



FPPA Board Seeks Legislation for Employer Contribution Increase

By Kevin Bommer, CML executive director

In 2018, the Fire and Police Pension Association (FPPA) Board of Directors voted to direct staff to prepare a legislative request for an increase in employer contributions by 4 percent. The vote was later reconsidered after significant outcry from CML, municipalities, fire districts, and at least one fire protection authority – some of which has just completed irrevocable affiliation with the Statewide Defined Benefit (SWDB) plan.

In lieu of the request for state legislation, the Board created a task force of employer, employee, and other representatives to examine the long-term funding of the SWDB plan, as well as the funded status of and challenges for the Statewide Death and Disability (D&D) plan. While the pension plan is nearly 100 percent funded, the D&D plan has slipped below 80 percent and is going in the wrong direction.

CML Executive Director Kevin Bommer was a member of the task force, having been responsible for lobbying pension issues since starting at CML nearly 20 years ago. The group began meeting in November 2018 and concluded its last meeting on May 29. Recommendations to the FPPA Board from the task force were voted on. CML voted for a recommendation on what Bommer believes is the most critical issue – the declining funded status of the D&D plan – and against the recommendation for the SWDB plan that calls for an employer contribution increase of 4 percent over 8 years and transferring authority for future contribution increases from the legislature to the FPPA Board.

At its most recent meeting, the FPPA Board directed staff to draft legislation to present to the legislature's interim Pension Reform Commission. That interim committee is responsible for oversight of FPPA and the Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA), and it can sponsor and directly introduce bills in the 2020 session.



If adopted by the interim committee as proposed by the FPPA Board, legislation in the 2020 session will include the following:

Statewide Defined Benefit Plan

- Require a 4 percent employer increase over 8 years, with the ability of the FPPA Board to further increase the required contributions equally between employers and employees.
- Provide for a normal retirement as early as age 50, if a member's combined years of service and age equals 80; with a corresponding 1 percent increase in employer contributions, to be implemented subsequent to other employer contribution increases, if any.
- Convert separate retirement accounts to defined contribution accounts.
- Authorize the FPPA Board to reduce the re-entry continuing uniform rate of contribution to allow credit for employer and member excess re-entry contributions toward the proposed increased contributions.

Statewide Death & Disability Plan

- Allow the FPPA Board to adjust the required contribution rate by up to 0.2 percent per year.
- Seek state assistance in funding the unfunded liability attributable to members who were enrolled prior to 1998.



As it relates to the SWDB, the main issue for employees has been the lack of annual cost of living adjustments (COLAs) for retirees. Unlike PERA, COLA adjustments for FPPA retirees are discretionary to allow the FPPA Board to ensure the plan remains actuarially sound. In the past decade, employees sought legislation allowing for a plan election among employees to increase their employee contribution so that they might have a chance of annual COLAs. The legislation was passed, and a subsequent plan election was narrowly approved to increase employee contributions 0.5 percent year for 4 years, until employees are contributing 12 percent.

Not too long passed before the FPPA Board reduced the plan's actuarial assumption from 7.5 percent to 7.0 percent, which essentially eliminated the likelihood for the Board to be able to grant COLAs for the foreseeable future. Combined with some other long-term concerns, the stage is set for legislation that will drive up employer contributions and transfer the authority for future hikes to the FPPA Board.

These actions merely set the stage for what will be a robust discussion when the Pension Reform Commission meets later this year. A date will be selected between August and early October and may include more than one meeting. For more information, please contact Kevin Bommer at kbommer@cml.org. Information on the FPPA Board and its members may be found at www.fppaco.org/board.html.

Three Colorado Rural Communities and Regions Will Receive Technical Assistance to Help Build Long-Term Economic Growth

Acting Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development Joel Baxley announced the names of 47 rural communities and regions that will receive technical assistance (bit.ly/2wPtTdq) to help create and implement long-term economic development plans.

The USDA is providing the assistance through an initiative called Rural Economic Development Innovation (REDI) (bit.ly/2wSph60). The USDA's Innovation Center created REDI to support recommendations identified in the Report to the President from the Interagency Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity (bit.ly/2WFKolg).

