



**Ohio
Police
& Fire Pension
Fund**
Oct. 15, 2025

**OP&F Testimony HB280
Public Insurance and Pensions Committee**

Ohio Police & Fire Testimony HB280

Public Insurance and Pensions Committee – October 15, 2025

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Executive Summary



140 East Town Street / Columbus, Ohio 43215-5164 / 1-888-864-8363 / www.op-f.org

October 15, 2025

Honorable Bob Peterson
77 S. High Street, 11th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Chair Peterson, Vice Chair Teska, Ranking Member White, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of this important pension modernization bill.

I'm honored to represent more than 60,000 active and retired first responders who are members of the Ohio Police and Fire Pension Fund.

For generations, Ohio's police officers and firefighters have been asked to sacrifice. They've been asked to increase their employee contributions. They did. They've been asked to accept reductions in benefits. They did that as well to the tune of 3.2 billion dollars.

Each time, our members stepped forward and shouldered the responsibility. Now, we need a different solution. We've been working on this for a long time. We first sounded the alarm with HB 512 of the 134th General Assembly in 2021 with our sponsors Representative Cindy Abrams and Brian Baldrige. Representative Thomas Hall joined the fight, and we subsequently introduced HB 296 of the 135th General Assembly in 2023. Our sponsors have held interested party meetings, gathered feedback and we arrived at compromise Substitute H.B. 296, which passed in the House by a vote of 66-25 on December 4, 2024.

Unfortunately, the failure to act has increased the problem. We also heard feedback from GA members, saying they want this problem solved. This is why in keeping with the recommendation of the Reason Foundation and Americans for Prosperity, HB 280 seeks to solve the problem once and for all.

House Bill 280 provides a good government, common sense solution.

Here's how HB 280 makes sense: for firefighters, the employer contribution rate remains unchanged. For police officers, the rate increases gradually by just one percentage point each year until it reaches 24 percent. This will help provide long-term solvency and make the fund equitable for all its members.

The phased-in approach gives employers predictability and time to plan while also moving us toward a fairer, more sustainable system.

In addition, HB 280 contains important safeguards. If the pension fund's unfunded liability ever stretches beyond the 30-year amortization standard, the board has limited authority to make temporary adjustments to employer rates—capped at half a percentage point per year for no more than three years. This is not a blank check. It's a prudent, taxpayer-focused mechanism to ensure the fund remains stable.

We know the cities will continue to claim they “cannot” afford it. Please remember they have claimed that since 1967 and have ignored the unequal rates since 1986. We do not minimize the economics but urge this body not to allow employers to simply not pay their fair share. We refer you to the cities' testimony since HB 512, citing the “existential” threat of remote work, fear about tax receipts that turned in surpluses and the like. Our employer partners have not said what they will do to address the underfunding, only what they won't do.

Yet, some communities across Ohio feel less safe. We read about stabbings on public transportation, mob-style fights in public spaces, and even politically motivated violence. At the same time, recruitment into law enforcement and fire service has become increasingly difficult. Some of that struggle comes from harmful anti-law enforcement rhetoric, but another piece is uncertainty about injury and retirement security.

Members of the committee, HB 280 is not only about numbers on a page; it's about honoring the promise Ohio made to the people who protect our families, homes, and communities. I urge you to stand with our first responders and support this bill. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mary Beth Foley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary Beth Foley, Esq.
Executive Director



140 East Town Street / Columbus, Ohio 43215-5164 / 1-888-864-8363 / www.op-f.org

August 5, 2025

Wendy Zahn
Director, Legislative Service Commission
77 S High Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Ms. Zahn,

Pursuant to Ohio Revised Code 742.14(C), enclosed, please find the actuarial analysis of the implementation of HB 280 and SB 293 which were introduced June 4, 2025, and July 30, 2025, respectively. The bills introduced increases police employer contributions to the Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund (OP&F) as well as creates an actuarially determined employer contribution formula, with a cap. OP&F employer rates have remained unchanged since 1986.

As of our most recent actuarial valuation (as of Jan. 1, 2024), OP&F remains below the statutory funding requirement, at 29.77 years. That result has been achieved due to the sacrifice of members who supported benefit cuts totaling \$3.2 billion beginning in 2013. However, several factors outside our control will most certainly push us out of compliance with Ohio's 30-year funding mandate if action is not taken.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mary Beth Foley".

Mary Beth Foley, Esq.
Executive Director

cc: Ohio Retirement Study Council
Public Insurance and Pensions Committee

enclosures

the Honorable Adam Bird
Chairman, Ohio Retirement Study Council
77 S High Street, 14th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

The Honorable Bob Peterson
Chairman, Public Insurance and Pensions Committee
77 S High Street, 11th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Ohio Retirement Study Council
c/o Bethany Rhodes, Director
30 East Broad St., 2nd Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

August 6, 2025

Ms. Mary Beth Foley
Executive Director
Ohio Police and Fire Pension Fund
140 East Town Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Re: Actuarial Impact of HB 280 and SB 239 - Increasing Police Employer Contributions to the Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund

Dear Ms. Foley:

We have estimated the impact on the funding period of the proposed legislation which increases contribution amounts that employers of full-time municipal police officers must make to the Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund.

Proposed Change

Section 1 of the bill amends Sections 742.16, 742.33, 742.34, 5705.06, and 5705.31 of the Revised Code.

Section 742.16 is amended to eliminate:

- the requirement that the OP&F Board adopt a plan specifying how it proposes to amortize OP&F's unfunded actuarial accrued pension liabilities over a 30-year period by December 31 of each year,
- the requirement that the Board, if the period exceeds 30 years, prepare a plan to reduce the period to below 30 years not later than 90 days after the receipt of the actuarial valuation to be submitted to the Ohio Retirement Study Council (ORSC) and the standing committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate with primary responsibility for retirement legislation,
- the requirement that the ORSC annually review the adequacy of the OP&F employer and employee contribution rates and the contribution rates recommended in a report by OP&F's actuary for the upcoming year.



Section 742.33(A) is amended to increase the Police Officer employers' contributions to the Fund from 19.50% of pay for all years to the following schedule:

For Salaries Earned by Police Member in Pay Periods Beginning:	Rate
Before July 1 that occurs after the effective date of HB 280	19.50%
On the <i>first</i> July 1 that occurs after the effective date of HB 280	20.50%
On the <i>second</i> July 1 that occurs after the effective date of HB 280	21.50%
On the <i>third</i> July 1 that occurs after the effective date of HB 280	22.50%
On the <i>fourth</i> July 1 that occurs after the effective date of HB 280	23.50%
On the <i>fifth</i> July 1 that occurs after the effective date of HB 280 and thereafter	24.00%

Section 742.33(B) for Police Officer employers' contributions and *Section 742.34(B)* for Firefighter employers' contributions are amended as follows:

- After the Police Officer employer contribution rate is increased to 24.00%:
 - Requires the OP&F Board to adjust the Police Officers and Firefighters employer contribution rates to a rate determined by the Board's actuary if the amortization period exceeds 30 years as determined by an actuarial valuation subject to the following limitations:
 - The Board must adjust both Police Officers and Firefighter rates determined by the Board's actuary.
 - The Board may adjust them over a period not exceeding three years after the date on which the actuarial valuation is completed.
 - In adjusting the rates, the Board cannot do any of the following:
 - Adjust them unless they are adjusted to the same rate;
 - Adjust them by more than 1.5% over the three-year period occurring immediately after the date on which the actuarial valuation is completed;
 - During the three-year period described above, implement the adjustment by more than 0.5% over any one-year period.

Sections 5705.06 and 5705.31 are amended to update the reference resulting from changes to *Section 742.33* and *Section 742.34* for Police Officers and Firefighter employers' contributions respectively.



Actuarial Impact on OP&F

Based on the results of the January 1, 2024 Actuarial Valuation, the January 1, 2024:

- funding period for OP&F is 29.77 years,
- funded ratio is 68.14% and
- the UAAL is \$8.400 billion.

Based on the January 1, 2024 actuarial valuation, under HB 280/ SB 239, the January 1, 2024:

- funding period for OP&F decreases 4.87 years to 24.90 years,
- funded ratio remains unchanged at 68.14% and
- UAAL remains unchanged at \$8.400 billion.

The schedule of Police Employer Rates to develop the HB 280/SB 239 metrics above are as follows:

For Salaries Earned by Police Member in Pay Periods Beginning:	Rate
Before July 1, 2026	19.50%
On or after July 1, 2026, but not later than June 30, 2027	20.50%
On or after July 1, 2027, but not later than June 30, 2028	21.50%
On or after July 1, 2028, but not later than June 30, 2029	22.50%
On or after July 1, 2029, but not later than June 30, 2030	23.50%
On or after July 1, 2030	24.00%

The exhibit below contains employer contributions under current and HB 280/SB 239 provisions for calendar years 2024 through 2030. For this analysis we have anticipated that the first increase will occur July 1, 2026. These employer contributions are the basis of the actuarial metrics discussed above. The employer rates for both Police Officers and Firefighters are 24.00% for pay periods on or after July 1, 2030. Based on the results of the January 1, 2024 actuarial valuation, additional increases above the 24.00% employer rate is not currently needed. Future events require increases above the 24.00% employer contribution rate may be needed to amortize the UAAL if the amortization period exceeds 30 years.



Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund Projection of Employer Contributions Under Current and HB 280 Provisions \$ Millions							
	Calendar Year						
	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Police Officers							
Current Provisions	\$ 289	\$ 298	\$ 308	\$ 318	\$ 328	\$ 339	\$ 350
Increase under HB 280 Provisions	-	-	8	24	42	61	76
HB 280 Provisions	\$ 289	\$ 298	\$ 316	\$ 342	\$ 370	\$ 400	\$ 426
Firefighters							
Current Provisions	\$ 351	\$ 363	\$ 375	\$ 387	\$ 399	\$ 412	\$ 426
Increase under HB 280 Provisions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
HB 280 Provisions	\$ 351	\$ 363	\$ 375	\$ 387	\$ 399	\$ 412	\$ 426
Total							
Current Provisions	\$ 640	\$ 661	\$ 683	\$ 705	\$ 727	\$ 751	\$ 776
Increase under HB 280 Provisions	-	-	8	24	42	61	76
HB 280 Provisions	\$ 640	\$ 661	\$ 691	\$ 729	\$ 769	\$ 812	\$ 852
Employer Contribution Rates							
Current Provisions							
Police Officers	19.50%	19.50%	19.50%	19.50%	19.50%	19.50%	19.50%
Firefighters	24.00%	24.00%	24.00%	24.00%	24.00%	24.00%	24.00%
HB 280 Provisions							
Police Officers	19.50%	19.50%	20.50% *	21.50% *	22.50% *	23.50% *	24.00%
Firefighters	24.00%	24.00%	24.00%	24.00%	24.00%	24.00%	24.00%
Effective July 1 of the Calendar Year							

HB 280/SB 239 Removes the Employer Contribution Rate Inequity

The employer contribution rate for the employer normal cost, which is the cost of benefits accruing, is currently 4.34% for Police Officers and 4.44% for Firefighters. This suggests that the employer rates of 19.50% for Police Officers and 24.00% for Firefighters under the current provisions results in Firefighter employers subsidizing Police Officer Employers. HB 280/SB 239, by making the Employer Rates the same for Police Officer and Firefighters at 24.00% results in removing this inequity effective July 1, 2030.

Important Disclosures

In order to prepare the results in this letter we have utilized appropriate actuarial models that were developed for this purpose. These models use assumptions about future contingent events along with recognized actuarial approaches to develop the needed results.

The estimates above are based upon assumptions regarding future events, which may or may not materialize. They are also based upon present plan provisions and actuarial methods that are outlined in the January 1, 2024 actuarial valuation reports and proposed plan provisions outlined in this actuarial note. If you have reason to believe that the assumptions that were used are unreasonable, that the plan provisions are incorrectly described, that important plan provisions relevant to this proposal are not described, or that conditions have changed since the calculations were made, you should contact the authors of this actuarial note prior to relying on this information.



Future actuarial measurements may differ significantly from current measurements due to plan experience differing from that anticipated by the economic and demographic assumptions, increases or decreases expected as part of the natural operation of the methodology used for these measurements, and changes in plan provisions or applicable law. Because of limited scope, Cavanaugh Macdonald performed no analysis of the potential range of such future differences.

The undersigned are Members of the American Academy of Actuaries and meet the Qualification Standards of the American Academy of Actuaries to render the actuarial opinion contained herein.

If you have any questions concerning this information, please let us know.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'LL'.

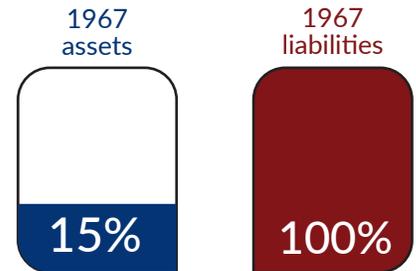
Larry Langer, ASA, EA, FCA, MAAA
Principal and Consulting Actuary

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wendy Ludbrook'.

