

Public Employees Retirement Association of Minnesota

Statewide Volunteer Firefighter Plan

GASB Statements No. 67 and No. 68 Accounting and
Financial Reporting for Pensions – Additional
Disclosures

December 31, 2023





April 9, 2025

Public Employees Retirement Association of Minnesota
Statewide Volunteer Firefighter Plan
St. Paul, Minnesota

Dear PERA Trustees:

The provided exhibits provide accounting and financial reporting information that is intended to comply with the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statements No. 67 and No. 68 for the Statewide Volunteer Firefighter Plan, as amended by Statement No. 82. These calculations have been made on a basis that is consistent with our understanding of these accounting standards.

GASB Statement No. 67 is the accounting standard that applies to the financial reports issued by retirement systems. GASB Statement No. 68 establishes accounting and financial reporting for state and local government employers who provide their employees (including former employees) pension benefits through a trust. GASB Statement No. 82 is an amendment to Statements No. 67, No. 68, and No. 73, intended to improve consistency in the application of the accounting standards.

Our calculation of the liability associated with the benefits described in this letter was performed for the purpose of providing reporting and disclosure information that satisfies the requirements of GASB Statements No. 67 and No. 68. The Net Pension Liability is not an appropriate measure for measuring the sufficiency of plan assets to cover the estimated cost of settling the employer's benefit obligations. The Net Pension Liability is not an appropriate measure for assessing the need for or amount of future employer contributions. The calculation of the plan's liability for the provided exhibits may not be applicable for purposes of funding the plan. A calculation of the plan's liability for purposes other than satisfying the requirements of GASB Statements No. 67 and No. 68 may produce significantly different results. This letter and provided exhibits may be provided to parties other than the Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) and the individual Statewide Volunteer Firefighter Plans only in their entirety and only with the permission of PERA or individual plan. GRS is not responsible for unauthorized use of this letter and provided exhibits.

The provided exhibits are based upon information, furnished to us by PERA, concerning retirement and ancillary benefits, active members, deferred vested members, retirees and beneficiaries, and financial data. If your understanding of this information is different, please let us know. This information was checked for internal consistency, but it was not audited.

This report, including exhibits, complements the actuarial valuation report for funding purposes that were provided to each Statewide Volunteer Firefighter Plan and should be considered in conjunction with that report. Please see the actuarial valuation report as of December 31, 2024 for additional discussion of the nature of actuarial calculations and more information related to participant data, economic and demographic assumptions, and benefit provisions.

To the best of our knowledge, the information contained within the provided exhibits is accurate and fairly represents the actuarial position of the Statewide Volunteer Firefighter Plan as of the measurement date. All calculations have been made in conformity with generally accepted actuarial principles and practices as well as with the Actuarial Standards of Practice issued by the Actuarial Standards Board.

The provided exhibits were prepared using our proprietary valuation model and related software which, in our professional judgment, has the capability to provide results that are consistent with the purposes of the valuation and has no material limitations or known weaknesses. We performed tests to ensure that the model reasonably represents that which is intended to be modeled.

The signing actuaries are independent of the plan sponsor.

Bonita J. Wurst and Sheryl L. Christensen are Members of the American Academy of Actuaries (MAAA) and meet the Qualification Standards of the American Academy of Actuaries to render the actuarial opinions contained herein.

Respectfully submitted,
Gabriel, Roeder, Smith & Company



Bonita J. Wurst, ASA, EA, FCA, MAAA



Sheryl L. Christensen, FSA, EA, FCA, MAAA

BJW/SLC:sc



Discussion

Accounting Standard

For pension plans that are administered through trusts or equivalent arrangements, Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement No. 67 establishes standards of financial reporting for separately issued financial reports and specifies the required approach for measuring the pension liability. Similarly, GASB Statement No. 68 establishes standards for state and local government employers (as well as non-employer contributing entities) to account for and disclose the net pension liability, pension expense, and other information associated with providing retirement benefits to their employees (and former employees) on their basic financial statements. Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement No. 82, Pension Issues, is an amendment to Statements No. 67, No. 68, and No. 73, intended to improve consistency in the application of the accounting standards.