Each of the 47 communities and regions will be paired with one of four partner organizations that will provide free technical assistance for up to two years to help rural towns and regions create and implement

economic development plans. The USDA awarded \$1.2 million in cooperative agreements to these partners in September 2018. The agreements will help the partners finance the free technical assistance. In Colorado, three entities were selected to receive technical assistance: Summit County Chamber of Commerce – Summit Prosperity Initiative, City of Craig and Moffat County, and Southwest Council of Governments in Durango.

McClure Engineering Company is partnering with CO.STARTERS and working with the Summit County Chamber of Commerce – Summit Prosperity Initiative. The National Association of Counties Research Foundation is partnering with the National Association of Regional Councils and working with the City of Craig and Moffat County for planning assistance to help complete a broadband build-out plan titled "Developing High-Speed

Connectivity." The planning will also help develop workforce housing and senior independent-living housing.

The Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP) will provide technical assistance to the Southwest Council of Governments in Durango through the organization's WealthWorks model. The model will help these rural communities and the region identify and market local assets and develop local industries and economic sectors.

USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities and create jobs in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community facilities such as schools, public safety, and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural areas. For more information, visit www.rd.usda.gov.

Art Grant

The National Endowment for the Arts offers grants for organizations to support exemplary projects in artist communities, arts education, dance, design, folk and traditional arts, literature, local arts agencies, media arts, museums, music, musical theater, opera, presenting and multidisciplinary works, theater, and visual arts. Deadline is **July 11**. For more information, visit www.arts.gov/grants/apply-grant/grants-organizations.

Congratulations to Englewood on Adopting the Standardized Sales Tax Definitions

Englewood joins the 47 self-collecting sales tax municipalities having adopted the standardized sales tax definitions in their local tax code. This continues the work undertaken by the municipal tax and finance administration community, originating with a request by the legislature (SJR 14-038) to work on a uniform set of sales tax definitions that could be adopted in the self-collecting jurisdictions for tax simplification.

The following are the cities or towns that have previously adopted the definitions: Alamosa, Arvada, Aspen, Aurora, Avon, Black Hawk, Boulder, Broomfield, Cañon City, Carbondale, Centennial, Cherry Hills Village, Cortez, Craig, Crested Butte, Dacono, Denver,

Edgewater, Evans, Federal Heights, Fort Collins, Frisco, Glenwood Springs, Golden, Greeley, Greenwood Village, Gunnison, Gypsum, La Junta, Lamar, Littleton, Longmont, Louisville, Montrose, Mountain Village, Mt. Crested Butte, Northglenn, Parker, Sheridan, Silverthorne, Snowmass Village, Steamboat Springs, Timnath, Vail, Westminster, Wheat Ridge, and Windsor.

CML would like to congratulate the staff, appointees, and elected officials of Englewood for their work and leadership in adopting their ordinances. We now have a total of 48 self-collecting municipalities that have adopted.



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Newsletter

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Subscription to CML Newsletter is offered as a portion of member dues. Cost to nonmembers is \$300 a year.

Local Officials and Private Entities Come Together to Address Homelessness

The Metro Mayors Caucus, the Denver Foundation, and other private donors have raised \$100,000 for the Metro Denver Homeless Initiative (MDHI) Flex Fund. The fund was created as a place for nonprofit providers of housing and services for people experiencing homelessness to apply to the fund for one-time payments for costs such as security or utility deposits. The fund allows for

the payment to be up to \$3,000. This one-time financial assistance can be the difference in getting a homeless individual or family housed. It is a great example of communities coming together to find meaningful solutions for homelessness. For more information on the MDHI Flex Fund, visit www.mdhi.org/flex_fund.

CML Hires Heather Stauffer



Kevin Bommer, CML executive director, recently announced the hiring of Heather Stauffer as CML's next legislative and policy advocate. The position was created with Bommer's

transition from deputy director and full-time lobbyist to executive director. Stauffer comes to CML from Denver Water, where she spent the past few years honing her advocacy skills.