Wendy Ludbrook, FSA, EA, FCA, MAAA
Consulting Actuary

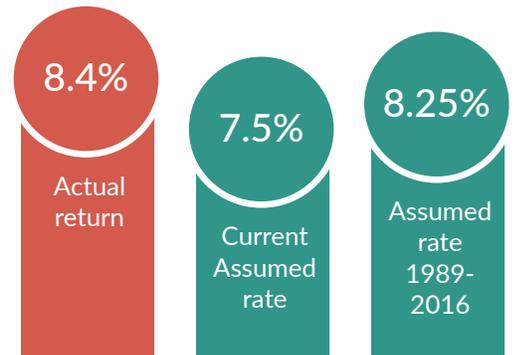
OP&F proposes in statutory language a mechanism that will automatically adjust COLA and contribution rates based on actuarial factors.

- OP&F was created in 1967 with only **15%** of the assets required versus **100%** of the employers' accrued liabilities and an immediate obligation to begin pension payments in 1968.



- Up until 1986, OP&F's employer contributions were determined using an actuarial formula.
- The initial underfunding, coupled with the rate inequality enacted in 1986, places OP&F at a funding disadvantage other Ohio funds do not have to overcome.
- Even with these disadvantages, OP&F has consistently remained within Ohio's funding requirements with a few exceptions.

- OP&F's rate of return on investments is 8.45% since the program's inception (1967-74 is estimated), above the system's assumed rate of return (7.5%).
- Employer contributions **have not** increased since 1986 – nearly 40 years ago. Meanwhile, our member contributions have gone from **6.0%** at inception to **12.25%**, most recently in 2015.



To keep the public pension plan's funding on track, the actuarially determined employer contributions (ADEC) need to be paid in full (*The Reason Foundation*).

As of 2019, **76.1** percent of surveyed pension plans had contributions that equaled or exceeded amounts calculated by system actuaries (*United States Census Bureau*).

Actuarial funding provides for greater benefit security than does fixed rate funding. Adjustments to the fixed rate or benefits in a fixed rate plan can be difficult to make in a timely manner (*The American Academy of Actuaries, 2023*).

Steps: What should happen next?



1. Police and fire employer contribution rates should be equalized at 24% (less than the Ohio Highway Patrol Retirement System).



2. Thereafter, OP&F should be funded on an ADEC basis. This approach for OP&F is supported by the Americans for Prosperity and the Reason Foundation.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT



* As of 12/31/2021

FUNDING PERIOD AS OF 1/1/2024 29.77 YEARS	
Calculated using 7.5% assumed investment return	Funding ratio is 68.1 percent
Was 26.71 years after 1/1/2023 study	Unfunded liabilities currently \$8.4 billion -if assumptions are met these will eventually be zero in 29.77 years
Remains in compliance with Ohio's funding requirement	

DISABILITY BENEFITS

Since 2002, OP&F has dramatic decreases in disability retirements

PERMANENT AND TOTAL DISABILITY GRANTS



ON-DUTY PARTIAL GRANTS



Reasons: Non-disabling conditions not considered in calculations (2013); retiree health care increases (2004); evaluation doctors using newer versions of AMA Guides (2010), psychological testing incorporated into mental health evaluations (2011), and change to a stipend based health care model (2019).

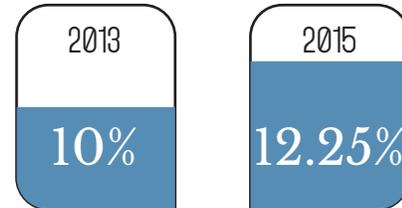
PENSION REFORM

Enacted in 2012 is working as intended

\$3.2 BILLION

removed from unfunded liabilities

MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS INCREASED



COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT

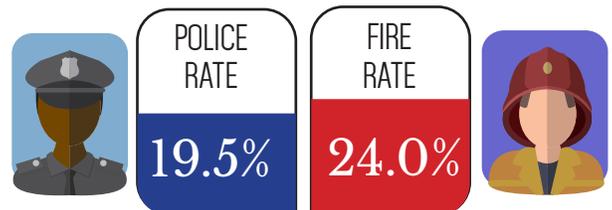
Pension reform in 2012 changed COLAs for OP&F members. **No members receive a COLA until they are age 55***

(*Exceptions are P&T disability benefit recipients and survivors)

COLA IS MATCHED TO THE CPI, WITH A CAP OF 3.0% FOR MEMBERS WITH LESS THAN 15 YEARS OF SERVICE ON 7/1/2013

EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTIONS

UNCHANGED since 1986



HEALTH CARE +

+ OP&F continues to contribute a small amount toward retiree health care (0.5 percent of employer contributions)

+ OP&F's move to a stipend based model in 2019 has extended the life of the health care stabilization fund. The most recent actuarial study conducted as of Jan. 1, 2024 found that the health care fund's solvency is now 16 years, 7 months.

HOW DO OTHER STATES VALUE FIRST RESPONDERS?

ACCORDING TO DATA FROM THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE RETIREMENT ADMINISTRATORS, OP&F'S EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTION RATE IS WELL BELOW THE MEDIAN PUBLIC SAFETY RATE. BELOW ARE CONTRIBUTION RATES OF SOME OTHER SYSTEMS COMPARED WITH OP&F.



System	State	Employee Contribution Rate (%)	Employer Contribution Rate (%)	Total Normal Cost (%)
Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund	OH	12.25	21.74	16.35
Ohio Highway Patrol Retirement System	OH	14.0	26.5	20.11
Police Officers' & Firefighters Retirement Plan	DC	8.0	17.2	38.8
State Police Pension Plan	DE	7.0	24.8	23.9
Miami Police Officers' & Firefighters' Retirement Trust	FL	10.0	55.7	53.2
Municipal Fire & Police Retirement System of Iowa	IA	9.4	25.3	23.9
Municipal Police Retirement System	LA	10.0	29.7	19.6
Firefighters Retirement System	LA	10	32.3	27.6
Kansas City Police Employees' Retirement System	MO	11.55	36.3	26.15
Municipal Police Officers' Retirement System	MT	9.0	52.8	25.78
Omaha Police & Fire Pension System	NE	16.6	34.7	21.29
State Police Retirement System	NJ	9.0	60.4	23.86
Houston Firefighters Relief & Retirement Fund	TX	10.5	31.9	25.39
Houston Police Officers' Pension System	TX	10.5	31.9	23/99

Ohio Police and Fire Pension Fund: Successful despite Structural Underfunding

OP&F is a cost-sharing, multiple-employer public employee retirement system and was created by the Ohio General Assembly in 1965, replacing 454 separate local police and firefighter relief and pension funds, who had accrued \$490 million in liabilities to that point. OP&F began operating as a statewide retirement fund on Jan. 1, 1967. On that date, the local pension funds transferred their assets and liabilities to OP&F. Assets transferred to OP&F only totaled \$75 million, creating an unfunded deficit of \$415 million. Some employers are still paying the remaining unfunded accrued liability. As of its last annual valuation, OP&F is still owed \$14 million from multiple employers.

This means that OP&F began with a 15% funded ratio, the general assembly did not require Ohio's cities to fund 85% of the liabilities Ohio's municipalities had already accrued. The impact of the original underfunding cannot be overstated in terms of not having the assets to invest from inception. OP&F would have been able to grow that \$415 million into additional assets of approximately \$35 billion. Placed in an overall context, OP&F's total assets at December 31, 2022, would have been over \$50 billion, resulting in a funded ratio of over 200%.¹

Furthermore, if there had been separate funding for healthcare, instead of a diversion of employer contributions to fund health care, additional assets of \$7 billion would have been accumulated, resulting in total assets as of December 31, 2022 of \$23 billion. Finally, if the employer contribution rate for police had been 24% since 1986, an additional \$6 billion of assets would have been accumulated, resulting in total assets as of December 31, 2022 of \$22 billion. When combined, these three policy decisions resulted in OP&F not having additional assets of \$48 billion as of December 31, 2022. OP&F would have an approximate funded ratio of 250% if not for the impact of these three policy decisions. For illustration, please see the attached chart.

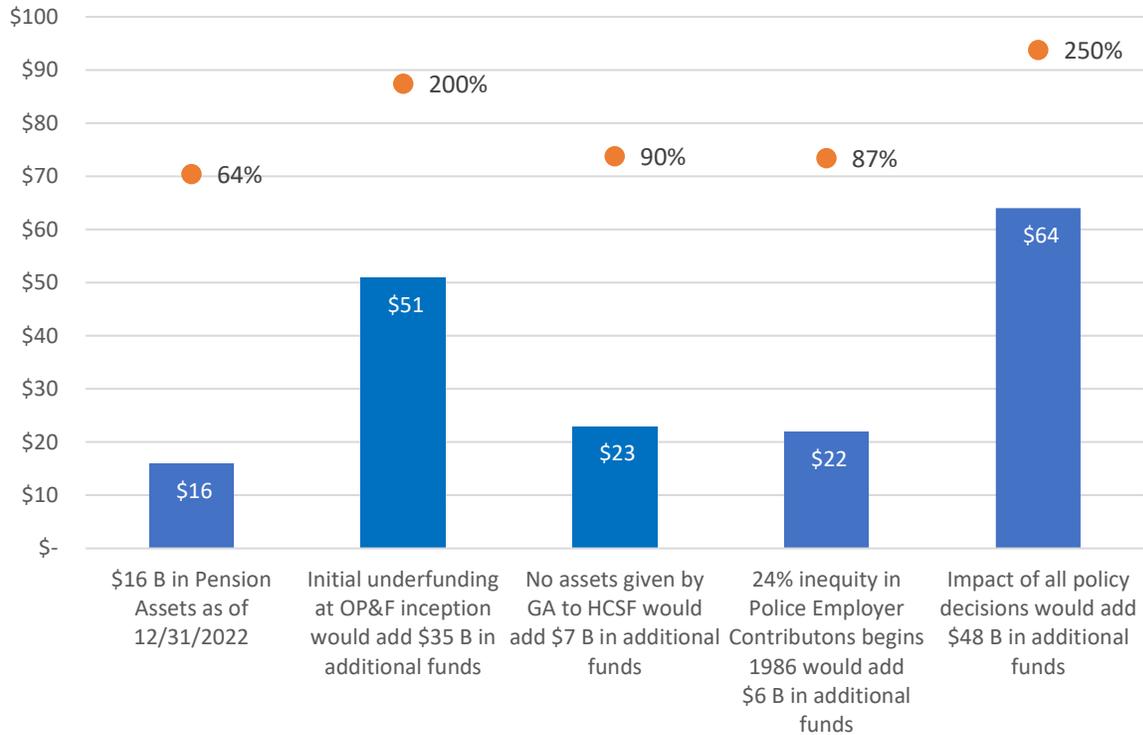
Though we understand the ORSC staff may not have records back to these periods, beginning the history in 1998 will not answer the question Council asked on the state of OP&F funding. Despite only having 15% of the funds required, OP&F has managed to pay pension, disability and survivor benefits for 56 years based on the amazing success of its investment program and the strength of the US capital markets.

In addition to the initial underfunding, the different employer contribution rates for police and fire set in 1986 have compounded the issue. ORSC actuaries first recommended to council that police rates be equalized in 1994.

OP&F Boards and members have accepted 7.25 % in increased employee contributions. They have accepted higher retirement ages, lower COLAs and benefits, and dramatically reduced health care benefits. These member sacrifices have allowed OP&F to continue the mission without sufficient funds. It is now time, finally, for Ohio's municipalities to pay their past debts and fund the promises appropriately going forward.

¹ These numbers were calculated by Wilshire consulting using OP&F actual returns, based on actual asset mix and actual market data for 1975-to present. Calculations for 1967-74 utilize index returns, for the most conservative estimate.

Illustrative Impact of Policy Decisions on OP&F Market Value and Market Funded Ratio (\$ Billions)



- Based on returns at OP&F 1968-current
- Figures calculated by Wilshire Consulting and Cavanaugh Macdonald actuaries

OP&F Board's Excellent Stewardship

OHIO AUDITOR OF STATE
KEITH FABER



65 East State Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
ContactUs@ohioauditor.gov
800-282-0370

September 22, 2025

Christine Torres
Crowe LLP
155 West Nationwide Boulevard, Suite 500
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Ms. Torres:

A desk review of the audit report has been performed for the GASB 68 (Pension) related schedules and the GASB 75 (OPEB) related schedules of the Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund, Franklin County, for the year ended December 31, 2024. Based on the desk review, this report is acceptable and requires no modifications.

We ask that you consider making the following suggested modifications to your audit report in the future:

- AAG SLV Chapter 13 Appendix B Note 7 and Chapter 14 Part III, which refers to the language in Chapter 13 Appendix B, indicates that the opinion should refer to the "Schedule of *Collective* Pension Amounts" if the plan prepares a schedule of collective pension amounts.

We will certify this audit report. As a reminder, the final invoice for this project must be submitted to the Auditor of State for approval no later than 90 days after the release of the report. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at (740) 534-6420.

Sincerely,

KEITH FABER
Auditor of State

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric J. Kline" followed by a stylized monogram "EJK".

Eric Kline
Chief of Quality Assurance

cc: Jacqueline Mckee, Chief Auditor
Scott Miller, CFO, Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund

OHIO AUDITOR OF STATE
KEITH FABER



65 East State Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
ContactUs@ohioauditor.gov
800-282-0370

July 10, 2025

Christine Torres
Crowe LLP
155 West Nationwide Boulevard Suite 500
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Ms. Torres:

A desk review of the audit report has been performed for the Ohio Police & Fire Pension, Franklin County, for the year ended December 31, 2024. Based on the desk review, this report is acceptable and requires no modifications.