The following discussion provides a summary of the information that is required to be disclosed under these accounting standards. A number of these disclosure items are provided in this letter and provided exhibits. However, certain information, such as notes regarding accounting policies and investments, is not included in this letter and provided exhibits and the retirement system and/or plan sponsor will be responsible for preparing and disclosing that information to comply with these accounting standards.

Financial Statements

GASB Statement No. 68 requires state or local governments to recognize the net pension liability and the pension expense on their financial statements. The net pension liability is the difference between the total pension liability and the plan's fiduciary net position. In traditional actuarial terms, this is analogous to the accrued liability less the market value of assets (not the smoothed actuarial value of assets that is often encountered in actuarial valuations performed to determine the employer's contribution requirement).

Paragraph 57 of GASB Statement No. 68 states, "Contributions to the pension plan from the employer subsequent to the measurement date of the collective net pension liability and before the end of the employer's reporting period should be reported as a deferred outflow of resources related to pensions." The information contained in the provided exhibits do not incorporate any contributions made to the Statewide Volunteer Firefighter Plan subsequent to the measurement date of December 31, 2023.

The pension expense recognized each fiscal year is equal to the change in the net pension liability from the beginning of the year to the end of the year, adjusted for deferred recognition of the liability and investment experience.

Pension plans that prepare their own, stand-alone financial statements are required to present two financial statements – a statement of fiduciary net position and a statement of changes in fiduciary net position in accordance with GASB Statement No. 67. The *statement of fiduciary net position* presents the assets and liabilities of the pension plan at the end of the pension plan's reporting period. The *statement of changes in fiduciary net position* presents the additions, such as contributions and investment income, and deductions, such as benefit payments and expenses, and net increase or decrease in the fiduciary net position.

Notes to Financial Statements

GASB Statement No. 68 requires the notes of the employer's financial statements to disclose the total pension expense, the pension plan's liabilities and assets, and deferred outflows and inflows of resources related to pensions.

Both GASB Statement No. 67 and No. 68 require the notes of the financial statements for the employers and pension plans, to include certain additional information. The list of disclosure items should include:

- A description of benefits provided by the plan;
- The type of employees and number of members covered by the pension plan;
- A description of the plan's funding policy, which includes member and employer contribution requirements;
- The pension plan's investment policies;
- The pension plan's fiduciary net position, net pension liability, and the pension plan's fiduciary net position as a percentage of the total pension liability;
- The net pension liability using a discount rate that is 1% higher and 1% lower than used to calculate the total pension liability and net pension liability for financial reporting purposes;
- Significant assumptions and methods used to calculate the total pension liability;
- Inputs to the discount rates; and
- Certain information about mortality assumptions and the dates of experience studies.

Retirement systems that issue stand-alone financial statements are required to disclose additional information in accordance with GASB Statement No. 67. This information includes:

- The composition of the pension plan's Board and the authority under which benefit terms may be amended;
- A description of how fair value is determined;
- Information regarding certain reserves and investments, which include concentrations of investments greater than or equal to 5%, receivables, and insurance contracts excluded from plan assets; and
- Annual money-weighted rate of return.

Required Supplementary Information

GASB Statement No. 67 requires a 10-year fiscal history of:

- Sources of changes in the net pension liability;
- Information about the components of the net pension liability and related ratios, including the pension plan's fiduciary net position as a percentage of the total pension liability, and the net pension liability as a percent of covered-employee payroll; and
- Comparison of the actual employer contributions to the actuarially determined contributions based on the plan's funding policy.

Measurement of the Net Pension Liability

The net pension liability is to be measured as the total pension liability, less the amount of the pension plan's fiduciary net position. In actuarial terms, this will be the accrued liability less the market value of assets.