Stauffer is a native Coloradan with a deep love of community, policy, and politics. After graduating with her bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Northern Colorado, Heather worked in the

office of Congressman Betsy Markey and later for nonprofit E-Town, before joining Denver Water in 2012. While working at Denver Water, Heather specialized in government and community relations. In that role, she communicated with a variety of constituent groups, government officials, and lawmakers regarding water issues and policy. When she is not working, Heather enjoys spending time outdoors, hiking any one of Colorado's many trails, learning to cook Indian food, and willing her house plants to grow.

"My team and I have seen Heather in action, and we are getting a great new addition," said Bommer. She will start at CML on July 29.

Course Notebook

Energy

If you are in a position of managing, developing, implementing, or marketing guaranteed energy savings performance contracting (GESPC) programs, products or services, attend the 8th Annual Market Transformation Conference, **Aug. 21–23**, in Denver. This one-and-a-half-day conference will offer a broad range of topics for those involved in the GESPC community through 360-degree panel discussions, facilitated workshops, and a number of networking opportunities. Visit conference.energyservicescoalition.org to learn more and register.

Research Corner: Castle Rock, Commerce City Among Fastest-Growing Municipalities in Nation

By Melissa Mata, CML municipal research analyst

The U.S. Census Bureau recently released updated population estimates for incorporated municipalities, and Colorado's own Castle Rock was 2017–2018's 14th-fastest-growing municipality of those with a population of 50,000 or more. Castle Rock saw a 4.3 percent increase in its population. Commerce City ranked 16th. Denver also stood out for its growth in the past year; its numerical increase of 11,053 was the 9th largest in the country, again among those with a population over 50,000. Colorado Springs (20th) and Aurora (21st) also saw large numerical increases.

According to the current population estimates, only 4 percent of municipalities had a population of 50,000 or more in 2018, yet these cities and towns were home to almost 39 percent of the total U.S. population. On the other hand, 76 percent of municipalities had fewer than 5,000 people.

To explore population estimates for your city or town, please visit the U.S. Census Bureau's website at www.census.gov/programs-surveys/popest/data/tables.html.

CWIG Welcoming New Members

Now you can become an official member of Colorado Women in Government (CWIG)! CWIG is open to both men and women who support the mission of advancing women in government leadership. For a limited time, you can join CWIG for a one-time contribution of \$25. This lifetime membership provides access to a quarterly newsletter and free admission to networking events that will be held across the state. CWIG is an organization that supports women who hold elected office or are employed in government in Colorado. It creates opportunities for women in government leadership roles to network with other elected and employed city and town officials from across the state to share resources and develop the skills necessary to reach their full potential as leaders. To learn more, visit www.facebook.com/CWIGColorado.

DOLA Division of Housing Embarks on Engagement Tour

The Colorado Department of Local Affairs Division of Housing (DOH), Housing Colorado, and Colorado Housing and Finance Authority will host five statewide meetings to generate local engagement and partnerships in reaching the full potential of the state's new investment in housing. The meetings will include briefings on housing policies, programs, and recent housing-related legislation. Following these briefings, participants will take part in facilitated discussions to share their perspectives and

opinions on existing programs, needed new programs, and technical assistance needed in their communities. The dates, times, and locations follow:

Grand Junction: June 27, 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.
Mesa County Workforce Center
512 29½ Road, Grand Junction
To register, visit bit.ly/2WvGeOc.

Pueblo: July 11, 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.
Pueblo City-County Library, Rawlings Branch
100 E. Abriendo Ave., Pueblo
To register, visit bit.ly/2X8FKSy.

Durango: July 29, 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.
Durango Public Library
1900 E. 3rd Ave., Durango
To register, visit bit.ly/2wSgpNK.

Centennial: Aug. 22, 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.
Eagle Street Facility, Community Room
7272 S. Eagle St., Centennial
To register, visit bit.ly/2RaMRUZ.

Fort Collins: Aug. 29, 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.
Harmony Library
4616 S. Shields St., Fort Collins
To register, visit bit.ly/2WHSXSL.



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