We will certify this audit report. As a reminder, the final invoice for this project must be submitted to the Auditor of State for approval no later than 90 days after the release of the report. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at (740) 534-6420.

Sincerely,

KEITH FABER
Auditor of State

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric J. Kline" followed by a stylized monogram "EJK".

Eric Kline
Chief of Quality Assurance

cc: Jacqueline McKee, Chief Auditor
Scott Miller, CFO, Ohio Police & Fire Pension

OHIO AUDITOR OF STATE
KEITH FABER



65 East State Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
ContactUs@ohioauditor.gov
800-282-0370

Retirement Board
Ohio Police and Fire Pension Fund
140 East Town Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

We have reviewed the *Independent Auditor's Report* of the GASB 68 (Pension) related schedules and the Independent Auditor's Report of the GASB 75 (OPEB) related schedules of the Ohio Police and Fire Pension Fund, Franklin County, prepared by Crowe LLP, for the audit period January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023. Based upon this review, we have accepted these reports. The Auditor of State did not audit the accompanying schedules and, accordingly, we are unable to express, and do not express an opinion on them.

Our review was made in reference to the applicable sections of legislative criteria, as reflected by the Ohio Constitution, and the Revised Code, policies, procedures and guidelines of the Auditor of State, regulations and grant requirements. The Ohio Police and Fire Pension Fund is responsible for compliance with these laws and regulations.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith Faber".

Keith Faber
Auditor of State
Columbus, Ohio

October 08, 2024



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

Board of Trustees
Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund
Columbus, Ohio

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund (Fund), as of and for the year ended December 31, 2023, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the Fund's basic financial statements as listed in the table of contents.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the fiduciary net position of the Fund, as of December 31, 2023, and the changes in fiduciary net position for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS) and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards (Government Auditing Standards)*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of the Fund, and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Fund's ability to continue as a going concern for twelve months beyond the financial statement date, including any currently known information that may raise substantial doubt shortly thereafter.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS and *Government Auditing Standards* will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with GAAS and *Government Auditing Standards*, we

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Fund's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Fund's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.

Required Supplementary Information

Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require that the management's discussion and analysis and the required supplementary information, as listed in the table of contents, be presented to supplement the basic financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and, although not a part of the basic financial statements, is required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board who considers it to be an essential part of financial reporting for placing the basic financial statements in an appropriate operational, economic, or historical context. We have applied certain limited procedures to the required supplementary information in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, which consisted of inquiries of management about the methods of preparing the information and comparing the information for consistency with management's responses to our inquiries, the basic financial statements, and other knowledge we obtained during our audit of the basic financial statements. We do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the information because the limited procedures do not provide us with sufficient evidence to express an opinion or provide any assurance.

Supplementary Information

Our audit was conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the financial statements that collectively comprise the Fund's basic financial statements. The schedules of administrative expenses and investment expenses are presented for purposes of additional analysis and are not a required part of the basic financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the basic financial statements. The information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the basic financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the basic financial statements or to the basic financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. In our opinion, the schedules of administrative expenses and investment expenses are fairly stated, in all material respects, in relation to the basic financial statements as a whole.

Other Information

Management is responsible for the other information included in the annual report. The other information comprises the Introduction, Investments, Actuarial and Statistical sections but does not include the basic financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the basic financial statements does not cover the other information, and we do not express an opinion or any form of assurance thereon.

In connection with our audit of the basic financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and consider whether a material inconsistency exists between the other information and the basic financial statements, or the other information otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work performed, we conclude that an uncorrected material misstatement of the other information exists, we are required to describe it in our report.

Other Reporting Required by Government Auditing Standards

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we have also issued our report dated June 12, 2024 on our consideration of the Fund's internal control over financial reporting and on our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements and other matters. The purpose of that report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the Fund's internal control over financial reporting or on compliance. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the Fund's internal control over financial reporting and compliance.

Crowe LLP

Crowe LLP

Columbus, Ohio
June 12, 2024

OHIO AUDITOR OF STATE KEITH FABER



88 East Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
IPARreport@ohioauditor.gov
(800) 282-0370

Retirement Board
Ohio Police and Fire Pension Fund
140 East Town Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

We have reviewed the *Independent Auditor's Report* of the GASB 68 (Pension) related schedules and the Independent Auditor's Report of the GASB 75 (OPEB) related schedules of the Ohio Police and Fire Pension Fund, Franklin County, prepared by RSM US LLP, for the audit period January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022. Based upon this review, we have accepted these reports in lieu of the audit required by Section 117.11, Revised Code. The Auditor of State did not audit the accompanying schedules and, accordingly, we are unable to express, and do not express an opinion on them.

Our review was made in reference to the applicable sections of legislative criteria, as reflected by the Ohio Constitution, and the Revised Code, policies, procedures and guidelines of the Auditor of State, regulations and grant requirements. The Ohio Police and Fire Pension Fund is responsible for compliance with these laws and regulations.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith Faber".

Keith Faber
Auditor of State
Columbus, Ohio

October 31, 2023



Independent Auditor's Report

RSM US LLP

The Retirement Board
Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund
and The Honorable Keith Faber

Report on the Audit of the Schedules

Opinions

We have audited the accompanying schedule of employer allocations of the Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund (the Fund) as of and for the year ended December 31, 2022, and the related notes. We have also audited the total for all entities of the columns titled net pension liability, total deferred outflows of resources, total deferred inflows of resources, and total employer pension expense (specified column totals) included in the accompanying schedule of pension amounts by employer of the Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund as of and for the year ended December 31, 2022, and the related notes (collectively, the Schedules).

In our opinion, the accompanying schedules referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the employer allocations, net pension liability, total deferred outflows of resources, total deferred inflows of resources, and total employer pension expense for all participating entities of the Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund as of and for the year ended December 31, 2022, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Basis for Opinions

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Schedules section of our report. We are required to be independent of Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinions.

Responsibilities of Management for the Schedules

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the Schedules in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the Schedules that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Schedules

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the Schedules are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinions. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the Schedules.

THE POWER OF BEING UNDERSTOOD
AUDIT | TAX | CONSULTING

In performing an audit in accordance with GAAS, we

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the Schedules, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the Schedules.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Fund's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.

Other Matter

We have audited, in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, the financial statements of Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund as of and for the year ended December 31, 2022, and our report thereon, issued June 26, 2023, expressed an unmodified opinion on those financial statements.

Restriction on Use

Our report is intended solely for the information and use of the Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund's management and Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund's employers and their auditors as of and for the year ended December 31, 2022, and it is not intended to be, and should not be, used by anyone other than these specified parties.

RSM US LLP

Cleveland, Ohio
September 25, 2023

OHIO AUDITOR OF STATE KEITH FABER



88 East Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
IPARreport@ohioauditor.gov
(800) 282-0370

Retirement Board
Ohio Police and Fire Pension Fund
140 East Town Street
Columbus, OH 43215

We have reviewed the *Independent Auditor's Report* of the GASB 68 (Pension) related schedules and the Independent Auditor's Report of the GASB 75 (OPEB) related schedules of the Ohio Police and Fire Pension Fund, Franklin County, prepared by RSM US LLP, for the audit period January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021. Based upon this review, we have accepted these reports in lieu of the audit required by Section 117.11, Revised Code. The Auditor of State did not audit the accompanying financial statements and, accordingly, we are unable to express, and do not express an opinion on them.

Our review was made in reference to the applicable sections of legislative criteria, as reflected by the Ohio Constitution, and the Revised Code, policies, procedures and guidelines of the Auditor of State, regulations and grant requirements. The Ohio Police and Fire Pension Fund is responsible for compliance with these laws and regulations.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith Faber".

Keith Faber
Auditor of State
Columbus, Ohio

October 27, 2022



Independent Auditor's Report

RSM US LLP

The Retirement Board
Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund
and The Honorable Keith Faber

Report on the Audit of the Schedules

Opinions

We have audited the accompanying schedule of employer allocations of the Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund (the Fund) as of and for the year ended December 31, 2021, and the related notes. We have also audited the total for all entities of the columns titled net pension liability, total deferred outflows of resources, total deferred inflows of resources, and total employer pension expense (specified column totals) included in the accompanying schedule of pension amounts by employer of the Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund as of and for the year ended December 31, 2021, and the related notes.

In our opinion, the schedules referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the employer allocations, net pension liability, total deferred outflows of resources, total deferred inflows of resources, and total employer pension expense for all participating entities of the Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund as of and for the year ended December 31, 2021, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Basis for Opinions

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Schedules section of our report. We are required to be independent of Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinions.

Responsibilities of Management for the Schedules

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these schedules in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the schedules that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Schedules

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the schedules as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinions. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the schedules.

THE POWER OF BEING UNDERSTOOD
AUDIT | TAX | CONSULTING

In performing an audit in accordance with GAAS, we

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the schedules, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the schedules.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Fund's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Fund's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.

Other Matter

We have audited, in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, the financial statements of Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund as of and for the year ended December 31, 2021, and our report thereon, issued June 27, 2022, expressed an unmodified opinion on those financial statements.

Restriction on Use

Our report is intended solely for the information and use of the Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund's management and Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund's employers and their auditors as of and for the year ended December 31, 2021, and it is not intended to be, and should not be, used by anyone other than these specified parties.

RSM US LLP

Cleveland, Ohio
September 22, 2022



140 East Town Street / Columbus, Ohio 43215-5164 / 1-888-864-8363 / www.op-f.org

Independent audit report shows that OP&F is well run; good steward of funds

A report summarizing required fiduciary audit of the Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund (OP&F) has been released by the Ohio Retirement Study Council (ORSC). The report shows that “The OP&F Board appears to have acted with loyalty and impartiality solely in the interests of current and future members and beneficiaries.”

The audit was conducted by Funston Advisory Services, LLC who was hired by the ORSC. A fiduciary audit of each of Ohio’s five public pension systems is required every 10 years. OP&F is responsible for the cost of the audit, which was in excess of \$600,000.

“The OP&F Board and staff are happy to confirm our successes and for the opportunity to improve and strengthen areas mentioned in the audit report,” said OP&F Executive Director Mary Beth Foley. “OP&F has established a financially sound pension fund, administered within the requirements established by the General Assembly in the Ohio Revised Code. Our disability, financial and investment portfolio management programs are routinely recognized for excellence.”

“We will share this report with legislators,” Foley continued. “It is my hope that this gives them the confidence to use House Bill 512 to correct the unequal and insufficient funding provisions. After nearly 40 years, it is time to revisit and properly fund public safety retirement benefits.”

Among the observations that Funston reported in their audit report:

- OP&F appears to effectively control costs while maintaining high performance standards.
- The OP&F Board of Trustees generally has leading practice authorities for budgets, staffing, and setting compensation and procurement.
- The OP&F Board appears to act with appropriate prudence and care.
- OP&F’s 10-year performance is in the top quartile (14%) among peer public pension funds.
- OP&F appears to have appropriate people, policies and processes to comply with the law and reporting requirements.
- OP&F takes its recordkeeping and management responsibilities seriously.
- OP&F has leading or prevailing practices for managing external manager fees both in public accounts and in alternative based accounts.
- There are organizational checks and balances that provide effective controls and minimize the potential for single point of failure decision making.
- The OP&F Finance and Accounting function is capable, and the accounting systems are effective.
- OP&F has appropriate ethics policies and standards of conduct in place.
- We were particularly impressed by the level of respect and caring both the Board and Staff pay to the Plan beneficiaries – the police and fire officers of Ohio.
- OP&F has a small, but highly qualified in-house investment staff.

The full report can be found at: <https://orsc.org/Assets/Reports/1509.pdf>

Actuarial

Pension Funding Report

Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund



Actuarial Valuation as of
January 1, 2024



October 30,2024

Board of Trustees
Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund
140 East Town Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Members of the Board:

Cavanaugh Macdonald (CavMac) is pleased to present this report on the results of the actuarial valuation of the Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund (OP&F). This report presents the results of the annual actuarial valuation of the assets and liabilities of OP&F as of January 1, 2024, prepared in accordance with Chapter 742 of the Ohio Revised Code (ORC), as amended by Senate Bill No. 340. The valuation takes into account all of the promised benefits to which members are entitled, including pension and survivor benefits.

The principal results of the valuation do not take into account Medicare Part B premium reimbursements or any other health care benefits. However, at the request of the Ohio Retirement Study Council (ORSC), supplemental results have been prepared that do take into account the liability for Medicare Part B premium reimbursements and are presented in Table 1A in the report.

The purpose of the valuation is to determine the financial status of OP&F on an actuarial basis. Use of this report for any other purpose may not be appropriate and may result in mistaken conclusions due to failure to understand applicable assumptions, methodologies, or inapplicability of the report for that purpose. CavMac will not accept any liability for any statement made about the report without prior review by CavMac.

Where presented, references to “funded ratio” and “unfunded accrued liability” typically are measured on an actuarial value of assets basis. It should be noted that the same measurements using fair value of assets would result in different funded ratios and unfunded accrued liabilities. Moreover, the funded ratio presented is appropriate for evaluating the need and level of future contributions but makes no assessment regarding the funded status of the plan if the plan were to settle (i.e. purchase annuities) for a portion or all of its liabilities.

