



**EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM (ERS)**

*Milwaukee County*

**Pension Board**

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Director, Retirement Plan  
Services

May 29, 2020

Mr. David Crowley  
County Executive  
Milwaukee County Employees' Retirement System  
901 North Ninth Street, Room 306  
Milwaukee, WI 53233

**Re: County Contribution to the Employees' Retirement System and OBRA 1990 Retirement System**

Dear Mr. Crowley:

This letter is being provided in accordance with the provisions of Section 201.24(3.1) of the County Ordinance ("CO") that governs the Employees' Retirement System and County Board File No. 97-155 that was adopted by the County Board in February 1997. This letter should be referred to the Committee on Finance and Audit.

The actuary has completed the annual review of the Pension Fund as of December 31, 2019, and has determined that the actual County obligation for 2020 is \$74,753,832. It is anticipated that a County contribution of \$77,437,000 will be paid for 2020. A break-down of these amounts is as follows (assuming that no Bi-weekly County contributions are anticipated to be made as of this time):

| <u>Plan</u>        | <u>Actual 2020<br/>Obligation</u> | <u>Expected<br/>Contribution<br/>Credit</u> | <u>Type of<br/>Contribution<br/>Credit</u> | <u>Variance</u>      |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| ERS                |                                   | \$76,901,000                                | Lump Sum                                   |                      |
|                    |                                   | 0                                           | Bi-weekly                                  |                      |
|                    |                                   | 0                                           | Interest                                   |                      |
| ERS Subtotal       | \$74,041,789                      | \$76,901,000                                |                                            | (\$2,859,211)        |
| OBRA               | 712,043                           | 536,000                                     | Lump Sum                                   | 176,043              |
| <b>Grand Total</b> | <b>\$74,753,832</b>               | <b>\$77,437,000</b>                         |                                            | <b>(\$2,683,168)</b> |

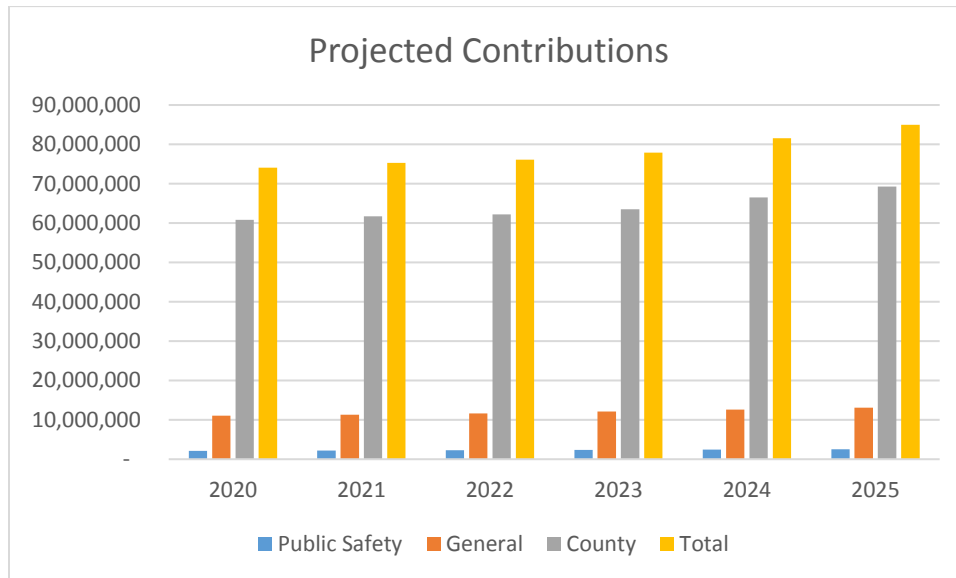
The actuary has estimated that the 2021 County Budget should include a total of \$75,673,000 for the County's 2021 gross Pension Fund obligation (including employee contributions). This amount includes:

|                      |                            |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| \$ 74,914,000        | Employees' Retirement Plan |
| <u>759,000</u>       | OBRA Pension Plan          |
| <b>\$ 75,673,000</b> | <b>Grand Total</b>         |

The plan provisions used for the 2020 actual calculation are the same as those used for the 2019 actual calculations. The actuarial assumptions used for the 2020 actual calculation were updated based upon recommended changes contained in the 2017 experience study analysis, which were adopted by the Board effective with the January 1, 2018 valuation. For the 2021 budget calculation, a base for unexpected change in Unfunded Actuarial Accrued Liability during 2020 is added and amortized over 20 years. In addition, a contribution variance base is added and amortized over 5 years for the amount of the 2020 Actual Contribution determined that is not contributed during 2020.

**NOTE:** The Pension Board previously adopted the following change to the investment return assumption. Effective with the current January 1, 2020 actuarial valuation, the rate of return on assets and valuation discount rate was changed from 7.75% to 7.50%.

The following table shows the projected ERS contribution amounts through the 2025 Plan year. The contribution amounts shown are split between Public Safety Employees, General Employees, and the County.



A summary of the reconciliation of ERS contributions is shown on page 26 of the enclosed valuation report.

Attached is a summary of the funding plan for the ERS and OBRA plans, a summary of the actuarial assumptions used by the actuary for the ERS plan, and ten-year histories of the assets and liabilities for both the ERS and OBRA plans. Enclosed are the actuarial valuation reports for the Milwaukee County Employees' Retirement System as of January 1, 2020.