General Implications of Contribution Allocation Procedure or Funding Policy on Future Expected Plan Contributions and Funded Status

Given the plan's contribution allocation procedure, if there are no changes in benefits, Chapter 353G.08 required contributions are made, and all actuarial assumptions are met (including the assumption of the plan earning 6.00% on a market value of assets basis, as prescribed by statutes), then the following outcomes are expected:

1. The normal cost of the plan is expected to increase with inflation annually; and
2. Plans that currently have a funded ratio more than 100% are expected to maintain a funded ratio over 100%; plans that currently have a funded ratio less than 100% are expected to gradually improve.

The projections done for this report are strictly for the purpose of determining the GASB single discount rate and are different from a funding projection for the ongoing plan.

Limitations of Funded Status Measurements

Unless otherwise indicated, a funded status measurement presented in this provided exhibits are based upon the actuarial accrued liability and the market value of assets. Unless otherwise indicated, with regard to any funded status measurements presented in this provided exhibits:

1. The measurement is inappropriate for assessing the sufficiency of plan assets to cover the estimated cost of settling the plan's benefit obligations; in other words, of transferring the obligations to an unrelated third party in an arm's length market value type transaction.
2. The measurement is dependent upon the actuarial cost method which, in combination with the plan's amortization policy, affects the timing and amounts of future contributions. The amounts of future contributions will most certainly differ from those assumed in this provided exhibits due to future actual experience differing from assumed experience based upon the actuarial assumptions. A funded status measurement in the provided exhibits of 100% is not synonymous with no required future contributions. If the funded status were 100%, the plan would still require future normal cost contributions (i.e., contributions to cover the cost of the active membership accruing an additional year of service credit).

Limitation of Project Scope

Actuarial standards do not require the actuary to evaluate the ability of the plan sponsor or other contributing entity to make required contributions to the plan when due. Such an evaluation was not within the scope of this project and is not within the actuary's domain of expertise. Consequently, the actuary performed no such evaluation.

Timing of the Valuation

An actuarial valuation to determine the total pension liability is required to be performed at least every two years. For employer reporting, the net pension liability and pension expense should be measured as of a date (measurement date) no earlier than the end of the employer's prior fiscal year, consistently applied from period to period. If the actuarial valuation used to determine the total pension liability is not calculated as of the measurement date, the total pension liability is required to be rolled forward from the actuarial valuation date to the measurement date.

The total pension liability shown in this provided exhibits is based on an actuarial valuation performed as of December 31, 2023 and a measurement date of December 31, 2023.

Single Discount Rate

Projected benefit payments are required to be discounted to their actuarial present values using a single discount rate that reflects: (1) a long-term expected rate of return on pension plan investments (to the extent that the plan's fiduciary net position is projected to be sufficient to pay benefits); and (2) tax-exempt municipal bond rate based on an index of 20-year general obligation bonds with an average AA credit rating as of the measurement date (to the extent that the contributions for use with the long-term expected rate of return are not met).

For the purpose of this valuation, the expected rate of return on pension plan investments is 6.00%; the municipal bond rate is 3.77% (based on the weekly rate closest to but not later than the measurement date of the Fidelity "20-Year Municipal GO AA Index"); and the resulting single discount rate is 6.00%.

Recognition of Deferred Outflows and Inflows of Resources

Differences between expected and actual experience and changes in assumptions are recognized in pension expense using a systematic and rational method over a closed period equal to the average of the expected remaining service lives of all employees that are provided with pensions through the pension plan (active employees and inactive employees) determined as of the beginning of the measurement period. Since this is GRS' first valuation of the Statewide Firefighter Plan, the calculation was done as of the end of the measurement period. We believe this is a reasonable approximation of the average remaining service life as of the beginning of the measurement period.

Additionally, differences between projected and actual earnings on plan investments should be recognized in pension expense using a systematic and rational method over a closed five-year period. For this purpose, the deferred outflows and inflows of resources are recognized in the pension expense as a level dollar amount over the closed period identified above.

Notes to Schedule of Contributions

Methods and Assumptions Used to Determine Contribution Rates for the Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 2023:

Valuation Date	December 31, 2022
Notes	Actuarially determined contribution rates are calculated as of each December 31 and apply to the fiscal year beginning on the day after the measurement date.
Actuarial Cost Method	Entry Age Normal
Amortization Method	Level Dollar, Open Period
Remaining Amortization Period	10 years
Asset Valuation Method	Market Value
Inflation	No explicit price inflation assumption is used in this valuation
Expenses	Prior year expenses increased by 3.5% are included in the actuarially determined contribution.
Salary Increases	N/A
Investment Rate of Return	6.00%
Retirement Age	Active Firefighters are assumed to retire at the later of age 50 or when fully vested.
Mortality	No explicit mortality assumption is used in this valuation.



Actuarial Methods and Assumptions Used for the Determination of Total Pension Liability and Related Values

Actuarial Assumptions and methods were the same as used for the December 31, 2024 valuation reports, with the exception of the actuarial cost method which is described below. For a description of other assumptions and methods used please see those valuation reports.

Actuarial Cost Method

Normal cost and the allocation of benefit values between service rendered before and after the valuation date were determined using an **Individual Entry-Age Actuarial Cost Method** having the following characteristics:

- (i) the annual normal cost for each individual active member, payable from the date of employment to the date of retirement, is sufficient to accumulate the value of the member's benefit at the time of retirement; and
- (ii) The annual normal costs for each individual increased by inflation each year, are spread over the participant's career. The assumed rate of inflation is 3.00%.

Actuarial gains/(losses), as they occur, reduce (increase) the Total Pension Liability.

Economic Assumptions

The investment return rate assumed in the valuation is 6.00% per year, compounded annually (net after investment expenses).

The inflation rate assumed in the valuation is 3.0% per year, compounded annually.

All other assumptions are the same as those used in the December 31, 2024 valuation reports for funding purposes.

Benefit Provisions Used for the Determination of Total Pension Liability and Related Values

Benefit provisions are the same as those used in the December 31, 2024 valuation reports for funding purposes.

Calculation of the Single Discount Rate

GASB Statement No. 67 includes a specific requirement for the discount rate that is used for the purpose of the measurement of the Total Pension Liability. This rate considers the ability of the fund to meet benefit obligations in the future. To make this determination, employer contributions, employee contributions, benefit payments, expenses and investment returns are projected into the future. The Plan Net Position (assets) in future years can then be determined and compared to its obligation to make benefit payments in those years. As long as assets are projected to be on hand in a future year, the assumed long-term expected rate of return is used. In years where assets are not projected to be sufficient to meet benefit payments, the use of a municipal bond rate is required, as described in the following paragraph.

The *Single Discount Rate* (SDR) is equivalent to applying these two rates to the benefits that are projected to be paid during the different time periods. The SDR reflects: (1) the long-term expected rate of return on pension plan investments (during the period in which the fiduciary net position is projected to be sufficient to pay benefits); and (2) tax-exempt municipal bond rate based on an index of 20-year general obligation bonds with an average AA credit rating as of the measurement date (to the extent that the contributions for use with the long-term expected rate of return are not met).

An SDR of 6.00% was used to measure the Total Pension Liability. This SDR was based on the expected rate of return on pension plan investments of 6.00%. The projection of cash flows used to determine this SDR assumed that contributions will be made at the rate equal to the actuarially determined contribution rates. Based on these assumptions, the pension plan's fiduciary net position was projected to be available to make all projected future benefit payments of current plan members. Therefore, the long-term expected rate of return on pension plan investments was applied to all periods of projected benefit payments to determine the Total Pension Liability.

For the purpose of this valuation, the expected rate of return on pension plan investments is 6.00%, the municipal bond rate is 3.77%, and the resulting SDR is 6.00%.

The State of Minnesota and the Cities associated with each SVF plan have a history of contributing above the required contribution to the fund. Based on the current funding policy and the history of contributions, it is the opinion of the actuaries that the Plan Fiduciary Net Position is sufficient to make all future projected benefit payments, assuming all other assumptions are realized. As a result, the SDR is the expected rate of return on pension plan investments (6.00%) and projections have been excluded from this report.