This report does not include accounting disclosure information under Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement Nos. 67 and 68. CavMac will provide disclosure information under Statement Nos. 67 and 68 in a separate report after OP&F’s 2024 year-end. CavMac also prepares a separate valuation of OP&F retiree health care benefits.



The valuation was based on the actuarial assumptions and methods that have been adopted by the Board of Trustees, including a valuation interest rate of 7.50 percent per annum compounded annually. The assumptions were effective January 1, 2023 and recommended by the actuary based on a quinquennial experience review covering the period 2017-2021. The next experience review will cover the five-year period 2022-2026. Actuarial Standards of Practice require that the likelihood and extent of future mortality improvements be considered.

Assets and Membership Data

OP&F reported to the actuary the individual data for members as of the valuation date. While we did not verify the data at their source, we did perform tests for internal consistency and reasonableness. The amount of assets in the pension trust fund taken into account in the valuation was based on financial statements prepared for us by OP&F.

An assumption is made by CavMac to account for salary adjustments reported by employers assumed to occur after the census information has been provided to CavMac by OP&F.

Funding Objectives and Progress

The actuary uses an actuarial cost method to determine the portion of OP&F's liabilities accrued by the members as of the valuation date and the portion that is attributable to future years of service. The rate of contribution necessary to systematically fund the future service liabilities, the normal cost rate, is calculated under the cost method to be a level percentage of active member payroll. The portion of the liabilities accrued as of the valuation date, the actuarial accrued liability (AAL), is compared to a market-related, actuarial value of OP&F's assets. The amount of liabilities in excess of the assets is called the unfunded actuarial accrued liability (UAAL).

The actuary determines how many years are required by OP&F to completely amortize the UAAL (the funding period), using the member and employer contributions reduced by the amount allocated to health care and the amount of normal cost for the year. For 2003-2012, the funding period was infinite years, meaning the annual contribution toward the unfunded when compared to the unfunded amount was not sufficient to pay it off. As a result of benefit and member contribution changes under Senate Bill No. 340, changes to the DROP program, and a reduction in the contribution allocation to the Health Care Stabilization Fund by the Board of Trustees, and favorable asset investment gains, the pension funding period has decreased from 47 years as of January 1, 2013 to 26.71 years as of January 1, 2023. As of January 1, 2024, the funding period increased to 29.77 years primarily due to deferred investment experience, administrative expenses and payroll growth that was higher than anticipated. As seen in Table 7, the UAAL is expected to start decreasing during calendar 2033.



Section 742.16 of the ORC, as adopted by Senate Bill No. 82, sets forth an objective that the funding period is no more than 30 years. If the funding period exceeds 30 years, a plan shall be developed and presented by the Board of Trustees to the ORSC to reduce the funding period to not more than 30 years. Section 742.14 of the ORC, as amended by Senate Bill No. 340, sets forth that the 30-year funding analysis be performed every three years and the 30-year funding plan, if necessary, be developed and presented not later than 90 days after the Board of Trustees' receipt of the actuarial valuation and 30-year funding analysis. The most recent triennial analysis is based on the January 1, 2022 actuarial valuation, and shows the funding period is 28.07 years, so no 30-year funding plan is required. The next analysis will be performed based on the January 1, 2025 actuarial valuation.

The funded ratio (i.e., the ratio of actuarial assets to the AAL) determined as of January 1, 2024 is 68.1 percent, compared to 70.0 percent as of as of January 1, 2023. If measured using the fair value of assets, the funded ratio would be lower at 64.1 percent on account of net investment losses not yet reflected in the actuarial assets. Taking into account the AAL for Medicare Part B premium reimbursements, the funded ratio would be 67.5 percent using the actuarial assets and 63.5 percent using the fair value of assets. The funded ratio is not intended to measure the adequacy of funding in any analysis of a possible settlement of plan liabilities.

Supporting Schedules and Certification

The valuation report shows detailed summaries of the financial results of the valuation and membership data used in preparing this valuation. The actuary prepared the following supporting schedules for inclusion in the Actuarial and Statistical Sections of the OP&F Annual Comprehensive Financial Report: Analysis of Financial Experience, Short-Term Solvency Test, Schedule of Funding Progress, Calculation of Actuarial Value of Assets, and Retirees and Beneficiaries Added to and Removed from the Rolls.

The valuation assumptions were chosen by the Board of Trustees with the advice of the actuary and first used in the January 1, 2022 valuation. The assumptions used to develop the January 1, 2024 valuation are individually reasonable and in combination represent our best estimate of anticipated experience under the plan.

Future actuarial measurements may differ significantly from current measurements due to plan experience differing from that anticipated by the economic and demographic assumptions, increases or decreases expected as part of the natural operation of the methodology used for these measurements, and changes in plan provisions or applicable law. Because of limited scope, CavMac performed no analysis of the potential range of such future differences.

During 2018 OP&F retained CavMac as their actuary. The January 1, 2019 valuation was the first valuation completed by CavMac. All results presented in this report for years prior to the December 31, 2018 were performed by the prior actuary(s).



Board of Trustees
October 30, 2024
Page 4

The consultants who worked on this assignment are pension actuaries. CavMac's advice is not intended to be a substitute for qualified legal or accounting counsel.

This is to certify that the independent consulting actuaries are members of the American Academy of Actuaries, have experience in performing valuations for public retirement plans, and meet the qualification standards of the American Academy of Actuaries to render the actuarial opinion contained herein. The valuation was prepared in accordance with principles of practice prescribed by the Actuarial Standards Board and the actuarial calculations were performed by qualified actuaries in accordance with accepted actuarial procedures, based on the current provisions of the retirement plan and on actuarial assumptions that are internally consistent and reasonable based on the actual experience of the Fund and future expectations. However, the Board of Trustees has the final decision regarding the selection of the assumptions and adopted them as indicated in Appendix C.

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Langer, ASA, EA, FCA, MAAA
Principal and Consulting Actuary

Wendy T. Ludbrook, FSA, EA, FCA, MAAA
Consulting Actuary

Ryan Gundersen
Senior Consultant

For full report: <https://www.orsc.org/Assets/EventFiles/1347.pdf>

Reports of Adequacy of OP&F Contribution Rates by the ORSC Actuary

1) 3/31/21- Pension Trust Advisors (Flick Fornia)

States "because of the disparity between police and fire rates, it could be argued that firefighter employers are paying a larger share of the unfunded liability than are police employers. While this is accurate, the police and fire components are completely merged, and the assets are not explicitly separated between police and fire."

Further states that "we estimate that rather than both being fully funded in 28 years (based on AVA), the fire would be fully funded in 21 years while police would be fully funded only after 40 years."

2) 1/31/20- Pension Trust Advisors (Flick Fornia)

States "because of the disparity between police and fire rates, it could be argued that firefighter employers are paying a larger share of the unfunded liability than are police employers. While this is accurate, the police and fire components are completely merged, and the assets are not explicitly separated between police and fire."

Further states that "we estimate that rather than both being fully funded in 29 years (based on AVA), the fire would be fully funded in 20 years while police would be fully funded only after 41 years."

3) 7/26/19- Pension Trust Advisors (Flick Fornia)

States "because of the disparity between police and fire rates, it could be argued that firefighter employers are paying a larger share of the unfunded liability than are police employers. While this is accurate, the police and fire components are completely merged, and the assets are not explicitly separated between police and fire."

Further states that "we estimate that rather than both being fully funded in 28 years (based on AVA), the fire would be fully funded in 19 years while police would be fully funded only after 39 years."

4) 6/5/18 - Pension Trust Advisors (Flick Fornia)

States "because of the disparity between police and fire rates, it could be argued that firefighter employers are paying a larger share of the unfunded liability than are police employers. While this is accurate, the police and fire components are completely merged, and the assets are not explicitly separated between police and fire."

Further states that "we estimate that rather than both being fully funded in 28 years (based on AVA), the fire would be fully funded in 20 years while police would be fully funded only after 45 years."

2017 not on ORSC website

5) 3/4/16 - Pension Trust Advisors (Flick Fornia)

States "because of the disparity between police and fire rates, it could be argued that firefighter employers are paying a larger share of the unfunded liability than are police employers. While this is accurate, the police and fire components are completely merged, and the assets are not explicitly separated between police and fire."

Further states that "we estimate that rather than both being fully funded in 30 years (based on AVA), the fire would be fully funded in 23 years while police would be fully funded only after 48 years."

In Recommendations, notes that OP&F's improved funding period (meeting 30 years) is "partly due to the increase in allocation of employer contributions toward statutory pension benefits, leaving reduced contributions toward healthcare."

6) 1/9/06- Milliman USA

Recommends equalization of employer contribution rates.

Notes that "the normal cost of the benefits provided to police are substantially the same as the normal cost of the benefits provided to fire members. Thus, there is no apparent cost justification for the higher contributions required by employers of fire members who contribute 24% of payroll versus the 19.5% required for police members."

7) 6/6/02 - Milliman USA

Recommends that police and fire employer rates be equalized

Notes that this change has been recommended since 1994

Also notes that if rates are not equalized, the employers of firefighters will continue to subsidize the pension costs for the employers of police officers.

8) 12/14/94 - Milliman & Roberts

Provides history of OP&F employer contribution rates

Notes that the lower contribution rate for police compared to firefighters is "inconsistent with the actuarially determined rates for these two groups."

OP&F Administrative and Financial Reporting Awards – GFOA & Budget



GOVERNMENT FINANCE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

*Distinguished
Budget Presentation
Award*

PRESENTED TO

Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund

For the Fiscal Year Beginning

January 01, 2024

Christopher P. Morill

Executive Director



Public Pension Coordinating Council

***Recognition Award for Administration
2024***

Presented to

Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund

In recognition of meeting professional standards for
plan administration as
set forth in the Public Pension Standards.

Presented by the Public Pension Coordinating Council, a confederation of

National Association of State Retirement Administrators (NASRA)
National Conference on Public Employee Retirement Systems (NCPERS)
National Council on Teacher Retirement (NCTR)

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alan H. Winkle".

Alan H. Winkle
Program Administrator



Public Pension Coordinating Council
**Recognition Award for Administration
2023**

Presented to

Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund

In recognition of meeting professional standards for
plan administration as
set forth in the Public Pension Standards.

Presented by the Public Pension Coordinating Council, a confederation of

National Association of State Retirement Administrators (NASRA)
National Conference on Public Employee Retirement Systems (NCPERS)
National Council on Teacher Retirement (NCTR)

A handwritten signature in dark blue ink that reads "Alan H. Winkle". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent 'A' and 'W'.

Alan H. Winkle
Program Administrator



Public Pension Coordinating Council
**Recognition Award for Administration
2022**

Presented to

Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund

In recognition of meeting professional standards for
plan administration as
set forth in the Public Pension Standards.

Presented by the Public Pension Coordinating Council, a confederation of

National Association of State Retirement Administrators (NASRA)
National Conference on Public Employee Retirement Systems (NCPERS)
National Council on Teacher Retirement (NCTR)

A handwritten signature in dark blue ink, reading 'Alan H. Winkle'.

Alan H. Winkle
Program Administrator



Public Pension Coordinating Council
**Recognition Award for Administration
2021**

Presented to

Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund

In recognition of meeting professional standards for
plan administration as
set forth in the Public Pension Standards.

Presented by the Public Pension Coordinating Council, a confederation of

National Association of State Retirement Administrators (NASRA)
National Conference on Public Employee Retirement Systems (NCPERS)
National Council on Teacher Retirement (NCTR)

A handwritten signature in dark blue ink, reading 'Alan H. Winkle'.

Alan H. Winkle
Program Administrator



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Executive Director



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Executive Director



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January 01, 2022

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Executive Director



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For the Fiscal Year Beginning

January 01, 2021

Christopher P. Morill

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Christopher P. Morill

Executive Director



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Achievement in
Popular Annual
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2021

PRESENTED TO

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Pension Fund**

Christopher P. Morill

Executive Director



Public Pension Coordinating Council

***Recognition Award for Administration
2024***

Presented to

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In recognition of meeting professional standards for
plan administration as
set forth in the Public Pension Standards.

Presented by the Public Pension Coordinating Council, a confederation of

National Association of State Retirement Administrators (NASRA)
National Conference on Public Employee Retirement Systems (NCPERS)
National Council on Teacher Retirement (NCTR)

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alan H. Winkle".

