

## Information Pages: Other Postemployment Benefits (OPEB) Funding Policy

The City of Ann Arbor Retiree Health Care Benefits Plan is a single-employer defined benefit healthcare plan administered by the City of Ann Arbor Employees' Retirement System (CAAERS). The plan provides certain health care and life insurance benefits, otherwise known as other postemployment benefits (OPEB), for eligible retired employees and their dependents in accordance with Ann Arbor City Code Chapter 21. Substantially all the City's employees hired before July 1, 2011 may become eligible for these benefits if they retire directly from City employment. The following OPEB policy, as adopted by City Council, should be used to provide the general framework for funding the City's OPEB plan.

### **1. General OPEB Policy**

- 1.1 The City relies on the Trustees of the CAAERS to perform periodic actuarial valuations and provide the City with an appropriate Annual Required Contribution (ARC). The systematic and disciplined funding of the system is imperative that the City demonstrates to rating agencies, investment bankers, creditors, the State of Michigan and taxpayers that City officials are appropriately funding this financial obligation of the City.
- 1.2 The ARC is based on a set of assumptions set forth by the Employees' Retirement System Board. The assumptions are as follows:
  - The actuarial cost method used (i.e. entry-age)
  - The rate of return on investments
  - The projected health care cost increases
  - The amortization period of the unfunded liability
  - The amortization method of the unfunded liability (i.e. open or closed)
- 1.3 The City of Ann Arbor will strive to achieve 90% funding of the City of Ann Arbor Retiree Health Care Benefits Plan. To the extent that 90% funding has been achieved, the City will continue to fund, at a minimum, the Normal Cost as defined by the outside actuary. To the extent that the funding goal has not been achieved, the City shall budget each fiscal year the higher of the ARC or the existing level of funding in the current budget year adjusted annually for the change in the General Fund budgeted revenues. If the General Fund revenues are projected to increase less than 2%, the city's contribution from all funds shall increase a minimum of 2%; thereby establishing a minimum increase of 2% per year. In some years this may result in an excess contribution to the Voluntary Employee Benefits Trust (VEBA) Fund, which will serve to both pay down the unfunded actuarial accrued liability and reduce future city cost increases. To the extent that the City incurs a liability related to the underfunding of the ARC in any fiscal year, the City Council will strive to set aside additional funding to pay off this liability within five years of the occurrence. To the extent active health care costs are less than the budgeted rate, the City, at the direction of the Chief Financial Officer, can transfer the annual cost savings to the VEBA trust from the Risk Fund to pay down the unfunded actuarial accrued liability and reduce future city costs.

Separate from the goal of achieving a 90% funding level in the VEBA trust is that sufficient additional funding should be reserved for in the city's Risk Fund such that

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the VEBA would achieve 100% funding if the funds were to be transferred into the VEBA. Retaining these funds in the Risk Fund provides the dual purpose of having a sufficient reserve for benefits which are not permanently legally restricted for OPEB costs, as well as having the funds available as a “rainy day” reserve. As a “rainy day” reserve, the Risk Fund could rebate the funds back to the city organization in the event of an unexpected economic shock. Given the importance of having a “rainy day” reserve, the Chief Financial Officer will recommend each year what portion of the City’s contribution should be transferred to the VEBA trust and what portion should be maintained in the Risk Fund as a reserve.

- 1.4 The City recognizes that it is of the utmost importance that elected and appointed City officials, and all others associated with the Employees’ Retirement System avoid conflict of interests as well as the appearance of conflicts. City officials and all others associated with the Employees’ Retirement System must conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the best interests of the City and taxpayers. City officials and all others associated with the Employees’ Retirement System must function within all applicable laws and regulations, Federal and State, both statutory and regulatory, as well as within the City’s own policies and procedures. A City official and all others associated with the Employees’ Retirement System must not use, appear to use or permit others to use the authority of their position in a manner that could erode the confidence of taxpayers.. This includes avoiding business gifts, gratuities, or hospitality of more than nominal value. City officials and all others associated with the Employees’ Retirement System are expected to disclose any interest or association that interferes, might interfere, or might be thought to interfere with independent exercise of judgment in the City’s best interest.
- 1.5 The City of Ann Arbor will not issue debt to fund any liability associated with funding the ARC or the remaining unfunded liability. The City will not use short-term borrowing to finance this cost except in the case of an extreme financial emergency, which is beyond its control or reasonable ability to forecast.
- 1.6 The City may use the services of qualified City staff, consultants, outside legal counsel and/or outside actuaries (other than the actuary used by the CAAERS Board) to assist in the analysis, evaluation, and decision process of benefit changes to union contracts, personnel policies, retirement windows or other changes as needed.

## **2. Process**

- 2.1 The City will apportion the ARC to each fund and agency (service unit) based on the number of employees they have budgeted for the upcoming fiscal year that are participating in the system as well as the cost.
- 2.2 Each service unit will be charged 1/12 of the budgeted cost each month regardless of the actual employees participating in the system. This is necessary to ensure the City meets its obligation for the ARC.
- 2.3 For all funds, the ARC collected each month will be credited to the Risk Fund, as

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the Risk Fund pays for the retiree health care premiums. At fiscal year end, the amount collected from service unit budgets less the retiree health care premiums paid will be remitted to the VEBA Fund. For the Downtown Development Authority and Housing Commission, the City will bill each organization for their payroll on a monthly basis. The amounts they owe for OPEB will be credited to VEBA Fund monthly.