Regarding the sensitivity of the net pension liability to changes in the SDR, we have included in the provided exhibits the plan's net pension liability calculated using a single discount rate of 6.00%, as well as what the plan's net pension liability would be if it were calculated using a SDR that is 1-percentage-point lower or 1-percentage-point higher.

Glossary of Terms

<i>Actuarial Accrued Liability (AAL)</i>	The AAL is the difference between the actuarial present value of all benefits and the actuarial value of future normal costs. The definition comes from the fundamental equation of funding which states that the present value of all benefits is the sum of the Actuarial Accrued Liability and the present value of future normal costs. The AAL may also be referred to as “accrued liability” or “actuarial liability.”
<i>Actuarial Assumptions</i>	These assumptions are estimates of future experience with respect to rates of mortality, disability, turnover, retirement, rate or rates of investment income and compensation increases. Actuarial assumptions are generally based on past experience, often modified for projected changes in conditions. Economic assumptions (compensation increases, payroll growth, inflation and investment return) consist of an underlying real rate of return plus an assumption for a long-term average rate of inflation.
<i>Accrued Service</i>	Service credited under the system which was rendered before the date of the actuarial valuation.
<i>Actuarial Equivalent</i>	A single amount or series of amounts of equal actuarial value to another single amount or series of amounts, computed on the basis of appropriate actuarial assumptions.
<i>Actuarial Cost Method</i>	A mathematical budgeting procedure for allocating the dollar amount of the actuarial present value of the pension trust benefits between future normal cost and actuarial accrued liability. The actuarial cost method may also be referred to as the actuarial funding method.
<i>Actuarial Gain (Loss)</i>	The difference in liabilities between actual experience and expected experience during the period between two actuarial valuations is the gain (loss) on the accrued liabilities.
<i>Actuarial Present Value (APV)</i>	The amount of funds currently required to provide a payment or series of payments in the future. The present value is determined by discounting future payments at predetermined rates of interest and probabilities of payment.
<i>Actuarial Valuation</i>	The actuarial valuation report determines, as of the actuarial valuation date, the service cost, total pension liability, and related actuarial present value of projected benefit payments for pensions.
<i>Actuarial Valuation Date</i>	The date as of which an actuarial valuation is performed.
<i>Actuarially Determined Contribution (ADC) or Annual Required Contribution (ARC)</i>	A calculated contribution into a defined benefit pension plan for the reporting period, most often determined based on the funding policy of the plan. Typically, the Actuarially Determined Contribution has a normal cost payment and an amortization payment.

Glossary of Terms

<i>Amortization Method</i>	The method used to determine the periodic amortization payment may be a level dollar amount, or a level percent of pay amount. The period will typically be expressed in years, and the method will either be “open” (meaning, reset each year) or “closed” (the number of years remaining will decline each year).
<i>Amortization Payment</i>	The amortization payment is the periodic payment required to pay off an interest-discounted amount with payments of interest and principal.
<i>Cost-of-Living Adjustments</i>	Postemployment benefit changes intended to adjust benefit payments for the effects of inflation.
<i>Cost-Sharing Multiple-Employer Defined Benefit Pension Plan (cost-sharing pension plan)</i>	A multiple-employer defined benefit pension plan in which the pension obligations to the employees of more than one employer are pooled and pension plan assets can be used to pay the benefits of the employees of any employer that provides pensions through the pension plan.
<i>Covered-Employee Payroll</i>	The payroll of covered employees, which is typically only the pensionable pay and does not include pay above any pay cap.
<i>Deferred Inflows and Outflows</i>	The deferred inflows and outflows of pension resources are amounts used under GASB Statement No. 68 in developing the annual pension expense. Deferred inflows and outflows arise with differences between expected and actual experiences; changes of assumptions. The portion of these amounts not included in pension expense should be included in the deferred inflows or outflows of resources.
<i>Discount Rate</i>	<p>For GASB purposes, the discount rate is the single rate of return that results in the present value of all projected benefit payments to be equal to the sum of the funded and unfunded projected benefit payments, specifically:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The benefit payments to be made while the pension plans’ fiduciary net position is projected to be greater than the benefit payments that are projected to be made in the period; and2. The present value of the benefit payments not in (1) above, discounted using the municipal bond rate.

