



Policy: Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Funding

Scope: CITYWIDE

Policy Contact

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Table of Contents

Purpose

Background

Policy

Effective: February 16, 2016

I. PURPOSE

In order to assure that the City's Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) program is financially sustainable, the program should accumulate adequate resources in a systematic and disciplined manner over the active service life of benefitting employees. The City's OPEB Funding Policy documents the method the City will use to determine its actuarially determined contributions to fund the long-term cost of benefits to City employees and retirees. The policy also:

- Demonstrates prudent financial management practices;
- Promotes long-term and strategic thinking;
- Provides guidance in making annual budget decisions;
- Reassures bond rating agencies; and
- Demonstrates to employees and the public how OPEB will be funded to ensure adequate funding for negotiated benefits.

2. BACKGROUND

The City provides OPEB benefits to active employees hired before specific dates based on negotiated labor agreements and the unrepresented resolution. The City's OPEB benefits consist of a cash contribution benefit for retiree medical and dental benefits and subsidized premiums resulting from blending retirees and active employees in the same risk pool. For police and miscellaneous employees, the cash benefit amount is \$300 per month for retirees only and \$365 per month for retirees with dependents. Police employees hired after September 3, 2013, and miscellaneous employees hired after June 30, 2012, are not eligible for OPEB benefits. For fire employees hired before January 14, 2015, the cash benefit amount is the total of the lowest cost \$25 co-pay health plan premium for one plus an additional 5.28% of that cost; the lowest cost PPO dental plan for one; and \$25.

Fire employees hired on or after January 14, 2015, are eligible for a cash benefit amount up to \$774 monthly from the date of retirement until the retiree reaches Medicare eligibility age, and up to \$387 monthly from the date the retiree reaches Medicare eligibility. Fire employees pay \$45 per month, with a City match of \$45 per month, deposited to a separate trust fund to pay for the benefit.

The City's OPEB cash benefit is prorated based on years of service – 50% for employees with ten to fifteen years of service, 75% for employees with fifteen to twenty years of service and 100% for employees with twenty years of service or more.

Currently, the City has \$363 million in underfunded long-term liabilities associated with retiree medical benefits from all funding sources, \$309 million attributable to the General Fund. While the benefit was historically funded on a pay-as-you-go (pay-go) basis, paying only the actual cost of the benefit for retirees in the current fiscal year, financial accounting standards require the

City to account for the benefit as if it were actuarially funded. If the City does not replace the current plan of pay-go combined with minimal contributions to the City's relatively new OPEB trust fund, the City's pay-go obligation will continue to grow, consuming resources that would otherwise pay for vital programs and services.

Consistent with best practices, in January 2013 Council authorized the establishment of an irrevocable trust with an initial General Fund investment of \$2 million. Another \$2 million was contributed to the trust in FY2013/14. The FY2014/15 and FY2015/16 approved budgets each included a \$1 million contribution to the trust, bringing the total funding for the trust to \$6 million. The approved FY2014/15 and FY2015/16 Budget Resolutions also included authority to direct available budgetary resources in the pension budget accounts at the end of the fiscal year to the OPEB Trust.

3. POLICY

3.1 OPEB Actuarially Determined Contribution (ADC)

The City will engage an OPEB actuary to determine the City's ADC based on biennial actuarial valuations. The ADC will include the normal cost¹ for current service and amortization of the unfunded liability. The normal cost will be calculated using the entry age normal cost method using appropriate economic and non-economic assumptions approved by the City.

The City will review the actuarial valuations to validate the completeness and accuracy of the employee census data and the reasonableness of the actuarial assumptions. Actuarial valuations involve estimates and assumptions about the probability of occurrence of events far into the future. Actuarially determined amounts are subject to continual revision as actual results are compared to past expectations and new estimates are made about the future.

3.2 Funding the ADC

The City will continue to appropriate in the annual budget for contributions to the OPEB Trust and the pay-go costs of OPEB for current retirees, as well as use one-time savings in pension contributions to make additional contributions to the OPEB Trust.

The City will fully fund the ADC within 10 years, or by Fiscal Year 2025-26, by reducing the gap between its current OPEB funding and the ADC with a combination of City contributions, employee contributions, and OPEB plan changes.

The City will achieve "full funding" of its OPEB plan within 30 years, or by Fiscal Year 2045-46, with a 20-year amortization of the unfunded liability after the 10-year ramp-up period. Full funding of the OPEB plan is defined as funding 100% of the accrued liability on an actuarial basis.

¹ Normal Cost – the current year cost of the program to provide the benefit for current employees in the future.

3.3 Transparency and Reporting

Funding of the City's OPEB should be transparent to all parties including City employees, retirees, recognized employee organizations, the City Council and Sacramento residents. In order to achieve this transparency, the following information shall be available:

- a. Copies of the biennial actuarial valuations for the City's OPEB plan shall be made available to the City Council.
- b. The City's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report shall be published on its website. This report includes information on the City's OPEB plan, contributions to the OPEB Trust, and the funded status of the plan.
- c. The City's annual operating budget shall include appropriations for contributions to the OPEB Trust and pay-go costs.

3.3 Review of Funding Policy

Funding OPEB requires a long-term plan. The City will review this policy at a minimum biennially, coincident with preparation of the actuarial valuations, to determine if changes to this policy are necessary to ensure adequate resources are being accumulated to fund OPEB benefits.