Alan H. Winkle
Program Administrator



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For its Annual Comprehensive
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For the Fiscal Year Ended

December 31, 2022

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Executive Director/CEO



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Award*

PRESENTED TO

Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund

For the Fiscal Year Beginning

January 01, 2024

Christopher P. Morill

Executive Director

Community Support

Community Support of First Responders

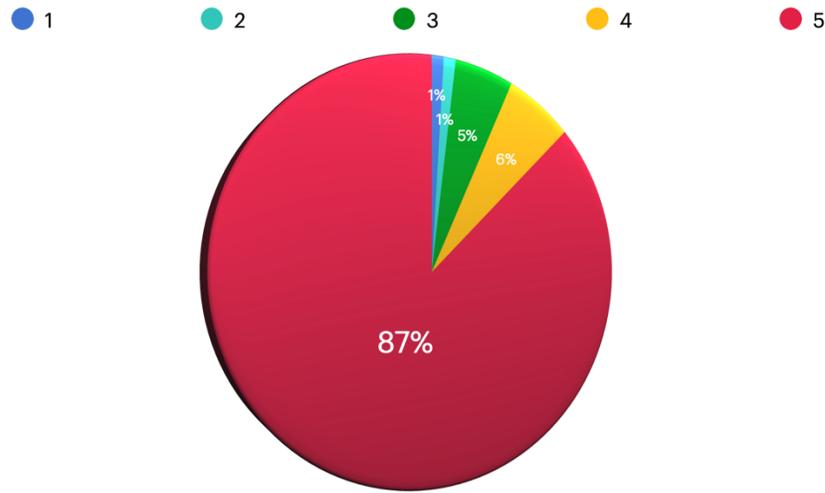
FOP/OAPFF Survey Results

2023



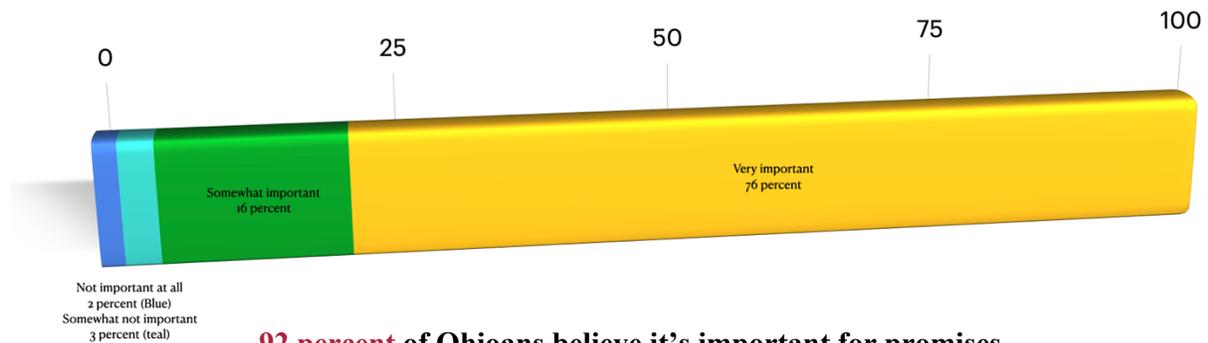
Advantage, Inc. recently conducted a telephone poll of 500 likely Ohio voters to gauge community feeling about first responders and measure support for House Bill 512. The poll's margin of error is +/- 4 percent.

1. On a scale of one to five with one being the least and five being the most, how important do you think it is for Ohio to support its police and firefighters?



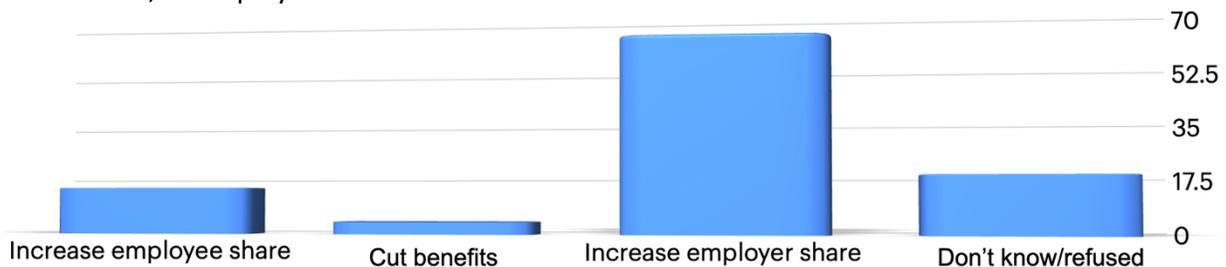
87 percent of Ohioans think that it's of maximum importance to support police and firefighters.

2. If Ohio lawmakers and local cities made a promise to police and firefighters to adequately fund police and firefighter pensions, how important is it that this promise is kept?



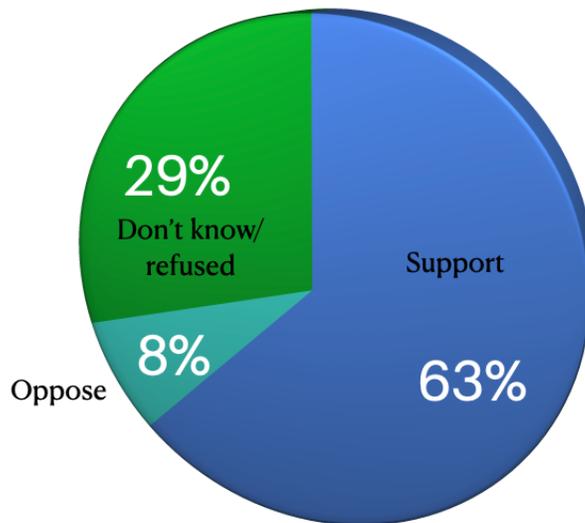
92 percent of Ohioans believe it's important for promises made to first responders about their pensions be kept.

3. Of the three fundamental ways to change funding for Police and Fire pensions – increasing the amount paid by first responders, cutting benefits (both of which have been done in the last ten years), or increasing the employer share (which hasn't changed in nearly 40 years) – do you think police and firefighters should make another increase, there should be more cuts, or employers should increase their share?



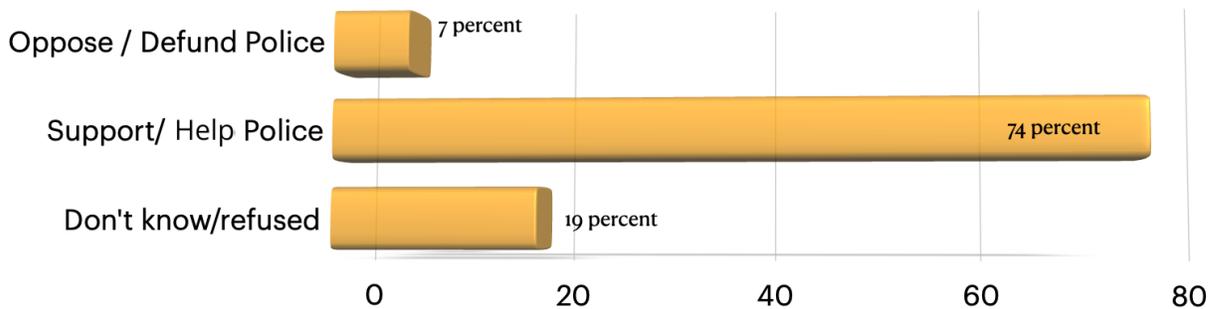
63 percent of Ohioans say that it's time for employers to increase their contribution to first responder pensions for the first time in nearly 40 years.

4. Ohio House Bill 512 is a good government solution that that would responsibly increase the employer contribution to police and firefighter pensions over a five-year period, giving city leaders time to budget for it. Do you support or oppose House Bill 512?



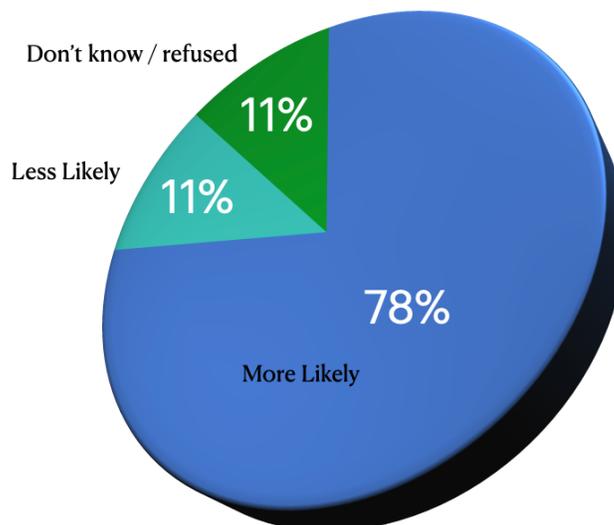
63 percent of Ohioans support House Bill 512

7. Some people oppose House Bill 512 because they want to defund the police, saying that police officers are racist. Other people support House Bill 512 because they want to help the police, saying crime is on the rise. Which of these two positions is closer to your view?



74 percent of believe we should support House Bill 512 to help police as crime is on the rise

5. In the fall election, would you be more or less likely to vote for a state lawmaker who supports legislation that ensures adequate funding for police and firefighter pensions?



78 percent of Ohioans are more likely to vote for a state lawmaker who support legislation like House Bill 512

Articles of Interest

Articles highlight budget surplus for cities & need for OP&F funding fix

The Columbus Dispatch

\$1.00 | FEB. 03, 2025

Ohio's 5 public pension funds grew in 2024 to more than \$265 billion

Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund: Leads Ohio funds with 10.66% return. Total portfolio is \$18.7 billion.

cleveland.com

EDITORIAL EDITION

December 13, 2024

\$1.00

HB 296 addresses two crises- in Ohio police staffing and police pension fundig: editorial

HB 296 deserves to be enacted into law...

BRIDGEWATER
2022

Past Fiscal Stimulus Is Financing a New Government Spending Spree

The Newspaper

Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund



npr

OCTOBER 19, 2021

Dayton is spending some of its COVID aid in unexpected ways.

WKYC-TV, Cleveland

November 2021

\$1.00

Here's where funds from American Rescue Act is going in Cleveland

OHIO CAPITAL JOURNAL

FINAL EDITION

Nov. 08, 2021

How are Ohio cities spending their American Rescue Plan dollars?

Editorial:

Shift pension reform target

Sep 29, 2025

The Ohio General Assembly and Gov. Mike DeWine have united educators in anger over the attempt to take over the State Teachers Retirement System. It's a preview of the disgust ahead when taxpayers get asked to put more money in the state pensions.

Ohio's budget that took effect in July included a last-minute insertion to cut active and retired teachers from seven of 11 seats on the pension board to three.

The Ohio Education Association, Ohio Federation of Teachers, and the Ohio Conference of the American Association of University Professors have combined to sue for reversal.

Judge Andy Miller of Franklin County Common Pleas Court issued a temporary restraining order blocking the takeover while he considers the teachers' claim that the state takeover is unconstitutional because it was done through the budget and discriminatory because only teachers are reduced to minority status on their state pension board.

The teachers say they are under attack by state government. The politicians responsible for the board makeover say they are protecting taxpayers.

Lawmakers and the governor point to a failed attempt in 2021 to move funds to a Columbus startup investment company as reason for the STRS reform.

But it was only when elected teachers took majority status on the STRS board that the dubious proposed investment was addressed.

Moreover, the idea that the people who appointed and approved the PUCO chairman behind the FirstEnergy bribery scandal, despite knowing that he was paid millions of dollars as a consultant for FirstEnergy, are competent to safeguard the pensions is contemptuous of history and experience.

Ohio's appointed oversight boards are mostly lobbyists and campaign contributors, selected to follow instructions from the governor. When STRS appointee Wade Steen veered to an independent course he was illegally fired by Governor DeWine.

The reforms promised by the elected STRS board members have never been fully implemented. The move to make teachers a permanent minority on their pension is simply protection against a group that could actually get it done.

The current STRS board just approved bonus payments to their investment staff totaling more than \$6.7 million. The benchmark for payments between \$7,280 and \$354,729 was not a market index but instead an internally created measure that the STRS always seems to beat.

Despite this purported investment success, STRS is one of three Ohio pension funds, along with the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System and the Ohio Police and Fire Pension, asking lawmakers to force taxpayers to contribute more than a billion dollars a year above the current rate.

Rather than worry about the composition of the STRS board, Ohio lawmakers should be forcing reforms that produce better investment returns. The 10-year cumulative return for the S&P 500 is 290.76 percent, more than double STRS' assumed rate of return.

Additional dollars from taxpayers would not be needed if Ohio was matching market returns, showing where state pension reform should focus.

Aug. 8, 2025

Senators join push to increase OP&F employer contributions

Senators have debuted their own plan to increase police employer contributions to the Ohio [Police & Fire Pension Fund](#) .

The measure ([SB 239](#)) from [Sen. Al Cutrona](#), R-Canfield, and [Sen. Andy Brenner](#), R-Delaware, would raise the amount the police employers contribute to the fund from 19.5% to the same 24% paid by firefighter employers over a five-year period.

"The large amount of dollars that the cities with the employers would have to pay can kind of be spread out over a period of time and increase parity between the two in that pension plan," Cutrona said in an interview.

The legislation echoes a House companion ([HB 280](#)) that drew debate in the spring and continues to split opinions between future retirees and their employers. (See [Gongwer Ohio Report, May 23, 2025](#))

Similar to the Senate bill, the House plan from [Rep. Cindy Abrams](#), R-Harrison, and [Rep. Thomas Hall](#), R-Middletown, calls for a 1% annual increase until the police employers' contribution reaches 24%.

The House bill, which Abrams at one point considered pushing for inclusion in the operating budget, was met with criticism from local governments calling it an unfunded increase that would result in downsized public safety services.