Glossary of Terms

<i>Entry Age Actuarial Cost Method (EAN)</i>	The EAN is a funding method for allocating the costs of the plan between the normal cost and the accrued liability. The actuarial present value of the projected benefits of each individual included in an actuarial valuation is allocated on a level basis (either level dollar or level percent of pay) over the earnings or service of the individual between entry age and assumed exit age(s). The portion of the actuarial present value allocated to a valuation year is the normal cost. The portion of this actuarial present value not provided for at a valuation date by the actuarial present value of future normal costs is the actuarial accrued liability. The sum of the accrued liability plus the present value of all future normal costs is the present value of all benefits.
<i>Fiduciary Net Position</i>	The fiduciary net position is the value of the assets of the trust.
<i>GASB</i>	The Governmental Accounting Standards Board is an organization that exists in order to promulgate accounting standards for governmental entities.
<i>Long-Term Expected Rate of Return</i>	The long-term rate of return is the expected return to be earned over the entire trust portfolio based on the asset allocation of the portfolio.
<i>Money-Weighted Rate of Return</i>	The money-weighted rate of return is a method of calculating the returns that adjusts for the changing amounts actually invested. For purposes of GASB Statement No. 67, money-weighted rate of return is calculated as the internal rate of return on pension plan investments, net of pension plan investment expense.
<i>Multiple-Employer Defined Benefit Pension Plan</i>	A multiple-employer plan is a defined benefit pension plan that is used to provide pensions to the employees of more than one employer.
<i>Municipal Bond Rate</i>	The Municipal Bond Rate is the discount rate to be used for those benefit payments that occur after the assets of the trust have been depleted.
<i>Net Pension Liability (NPL)</i>	The NPL is the liability of employers and non-employer contribution entities to plan members for benefits provided through a defined benefit pension plan.
<i>Non-Employer Contribution Entities</i>	Non-employer contribution entities are entities that make contributions to a pension plan that is used to provide pensions to the employees of other entities. For purposes of the GASB Accounting Statement plan members are not considered non-employer contribution entities.
<i>Normal Cost</i>	The actuarial present value of the pension trust benefits allocated to the current year by the actuarial cost method.

Glossary of Terms

<i>Other Postemployment Benefits (OPEB)</i>	All postemployment benefits other than retirement income (such as death benefits, life insurance, disability, and long-term care) that are provided separately from a pension plan, as well as postemployment healthcare benefits regardless of the manner in which they are provided. Other postemployment benefits do not include termination benefits.
<i>Real Rate of Return</i>	The real rate of return is the rate of return on an investment after adjustment to eliminate inflation.
<i>Service Cost</i>	The service cost is the portion of the actuarial present value of projected benefit payments that is attributed to a valuation year.
<i>Total Pension Expense</i>	<p>The total pension expense is the sum of the following items that are recognized at the end of the employer's fiscal year:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Service Cost2. Interest on the Total Pension Liability3. Current-Period Benefit Changes4. Employee Contributions (made negative for addition here)5. Projected Earnings on Plan Investments (made negative for addition here)6. Pension Plan Administrative Expense7. Other Changes in Plan Fiduciary Net Position8. Recognition of Outflow (Inflow) of Resources due to Liabilities9. Recognition of Outflow (Inflow) of Resources due to Assets
<i>Total Pension Liability (TPL)</i>	The TPL is the portion of the actuarial present value of projected benefit payments that is attributed to past periods of member service.
<i>Unfunded Actuarial Accrued Liability (UAAL)</i>	The UAAL is the difference between actuarial accrued liability and valuation assets.
<i>Valuation Assets</i>	The valuation assets are the assets used in determining the unfunded liability of the plan. For purposes of the GASB Statement No. 67, the valuation asset is equal to the market value of assets.