



Hamburg Township Public Safety Department

PO BOX 157 · HAMBURG, MICHIGAN 48139
PHONE: (810) 231-9391 · FAX: (810) 231-9401

EMAIL: HATP@hamburg.mi.us

RICHARD DUFFANY, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SAFETY



TO: Hamburg Township Board
FROM: Chief Richard Duffany
DATE: February 13, 2025
RE: Tuition Reimbursement

As you are aware, the Board discussed several proposed amendments to the Hamburg Township Employee Handbook at the Township Board special meeting held on February 4, 2025. Among the proposed changes discussed was section 4.14: Continuing Education/Tuition Reimbursement. The primary change called for an increase in the amount of tuition that the Township would reimburse an employee from \$6,000 to \$9,000 per fiscal year. This proposal was tabled for further discussion.

The purpose of this memo is to provide additional information to you for consideration as you discuss this change. I attempted to supply the information that would provide answers to the main questions brought up by board members at the previous Board meeting as well as to provide context as to why I believe this proposed change should be adopted.

To begin with, I strongly believe in the importance of formal education as a means to improve the quality of employee performance, especially at the supervisory level. I could cite an endless number of articles and studies that confirm the validity of this belief. The bottom line, though, as a department head for the past 14 years, I have consistently encouraged all employees in my department to continue their college education. More than just encouraging others, I have such a belief in the importance of education that I enrolled in a graduate degree program last year to better myself even though I already have two college degrees (a Bachelor's and a Juris Doctorate).



Hamburg Township Public Safety Department



PO BOX 157 · HAMBURG, MICHIGAN 48139
 PHONE: (810) 231-9391 · FAX: (810) 231-9401
 EMAIL: HATP@hamburg.mi.us

RICHARD DUFFANY, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Several police and fire personnel have taken advantage of the Township’s tuition reimbursement program, whether pursuant to the employee handbook or collective bargaining agreements, in order to continue their college education. In fact, I am very proud that four public safety personnel (two police officers and two firefighters) are currently enrolled in graduate programs working on their Master’s degrees.

The Township’s tuition reimbursement program is instrumental for employees to continue their education as the cost of college tuition is beyond the financial means of most Township personnel. I cite the following current tuition rates for area universities:

University	Undergraduate Tuition (per credit hour)	Graduate Tuition (per credit hour)	Cost to attend part-time graduate school for <i>one fiscal year</i> (2 classes per semester)
Cleary University	\$981	\$1,185	\$14,220
Madonna University	\$948	\$1000	\$12,000
Eastern Michigan	\$668	\$986 - \$1128	\$11,832-\$13,536
Michigan State	\$537.50 - \$616.25	\$893	\$10,716
U of M – Flint	\$568	\$875.25	\$10,503
Central Michigan	\$525	\$793	\$9,506
Note: These figures does not include required fees and books.			

Considering these tuition rates, the current tuition reimbursement program (\$6,000) still places an employee in the position of making the choice of either not trying to better themselves through furthering their college education OR doing so at the expense of getting into credit card or student loan debt. I can point to one employee in the public safety department who related to me that they have maxxed out a \$15,000 credit card paying for college tuition that was in excess of what was covered by the Township’s tuition reimbursement program.

An additional consideration for the Board is that while college tuition has drastically increased, the current \$6,000 figure has not been increased in over 20 years. According to a 2024 Detroit Free Press article, the average cost of college tuition at public 4-year institutions has risen 179.2% in



Hamburg Township Public Safety Department

PO BOX 157 · HAMBURG, MICHIGAN 48139
PHONE: (810) 231-9391 · FAX: (810) 231-9401
EMAIL: HATP@hamburg.mi.us



RICHARD DUFFANY, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SAFETY

the last 20 years. (<https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2024/07/31/michigan-universities-tuition-increase-cost/74520756007/>).

One final consideration is the financial impact on the Township moving forward should this increase be approved. If you remove those employees who are covered by or will be covered by a collective bargaining agreement and not subject to this program, there have only been two non-union employees who have submitted for tuition reimbursement in the last several years. In short, there is very minimal impact or potential impact on the Township's finances should this increase be approved.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard Duffany".

Chief Richard Duffany
Director of Public Safety