At a hearing in May, Kent Scarrett, executive director of the Ohio Municipal League, said the increase remained "a nonstarter" for the group and that employers would rather lawmakers focus on broader efforts such as a Senate placeholder bill ([SB 69](#)) "to reform the law governing the state's public retirement systems." (See [Gongwer Ohio Report, February 10, 2025](#))

The group instead unsuccessfully lobbied senators to use the operating budget ([HB 96](#)) to expand the OP&F board to include two seats for municipalities, which had previously failed to gain House support.

Cutrona acknowledged the cool reception from police employers to date — both in the current General Assembly and in years prior. However, he said he thinks the plan is affordable to local governments because of the phased-in approach.

"As far as payment goes, I believe that the cities would have the ability to do it. That's why we're implementing this over a series of years," Cutrona said. "In addition to that, it's something that I believe is affordable for these cities."

He also said he hopes to hear from local governments and start a robust conversation surrounding the legislation to make it favorable for everyone involved.

"Ultimately, I think this is a good opportunity for us to hear from the cities but also hear from those that are protecting society as well and see what it's like and what we can do to make a bill come out and something that everybody can agree with," Cutrona said.

"At the end of the day, it's just as dangerous to run into a burning building as it is to go after an armed assailant. Both jobs are difficult. They're dangerous and I think that this bill creates that parity, which is essential," he said.

OP&F officials and supporters have argued the change is needed to avoid a looming fiscal crisis. But prior efforts failed to find success.

Abram's first attempt was in 2021 ([HB 512](#) of 2021) but failed to advance after three hearings.

A second attempt was made during the 135th General Assembly when Abrams obtained a late victory with narrow lame duck House passage of the plan ([HB 239](#) of 2023).

That version failed to clear the Senate due to the late hour, with then Senate president and now House [Speaker Matt Huffman](#), R-Lima, saying at the time that although resolving the question should be a "priority" the complex issue is one better left for the 136th General Assembly. (See [Gongwer Ohio Report, December 4, 2024](#))



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NEWS

Ohio police push scaled-back pension plan to boost employer contributions

Updated: May. 01, 2025, 1:30 p.m. | Published: May. 01, 2025, 12:51 p.m.



Thousands of police officers attended a Cleveland police officer's memorial in 2024. The Fraternal Order of Police of Ohio is pushing a new plan that would give a first responder pension fund more authority to raise contribution requirements for employers. David Petkiewicz, cleveland.com David Petkiewicz, cleveland.com



By [Anna Staver, cleveland.com](#)

COLUMBUS, Ohio -- After a push to raise employer contributions failed last year, Ohio's largest police union is pushing a new plan: Give the Ohio Police & Fire pension board power to gradually boost what cities and counties pay.

The Fraternal Order of Police of Ohio wants the board to be able to increase or lower employer rates by up to 0.5% every three years—arguing it's a more flexible solution than last year's failed attempt to raise contributions by 4.5% over six years.

Anna Staver

As a statehouse reporter for Cleveland.com, I write about all things Ohio politics with a focus on elections, marijuana policy, social issues, budgets, redistricting, public pensions, immigration in Ohio and... more

[✉ astaver@cleveland.com](mailto:astaver@cleveland.com) [in](#) [X](#) [@](#)

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Dec. 13, 2024

OPINION

HB 296 addresses two crises - in Ohio police staffing and police pension funding: editorial

By Editorial Board, cleveland.com and The Plain Dealer

There's a reason House Bill 296 passed the Ohio House earlier this month on a robust 66-25 vote, with legislators of both parties in favor, including state Reps. Sean Brennan, a Parma Democrat, and Thomas F. Patton, a Strongsville Republican, both sponsors of the bill.



The legislation, which at this writing is pending in the Ohio Senate, seeks to correct two interrelated problems: A funding crisis for the Ohio Police and Fire Pension Fund and a police staffing crisis that the primary sponsors of HB 296 -- state Reps. Cindy Adams and Thomas Hall, both of southwest Ohio -- trace in part to the pension fund's funding challenges and belt-tightening that are making Ohio police pensions noncompetitive.

HB 296 would incrementally increase municipal contributions to police pensions over five years, from July 2025 to July 2030, raising employer contributions from 19.5% of a police officer's salary to 24% by July 1, 2030. Police officer contributions would also rise, to 12.5% of their salaries by July 1, 2030, from 12.25% now. (Firefighter contributions are not impacted.)

"We cannot afford to have a workforce shortage when it comes to our first responders," Abrams and Hall said in their sponsor testimony. "It is vital that we retain and recruit talented and dedicated public servants. Having a sound and stable pension fund structure is crucial when it comes to long-term retention of these valued public employees."

And the choices are stark, they noted -- either increase police pension funding or cut benefits further. "Ohio's police and firefighters have already experienced, in the last eight years alone, \$3.2 billion in benefit cuts and they've seen a 2.25% increase in their contribution," Hall and Abrams noted.

A long list of officials from Northeast Ohio municipalities -- from the cities of Cleveland and Parma Heights to Fairlawn -- have lined up to testify against HB 296.

Cleveland's then-CFO Ahmed Abonamah told the Ohio House Pensions Committee in November 2023 that the five-year increase, based on then-current police salaries and staffing, would mean an extra \$5.5 million annually in Cleveland pension contributions by July 2030.

Yet what might a cost-benefit analysis say? The pension fund is a shared fund, supported by police and firefighters and municipalities in the state with police and fire departments, thanks to the 1967 reform that created the Ohio Police and Fire Pension Fund. That centralization

saved municipalities then collectively running more than 450 different police and fire pension funds from the growing costs and administrative headaches.

Now that the pension fund needs to right-size contributions for future long-term stability, does Cleveland, or any of the other municipalities opposed to this law, really want to go back to that every-municipality-for-itself system? No. That means addressing the fund's funding needs now, not ignoring the long-term risks if changes aren't made.

Moreover, does Cleveland really want to keep raising police salaries to try to attract additional police officers without also addressing pension benefits? Police officer candidates likely look hard at benefits, including pension benefits, not solely at the pay. Police staffing shortages in Cleveland and elsewhere in Ohio also are a nagging, long-term problem that cannot be ignored.

HB 296 deserves to be enacted into law.

Toledo's finances in good condition

8/22/2024

BY KELLY KACZALA / BLADE STAFF WRITER

Toledo's finances so far this year are in good shape, according to city finance officials who appeared before Toledo city council's finance, debt, and budget oversight committee on Thursday.

Melanie Campbell, interim finance director, and John Zawisza, commissioner of taxation, provided a report to the committee on the city's finances through the month of July.

Income tax collections for 2024 through the month of July total approximately \$120.5 million for the general fund, compared to \$116.6 million through the same period last year.

For the road improvement fund, income tax collections total approximately \$13.2 million through July, 2024, compared to \$12.7 million through July, 2023. Total collections through July are approximately \$133.7 million.

Revenues from businesses dropped by 3.7 percent, which Mr. Zawisza chalked up to a slow month. "Profit margins are down, but when we put this year's budget together, we were projecting that category to be down. July is a notorious slow net profit month," he said.

Total expenditures this year are projected to total \$332,619,054, compared to \$330,372,670 last year. Labor costs make up the majority of general fund expenses.

There is a small balance in the American Rescue Plan Act account, which has financed various needs in the city since 2022, when the federal government allocated a one-time payment of \$180 million in response to the unmet needs of residents impacted by the pandemic. That amount has dwindled to \$7.6 million, which must be used by the end of this year.

Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz has made recommendations to city council on how to use the remaining funds, including \$3.5 million for new rooftops for various community and senior centers.

"I think that is very important," Councilman George Sarantou, chairman of the committee, said after the meeting. "This is a one-time opportunity to bring our community and senior centers up to speed. You can't have an effective community center if the roof is leaking."

Others vying for the money include Toledo's parks, recreation, and youth services, which is requesting \$1 million to renovate Savage Park, including the installation of a new splash pad. Other improvements include a large open-air shelter, playground improvements, and upgrades to the baseball field.

Mr. Sarantou said he was pleased with the overall budget report.

"Right now, we have a steady economic picture in Toledo, at this point. That could change, but we recognize that it's steady," he said.

He would like to see the Federal Reserve Board cut interest rates next month because it would stimulate the economy with business expansion and new jobs, which would benefit the city with more revenue.

“It’s going to take a while for those interest rates to drop, but those are always positive trends you see in the economy when the rates start to come down,” he said. “People have a little more confidence to borrow and buy a home or car. Right now, there’s a lot of people who want to buy a home, but they just can’t afford the interest rates.”

Mr. Sarantou said council will vote on who will receive the remaining ARPA funds at a regularly scheduled council meeting on Sept. 14.

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CLEVELAND, August 1, 2024 — Today, city officials transmitted a competitive deal to retain the Cleveland Browns at their current stadium site.

Cleveland Mayor Justin M. Bibb and civic leaders agree the stadium is more than just a venue and that keeping the Browns in Cleveland is vital for sustaining downtown's successes, regional health and the city's global image.

“We are implementing a bold vision for lakefront development, and the Browns have been an essential fixture on our lakefront for decades. But our first priority is always our residents,” stated Mayor Bibb. “Having the Browns play here is integral to our city’s identity and community spirit. This initiative must go beyond the Browns and be about what’s best for downtown, the neighborhoods, the suburbs, and the region.”

Over the last decade, \$7.5 billion has been invested into downtown Cleveland. There is an opportunity to build on the many public investments that have already been made including Progressive Field, Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse, the Hilton Hotel and the Huntington Convention Center, and private investments including the new Sherwin-Williams headquarters, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame expansion, and the Flats East Bank.

“Losing the Browns would harm Cleveland and all Clevelanders,” Bibb added. “Lower spending downtown would negatively affect tax revenues that provide essential services for a city in need. It would close businesses, cost jobs, empty out storefronts, and make our downtown feel less alive.” he added. “We also can’t lose sight of how a new venue would cost taxpayers—including Clevelanders—hundreds of millions more while undermining the city and region's other critical needs. A strong urban core drives success for the entire region.”

[In a letter to the Haslam Sports Group](#), the Mayor stated:

“We are unified in our belief that transforming the current facility is unquestionably in the best interests of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County. We do not believe any public financial support should responsibly be made available for development of a stadium outside of the City of Cleveland.”

Mayor Bibb emphasized that the Browns had presented the city with exciting and transformational plans for a modernized facility on the lakefront, aligning with the city’s commitment to a vibrant shore-to-core-to-shore plan for Cleveland. The administration is steadfast and focused on developing the North Coast lakefront into a world-class, well programmed, people-focused space. The Cleveland Browns are a key part of that vision.

<https://www.clevelandohio.gov/news/city-cleveland-proposes-461-million-financing-plan-support-browns-lakefront-stadium>

The proposed 30-year lease arrangement balances the needs of our residents and the team, and it is designed to provide the Browns with a dramatically transformed facility that will serve the region for decades.

“We have worked closely with the Haslam Sports Group over many months and developed a competitive, thoughtful, and comprehensive package that we believe respects taxpayers and protects the city’s budget while enhancing the Browns’ fan experience,” noted Mayor Bibb.

The funding model ensures that fans paying for tickets cover the cost of upgrades without negatively impacting the city budget. Cleveland is committed to using revenues that would not exist but for this project. This approach assures equity, given that 70% of the stadium’s users come from outside of Cuyahoga County.

The total city investment would be \$461 million without any impact to city services, and that is before any pending County and State commitment. Terms include:

- \$367 million (\$227 million from increases in admission tax revenues, \$120 million from Cuyahoga County sin tax revenues, and \$20 million in existing stadium capital reserves) over the 30-year lease term, with a five-year renewal option.
- The city will turn the Willard Garage and the Muni Lot over to the Browns for their exclusive use on game days and event days. Parking revenues are expected to generate \$94 million for capital repairs and improvements.
- Under the current lease, the city covers \$1.3 million in annual property taxes and insurance, while the Browns pay \$250,000 in rent. Under the proposed new lease, rent will be waived for the Browns, but they will assume responsibility for the insurance and tax payments. This adjustment aligns with the lease agreements held by the Guardians and Cavs, making it consistent across sports franchises in Cleveland.

The proposal benefits Cleveland and Cuyahoga County residents by enhancing the facility and saving the public hundreds of millions in new construction costs. It is a strategic investment that sets the stage for Cleveland Browns Stadium to continue to serve as an economic engine for Greater Cleveland.

Said Mayor Bibb: “I was elected to fight for Cleveland—its residents, its businesses, and its future. I am committed to keeping the Browns here at home, as key partners in our lakefront transformation.”

[Read the full Browns Lease Term Sheet.](#)

<https://www.clevelandohio.gov/news/city-cleveland-proposes-461-million-financing-plan-support-browns-lakefront-stadium>

Most of city surplus spent on raises, new positions

 cdispatch.com/news/most-of-city-surplus-spent-on-raises-new-positions/

Brian Jones

September 13, 2023

Columbus City Council on Tuesday committed much of its projected \$500,000 Fiscal Year 2024 surplus for raises to city employees and creating two new positions.

However, it did not vote on the actual budget — which must be approved by Sept. 15 — during the special-call meeting at City Hall.

Last month the city began weighing a proposed \$26 million budget that included a surplus of about \$700,000. Chief Financial Officer James Brigham told the council they could safely obligate about \$500,000 of that.