**NOTE:** The contribution amounts shown in this letter are gross amounts and do not account for any mandatory employee contributions. It is our understanding that County Staff will net out from this gross amount the amount of employee contributions that are collected to arrive at a net County contribution. The sum of County contributions and employee contributions should match the gross amount of contributions shown in this letter. The recommended employee contribution rates for 2021 are 6.2% for General Employees and 9.7% for Public Safety Employees. Last year's rates were 6.2% and 8.9%, respectively.

We urge the County to make every effort to budget for 2021 the amounts shown in this letter, and to consider any arrangements as it deems appropriate to transition to the increase in future contribution amounts.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:  
  
CD08ABD251F84AB  
Mr. Michael S. Harper  
Pension Board Chairman

Attachment and Enclosure

**Employees' Retirement System of the County of Milwaukee**  
**Funding Plan, Assumptions and Methods, History of Assets and Liabilities**

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**I Funding Plan**

- The funding policy in 2020 is to contribute each year the normal cost plus amortization payments plus expected administrative expenses.

**2020 Obligation as Budgeted**

|                          | <b>ERS</b>           | <b>OBRA</b>       | <b>Total</b>         |
|--------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Normal cost              | \$ 18,537,000        | \$ 105,000        | \$ 18,642,000        |
| Amortization of unfunded | 58,364,000           | 268,000           | 58,632,000           |
| Administrative Expenses  | <u>0</u>             | <u>163,000</u>    | <u>163,000</u>       |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>\$ 76,901,000</b> | <b>\$ 536,000</b> | <b>\$ 77,437,000</b> |

**Actual 2020 Obligation, Expected Contribution, and Variance**

|                        | <b>ERS</b>        | <b>OBRA</b>    | <b>Total</b>      |
|------------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Actual Obligation      | \$ 74,041,789     | \$ 712,043     | \$ 74,753,832     |
| Expected Contribution* | <u>76,901,000</u> | <u>536,000</u> | <u>77,437,000</u> |
| Expected Variance      | \$ (2,859,211)    | \$ 176,043     | \$ (2,683,168)    |

\*Without interest to year-end

**2021 Obligation as Budgeted**

|                          | <b>ERS</b>           | <b>OBRA</b>       | <b>Total</b>         |
|--------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Normal cost              | \$ 19,311,000        | \$ 97,000         | \$ 19,408,000        |
| Amortization of unfunded | 55,603,000           | 437,000           | 56,040,000           |
| Administrative Expenses  | <u>0</u>             | <u>225,000</u>    | <u>225,000</u>       |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>\$ 74,914,000</b> | <b>\$ 759,000</b> | <b>\$ 75,673,000</b> |

- The normal cost is the charge for benefits earned in the current year.
- Expected administrative expenses are immediately reflected.
- The 2020 Obligation as Budgeted did not include any administrative expenses payable from ERS to the County nor from OBRA to ERS.
- The amortization period is 20 years for liabilities due to plan changes, actuarial assumption changes and actuarial experience. Future bases are amortized over 20 years from the date of inception. These amortization payments are calculated assuming that future payments increase by 1.75%.
- The amortization period for the variance (the difference between the actual obligation and the contribution paid) will be 5 years. These amortization payments will be calculated in level dollar amounts.

**Employees' Retirement System of the County of Milwaukee  
Funding Plan, Assumptions and Methods, History of Assets and Liabilities**

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**II Current Actuarial Assumptions and Methods for the ERS and OBRA Plans**

- Investment return – 7.50% per annum for ERS and OBRA
- Payroll growth – 3.5% per annum for ERS / 3.0% for OBRA
- Revenue growth – 1.75% per annum for ERS and OBRA

- Pay increases – Average Annual Individual Increase:

|                |                        |                |
|----------------|------------------------|----------------|
| <u>General</u> | <u>Deputy Sheriffs</u> | <u>Elected</u> |
| 3.9%           | 4.8%                   | 3.1%           |

- Retirement age – Average Retirement Age:

|                |                        |                |
|----------------|------------------------|----------------|
| <u>General</u> | <u>Deputy Sheriffs</u> | <u>Elected</u> |
| 62             | 57                     | 64             |

- Mortality rates

- a. Non-disabled pensioners: 102% of RP-2006 Healthy Annuitant male and 107% of RP-2006 Healthy Annuitant female projected generationally using scale MP-2016.
- b. Disabled pensioners: 97% of RP-2006 Disabled male and 95% of RP-2006 Disabled female projected generationally using scale MP-2016.
- c. Active members: RP-2006 Employee tables, sex distinct, projected generationally using scale MP-2016.

- Separation rates – Average Annual Turnover\*:

|                |                        |                |
|----------------|------------------------|----------------|
| <u>General</u> | <u>Deputy Sheriffs</u> | <u>Elected</u> |
| 13.1%          | 7.0%                   | 2.0%           |

*\* For employees not yet eligible to retire.*

- Type of disability

- a. Represented employees - 50% Ordinary; 50% Accidental
- b. Non-represented employees - 100% Ordinary; 0% Accidental

- Backdrop rates – 75% of eligible retirees are assumed to elect a backdrop. