anger.

"Is this what my partner and the thousands of others deserve? Sling them in a dump? No, no."

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