At Tuesday's meeting, the council spent about \$300,000 off the top on 3% raises for all employees. It would go on to dedicate about \$92,000 on step pay for Columbus Police Department officers and a further \$25,000 for targeted raises at Columbus Fire and Rescue.

The council also created two positions: a grant manager and an assistant at the Trotter Convention Center, before approving about \$108,000 for service and upgrades at the Crime Lab.

"I think (raises) are the starting point," Vice Mayor and Ward 2 Councilman Joseph Mickens said during the discussion. "We're going to ask (department heads) to bring their good mind, their Sunday mind, today. Some will get some (money) and some won't, and don't hold it against us if you don't get nothing."

CPD Chief Joseph Daughtry asked for step raises to be implemented for patrol officers.

"This will help us with our retention," Daughtry said.

Under the new pay scale, a starting patrol salary will be bumped from \$39,500 to \$40,000. Patrol officers with two years experience will go from \$41,500 now to \$43,500; at three years from \$41,500 now to \$45,000; and at six years officers will make \$48,500.

Officers who now have six years of experience are paid anywhere between \$41,500 and \$45,000, according to Chief Operations Officer Jammie Garrett.

The 3% across-the-board raises passed 4-1 with Mickens, Ward 4 Councilman Pierre Beard, Ward 5 Councilman Stephen Jones and Ward 6 Councilwoman Jacqueline DiCicco voting yes and Ward 3 Councilman Rusty Greene opposed. Ward 1 Councilwoman Ethel Stewart was not at the meeting.

The police step increases passed unanimously.

Fire and Rescue raises

CFR Chief Duane Hughes asked for raises for two positions in his department: the administrative assistant and the assistant chief. He asked for the administrative assistant to go from \$31,070 to \$39,750 and for the assistant chief — which is currently vacant — to be increased from \$60,000 to \$68,000.

The assistant chief and the chief of training both made the same salary even though the assistant chief has the higher rank, Hughes said.

Garrett told the council Hughes needed a raise, too. He currently makes \$71,000, and Garrett suggested a rate of \$80,000.

Hughes disagreed that he needed a raise, asking only for the other two positions.

“Other department heads need an assistant to help them out,” Mickens said. “(Daughtry) has two assistant chiefs helping him out. ... But I don’t see you getting nobody to help you.”

“I’m extraordinary,” Hughes replied. “I work my ass off.”

Greene moved, with a second by DiCicco, to give raises to the administrative assistant, assistant chief and Hughes.

The motion passed unanimously, at a total cost of about \$25,000.

New positions, other expenditures

The council also created two positions: a grant manager requested by Mayor Keith Gaskin and an assistant at the Trotter Convention Center requested by Trotter Manager Rogena Bonner.

Gaskin originally put two new City Hall positions in the budget: a grant manager with a \$50,000 salary, and a city planner at \$70,000 per year. The council cut the city planner position but decided to fund the grant manager.

“If we go with one, I would be for the grant writer,” Mickens said. “From a department heads’ standpoint, (a grant writer) can help everybody. When they need help, that’s somebody they can all fall back on.”

Greene moved, with a second by Mickens, to fund the grant manager position. The motion passed unanimously.

At the last budget work session Bonner asked for a full-time assistant, noting that there wasn't anybody at the Trotter who could do her job while she was out. The council decided to meet her halfway, doing away with two currently empty part-time positions at a combined cost of \$26,000, and putting that money toward funding the assistant, who will have a salary of \$42,000.

Beard moved, with a second by Jones, to create the position, and the motion passed unanimously.

In the last bit of personnel action, the council voted unanimously to allow Public Works Director Casey Bush to eliminate an unfilled concrete finisher position and spread the \$30,596 salary between 10 skilled laborers in Public Works.

Bush said the increase would help him retain workers, who often leave for higher paying jobs with Lowndes County.

Finally, the council voted unanimously to spend \$108,000 for software and technology upgrades at the Crime Lab. That money will go towards service contracts for the lab's three gas chromatography/mass spectrometry machines, as well as upgrades to the evidence system.

By the end of the meeting, all but about \$39,000 of the \$500,000 surplus had been spent. The council opted to adjourn without approving the budget in order to allow Brigham and Garrett to confirm spending figures.

The council will meet again later this week to approve the budget.

Brian Jones is the local government reporter for Columbus and Lowndes County.

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- **From Gongwer, Nov. 3, 2023:**

The Fiscal Year 2025-2026 capital bill cycle could see as much as \$700 million in General Revenue Funds appropriated along with the usual \$3 billion or so for debt-backed projects. ***The extra cash, made possible by the unusually flush condition of the state treasury***, was included in the biennial budget ([HB 33](#)).

- **NASRA news and notes**

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that state and local governments added an estimated 48,000 jobs in October 2023. October marks the 19th consecutive month of increase in aggregate state and local employment. The private sector added an estimated 99,000 jobs in October 2023.

July 7, 2023

State Ends Fiscal Year With Record GRF Balance

With the fiscal year now complete, the Office of Budget and Management is reporting tax receipts exceeded expectations for the year by nearly \$1 billion.

OBM [Director Kimberly Murnieks reported](#) the latest [preliminary revenue data](#) show the state finished Fiscal Year 2023 with a record balance in the General Revenue Fund.

"When you look across all major revenue categories, you see strong performances providing a strong baseline for the upcoming budget and definitely supporting the policy priorities that are in HB33," she said in a Friday interview.

Ms. Murnieks clarified that the report continues to be based off the estimates completed at the beginning of the fiscal year. They are therefore slightly different than the updated numbers she presented two weeks ago to the conference committee on the recently signed budget ([HB 33 Track](#)). (See [Gongwer Ohio Report, June 22, 2023](#))

June's tax receipts of \$2.7 billion brought the annual total to \$28.9 billion, slightly higher than the \$28.76 billion FY23 tax revenue forecast she provided to the conference committee. That is 3.6% above projections and a 2.7% improvement over the prior year.

The major revenue generators – non-auto sales tax, auto sales tax, personal income tax and the commercial activity tax – similarly finished above monthly and annual estimates.

Ms. Murnieks said that over the last few years, the state saw large overages in sales taxes, fueled by pandemic relief payments.

Sales taxes, including both non-auto and auto sales, increased 3.5% since last year, which she said is more in line with normal trends.

Non-auto sales revenue was \$10.3 million (1%) above the monthly estimate and \$110.6 million (1%) above the annual estimate.

Auto sales revenue was \$11 million (6.3%) above June forecasts, landing it \$38.7 million (2%) beyond projections.

Ms. Murnieks said the categories saw much ebb and flow over the course of the year but overall returned to estimates.

"Personal income tax also ended strong," the director said. "While we had anticipated PIT declining in '23 compared to '22, we saw 6.4% overages and a 0.4% year-over-year growth. Again, a very strong performance."

At the end of June, the category's collections were \$59.8 million (6.6%) more than anticipated for the month and \$645 million (6.4%) more than the annual expectation.

The CAT outperformed monthly estimates by \$113,000 (0.7%) in June and the annual estimate by \$82.9 million (4%). It also saw the greatest percentage increase over last year at 7.8%.

The final figures will inform the FY 2024-25 revenue estimates based on the final budget, accounting for all the changes made to tax policies. Those estimates will then become the basis for OBM's FY24 reports that will begin next month, Ms. Murnieks said.

"The newly enacted budget for Fiscal Years 2024 and 2025 allocates one-time resources for one-time expenses that will provide generational opportunities, while focusing ongoing resources on providing tax relief while also supporting children and families, growing our workforce, strengthening our communities, and investing in our thriving economy," she said. "Ohio citizens can be assured that our state finances are sound as we begin the new fiscal year."

The full monthly financial report will be posted to OBM's website on Monday.



Tax Revenues Remain Strong In First Month of New Biennium

Aug. 7, 2023

State tax receipts improved by more than \$60 million over the same period last year, according to the latest data released by the Office of Budget and Management on Monday.

"This was definitely a solid start for the new budget biennium," OBM [Director Kimberly Murnieks](#) said in an interview. "We're right where we would want to be after the first month of a new budget. It's a solid foundation for the upcoming two-year period."

The [preliminary report](#), which is the first of this fiscal year and the biennium, shows that general revenue tax receipts totaled \$2.1 billion in July, just 0.6% above the monthly estimate.

Three of the four major categories exceeded expectations.

Personal Income Tax collections totaled \$741.7 million, outpacing projections by \$11.6 million (1.6%). The category also posted a \$17.5 million improvement (2.4%) over the previous July.

The Commercial Activity Tax also blew past estimates by \$15.3 million (15.2%), though Director Murnieks said it is evaluated on a quarterly basis.

"We see the performance as a positive, but it's just one month out of the quarter," she said. "It's a good start."

Compared to the previous July, the CAT's total \$115.9 million showed growth of \$15.2 million (15.1%).

Non-Auto Sales Taxes totaled \$1 billion, or 26.1 million (2.5%) above estimates. It was also \$66.8 million (7%) higher than the previous July.

However, it was tempered by Auto Sales and Use, which came up \$26.1 million (15.2%) short. The category dropped \$13 million (8.2%) since the previous July.

Director Murnieks said however that the dip could be a "timing-related issue."

"Especially with some of the smaller tax categories, we look at the total year to date and monitor the month-to-month," she said. "When you only have one month of data, it is not sufficient information to make any conclusions."

"We'll monitor in August, but it could be the timing of payments between late July and early August, and we see that often in some of the smaller categories," she said.

Director Murnieks also emphasized that the subtotal sales and use category, including both auto and non-auto sales, is right on target at \$1.2 billion with a 0% variance.

"The strong performances continue with many of the trends we've been seeing in recent months," she said. "It's good to see that positive growth is continuing."

The full monthly financial report is expected to be posted to OBM's website on Aug. 10.

As it is the first report of the new fiscal year, Director Murnieks said there are rarely changes between the preliminary report and the yet-to-be-released final report.

Proposed 2024 Columbus budget projects 29% surge in property tax revenue from reappraisals

Bill Bush

Columbus Dispatch

As the Franklin County Auditor's Office puts the final touches on its property reappraisal increases, the city of Columbus expects its property tax revenue will jump by almost 29% next year, Mayor Andrew J. Ginther's proposed 2024 city budget released Thursday shows.

Columbus expects to collect \$81.8 million in property taxes in 2024, up from \$63.4 million that was budgeted in 2023. The city's total general fund budget spending is expected to grow to a record of just under \$1.2 billion.

The reason for the surge in property tax revenues is the gain that the city expects to realize from the reappraisal, with new bills going out in January, a city budget department spokesman said. In 2022 and 2023, property tax collections increased by only single digits.

Franklin County home values are set to rise a record 41% in this year's reappraisal, double the previous record of 20% set in the county's previous reappraisal in 2020.

Columbus' income tax of 2.5%, which provides the bulk of its general budget revenue, is expected to increase 3% next year to \$872.3 million.

Spending on the city Department of Public Safety, the largest general fund category that includes police and fire protection, would grow about 3.2%, or \$24.4 million, to \$753.2 million, under Ginther's proposed budget.

During a Thursday morning news conference, held before the actual 408-page budget was released by the mayor's office, Ginther said the increase in public

safety spending would fund three new police and fire recruit classes each that could add up to 150 new police officers and 150 new firefighters next year.

However, the city also planned three police classes for 2022 and 2023, and things didn't work out as planned, with the number of new recruits signing up being significantly lower than in previous classes, The Dispatch reported in July. A class of 34 Columbus police recruits graduated July 14. Another class of 48 officers began training at the police academy in August. The third class is set to begin in December.

The budget document shows the number of uniformed police officers in Columbus dropping next year by 16, to 1,980. But the Public Safety Department said numbers from 2022 and 2023 were revised down each of those years because of increased retirements, and 1,980 officers for next year is actually a year-over-year increase of about 75 officers.

Whether the Division of Police can recruit a full complement of 150 new police officers next year remains to be seen, said Glenn McEntyre, spokesman for the Department of Public Safety.

The police division is also budgeting for 10 new officers it expects to recruit from other police departments around the state.

The struggle to fill budgeted police positions comes amid an announcement last week that the police division would begin for the first time providing a full-time security detail of three sworn officers to protect members of City Council when they are out in public — beyond officers stationed at council meetings.

Council President Shannon Hardin has maintained the detail would not only protect council members but also the public. Previously, only the mayor and police chief have had security details.

The city expects that council security detail members would at least initially be rotated out by 60 days to fall under the city's contract with the Fraternal Order

of Police Capital City Lodge No. 9, which has filed a grievance arguing that any such detail assignment over 60 days must be negotiated with the union.

The Dispatch reported last week that Columbus taxpayers initially will pay \$315,314 per year to the detail, which could grow as officials determined the right number of officers needed to protect councilmembers at public events, and potentially while they are off the job shopping, going to movies and or out to eat.

Hardin said last week that the Division of Police would decide how many officers are ultimately needed.

The mayor's proposed budget now goes to City Council for consideration, any changes and final approval.

Asked at the news conference if the mayor would commit to having three police recruit classes a year beyond 2024, Ginther — who was reelected to another four-year term Tuesday after a campaign focused on improving public safety — said he would only commit to do as many classes "as we can afford."

Other highlights in the proposed budget, according to Ginther, are:

- \$19.2 million to continue expanding affordable housing options across Columbus
- \$21 million for summer, after-school and jobs-readiness programming to keep Columbus youth safe, active and engaged
- \$10 million in human services grants for 112 social service organizations that provide support for vulnerable residents and neighborhoods
- An expected balance of \$101 million in the city's "rainy day fund" by the end of 2024



Dayton is spending some of its COVID aid in unexpected ways. It's not alone

Updated October 19, 2021

[TAMARA KEITH](#)

Early last week, the sun just starting to rise over Dayton, Ohio, Zac Wyrick and 17 other firefighter recruits panted as they hauled fire hose up several flights of stairs at the department's training center. It's something Wyrick, 28, has been waiting to do for years. He was inspired to apply to join the force after talking to EMTs following a tragedy: His brother died of an opioid overdose in 2017.

But his dream was delayed when the COVID-19 pandemic hit Dayton's budget hard. The city wasn't sure it would have enough money for a new training class, and waited for months to see if it would get money in the American Rescue Plan, [the \\$1.9 trillion pandemic relief package](#) passed by Democrats in March. "I knew it was going to take awhile. I didn't expect it to take this long, though," Wyrick said.

Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley had been one of the loudest voices lobbying for state and local governments to get money from the COVID aid package. "If we don't get any federal money — no fire class," she told NPR back in February.

Dayton got the money, but in the end, the city didn't need it for the fire class. That's because the local economy had bounced back more quickly than forecast.

"We saw a huge uptick, frankly, in corporate taxes coming back really heavily. And so that gave us the opportunity to kind of breathe and then figure out, OK: How can we spend this to make the most impact in Dayton?" Whaley said in an interview.

Dayton isn't alone in this. Cities and states all over the country found their budgets fared better than expected. And now, they're looking at new and unexpected ways to spend the \$360 billion in COVID aid.

"Cities and counties and states, many have been pinching pennies for a very, very long time," said Alan Berube, a researcher at the Brookings Institution who specializes in economic policies for cities.

"The American Rescue Plan is forcing them to change their mindset from one of scarcity to one of abundance in a very short period of time," Berube said.

Some of Dayton's COVID aid could go toward tearing down abandoned houses

A boarded-up house in Dayton's Westwood neighborhood, abandoned for so long the vines have taken over. The city is looking at spending some of its COVID aid on tearing down these kinds of buildings.
Tamara Keith/NPR

Dayton is taking its time to plan what to do with its share of the aid package, which has to be obligated by the end of 2024.

"This is a real once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," said Shelley Dickstein, city manager, who described the funding as a chance to do "transformative things" for the community. "The city of Dayton has never received \$138 million in federal grant funding — and it probably never will again," she said.

The city has held a series of community meetings to discuss how the funds should be spent, and they also posted a survey to get feedback.

"We just have never had this opportunity before and I think that's what's really exciting about it," said Whaley, who is the president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors. "I talk to mayors weekly, and we want to get it right," she said.

One leading proposal in Dayton: using some of the money to demolish boarded-up homes, the kind that scar working-class neighborhoods like Westwood, where Whaley — now running for governor — pointed out a house that has been abandoned so long that vines have taken it over.

Residents also favored spending to support Black and brown businesses, addressing crime, housing and improving playgrounds and parks.

Amaha Sellassie said he wants to make sure people living in long-neglected neighborhoods have a say in how the money is spent. "There's strips of houses, where ... it looks like a bomb was dropped," said the community activist, who is a sociology instructor at Sinclair Community College in Dayton.

"We've accepted the unacceptable," Sellassie said, explaining the COVID money could begin to reverse decades of economic disparity in the city.

"We haven't had this much resources coming into the community in, I don't know how long," he said.

The unexpected funds could fuel political arguments

Gene Sperling, the White House official overseeing the funds, said there's nothing wrong with cities taking some time for "thoughtful planning" in how to spend the relief.

"The American Rescue Plan was always designed to be both about dealing with immediate crisis and about giving states and localities the firepower and flexibility to ensure we have a strong and sustainable recovery," Sperling said in an interview.

He said Democrats learned their lesson back in 2009 responding to recession after the financial crisis. Back then, the big stimulus package emphasized quick spending on shovel-ready projects. But when the recovery stagnated, there wasn't anything there for struggling local governments. Sperling said the Biden administration wanted flexibility in case of future bumps in the road.

But when President Biden and Democrats were pushing for the \$1.9 trillion bill to pass, Republicans argued not all of that money was urgently needed. That case will likely get louder ahead of next year's congressional elections, especially with cities and states now using the emergency aid for long-deferred wish list items.

"I think that will be possibly a talking point for Republicans in the next couple years," said Dave Luketic, who was a political consultant for former Ohio Gov. John Kasich, a Republican. "They're already leaning that way," Luketic said.

But whether that message resonates with voters will depend on where the economy is closer to the election, Luketic said. "The jury is still out," he said.

In Dayton schools, it's easy to see COVID aid money at work

Michelle Isaacs works on a math problem with students. Dayton Public Schools hired an extra teacher for each first, second and third grade class to help kids catch up after a year outside school.

Tamara Keith/NPR

The COVID aid bill was so big that there are other programs that may determine whether voters ultimately see it as wasteful or a success. There were direct relief checks to families, aid for businesses and money for schools.

On a visit to Louise Troy Elementary School in Dayton, it was easy to see the COVID dollars at work. On one side of a third-grade classroom, Jessica Lomax helped one half of the class learn to read. On the other side, Michelle Isaacs worked with students on math. After 45 minutes, the groups switched.

Dayton Public Schools hired nearly 90 teachers over the summer to put two teachers in each first-, second- and third-grade classroom. It may seem extravagant, but superintendent Elizabeth Lolli said it gives kids more individual attention after more than a year of being out of the classroom.

"I can teach 10 students at the same time that my partner teacher is teaching 10 students. Think about how much more I can see with 10 as opposed to 20," Lolli explained.

Lolli said there's enough funding from the aid package to continue this experiment for two years and if it works, she'd like to find a way to keep it going.

Nov. 8, 2021

How are Ohio cities spending their American Rescue Plan dollars?

While some spending has been planned, much remains unknown

When the American Rescue Plan was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Joe Biden last March, the U.S. Department of the Treasury wanted the cities who were getting part of the \$1.9 trillion national relief package to submit their first project and expenditure reports to them by Oct. 31. Ohio cities got \$6.6 billion to spend on future projects and needs from the COVID-19 pandemic.

But local governments have not been processing this huge amount of spending for their needs fast enough, and the Treasury Department has now moved the first deadline for the spending back to the end of January 2022. A study published by the Brookings Institution in September found that 20 large American cities had committed to spending a total of \$1.3 billion through the end of July, or 18% of their combined \$7.4 billion allocation.

Why are most of these cities — which for years have complained that the state and federal government had cut financial help to them drastically through the years — unable to assess their needs and get back to the feds with some answers in seven months?

Many reasons, from deciding whether paying off debt or investing in things like affordable housing is appropriate, or whether they'd rather add some parks to the city landscape, for instance. About 40% of that spending budgeted so far is for revenue replacement and 20% for low-income community needs.

While waiting on Washington, cities have also been wondering if they should invest money on infrastructure — like say, rebuilding the lakefront port in Cleveland — or if funding for that might be included in the infrastructure bill. “In turn, many big cities are telling Treasury: We’ll get back to you on that,” the Brookings researchers wrote.

As for their plans, Ohio cities are all over the map. Some are just pushing the funding through city council and emphasizing debt reduction and law enforcement investment. Others are holding public meetings to gather input. Still others are indeed postponing decisions to see what happens next as current spending bills are finished off by Congress. But most are facing pressure to take care of problems that have gone unaddressed for a long time.

“We just have never had this opportunity before, and I think that’s what’s really exciting about it,” Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley and Democratic candidate for Ohio Governor told NPR in mid-October. “And we want to get it right.”

Here’s what the current status is for some of the major cities in Ohio:

Columbus: Of the \$187 million available to spend from the ARP funds, Columbus has only committed a small amount so far. Columbus Mayor Andrew J. Ginther and City Council have agreed to allocate \$15.6 million of the funds for “short-term summer youth engagement and anti-violence efforts.” The city is encouraging community organizations seeking financial support to apply as they move into the new year.

Akron: The city has hired a consulting firm to help decide how the \$145 million will be spent, and the Akron Beacon Journal has decided to make [18 suggestions in an early October story as to how they would spend the cash](#). Those include programs to curb youth violence, a down payment assistance program for those needing help in buying a single-family home, and replacing lead contaminated water service lines.

Cincinnati: The first \$134 million was decided early by Cincinnati (in May), with about \$107 million of that going toward spending deficits for the current and upcoming fiscal year budgets. Some of the remaining funds will be spent on visual arts organizations, restaurant grants, and investment in minority businesses.

Toledo: Of the \$181 in federal funds being spent in Toledo, \$80.9 million will go for maintaining city services and adding nearly 50 firefighters and 100 police officers. An additional \$40.5 million will go toward youth programming, sports and recreation. “We live in a time where there is low trust between government and citizens,” Toledo Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz said of the October decision. “We have to emphasize we are listening to our citizens and doing what they told us to do.”

Cleveland: The city gets \$255 million to spend as the first half of its \$511 million total, and about \$108 million will be used to make up for lost revenues during the pandemic. The remainder of the spending includes \$75 million for community and economic development programs, \$15 million for home/building demolition and \$26 million for public safety. An additional \$ 5 million will go toward the county food bank, and another \$20 million for an expanded broadband Wi-Fi service in underserved poor communities in the city.

Youngstown: The city hasn’t decided how to spend its \$83 million in ARP funds, and has been doing surveys and meeting with citizens groups all summer to be ready for final decisions up later this year. “[Some] might say crime and youth prevention, but then we’ve got to figure out... what’s that really mean,” Youngstown Mayor Tito Brown said in early October. “What kind of service are you going to provide? And then you make recommendations to the council for the majority of those issues they put out there and then the council has to decide how to appropriate those funds.”

The City of Youngstown, however, has decided to take care of one order of ARP spending business before the bigger outlay plans are decided. The city will spend about \$5.1 million of the federal funds to demolish 500 of the worst abandoned houses in Youngstown. Michael Durkin, the city’s code enforcement and blight remediation superintendent, told council that \$5.1 million was needed because the demolitions were expensive due to homes filled with asbestos and other hazardous materials. “The goal is to get down the worst of the worst,” Durkin said.

Here's where funds from the American Rescue Plan Act is going in Cleveland

CLEVELAND — Cleveland City Council on Monday passed a plan detailing how they will use more than \$500 million in COVID-19 funds from the federal government.

The city is receiving roughly \$512 million from the American Rescue Plan Act, with significant portions going toward Cleveland's overall financial recovery.

More than 20 percent- nearly \$110 million- will go into the city's General Fund that will aid in recouping revenue lost from the coronavirus pandemic.

The second-largest beneficiary? Public Safety.

In total, more than \$26.3 million will be distributed among the Cleveland Division of Police (\$10.2 million), Cleveland Division of Fire (\$3.6 million), Emergency Medical Services (\$7.8 million), and Animal Control and IT Safety received \$5 million.

According to City Council, the monies will be used to upgrade equipment, vehicles and computers, as well as pay for 15 new ambulances for EMS.

More than \$80 million will go to the Departments of Community and Economic Development and \$15 million for the Department of Building and Housing.

3News' Lydia Esparra spoke with Cleveland resident Nozomi Ikuta who said that she thinks it's important that people like her "have an opportunity to have that voice and discern together how at least a portion of this money should be spent."

Ikuta's criticism comes less than [six months after Cleveland officials put out a call for residents to suggest what the city should do with the money](#). The Cleveland resident also adds that she thinks a portion of the money should go towards people who cannot help themselves.

"People who want mental health services, homeless shelters, or people who want a place for their kids to play," Ikuta suggested to Esparra. "The basic nuts and bolts that they can see are affecting their lives."

The second half of the money is expected to be released in May 2022 and Cleveland City Councilman Joe Jones says he would like to see that money spent differently.

"if we don't establish funds and finances towards the direction of making our city safe and we don't make it a major priority with the resources we have, people are going to leave the city of Cleveland," Jones said.

Past Fiscal Stimulus Is Financing a New Government Spending Spree

State and local governments typically make budget cuts following recessions as they balance their expenditures against shortfalls in revenue. But much like the private sector, massive federal transfer payments and other stimulus measures transformed their balance sheets, allowing for continued spending even as federal fiscal stimulus has been pulled back.

State and local governments also received unprecedented federal aid, which, combined with much stronger revenues than anticipated (reflecting the indirect impact of other stimulus), puts them today in a position of remarkable fiscal strength.

...substantial portions of state and local government allotments under the American Rescue Plan (ARP) have yet to be spent.

State and local governments received a record amount of federal aid in response to the pandemic, including \$150 billion in flexible aid from the CARES Act in 2020 and an additional \$350 billion from the ARP in 2021.

While state and local governments have already budgeted much of their ARP allotments, significant portions remain unspent. Local governments, for instance, received half of their ARP funding in a second tranche in May (worth \$65 billion), as did many state governments. And as state and local governments draft their budgets for fiscal year 2023 (starting in July for nearly all states), most will allocate spending for their remaining funds.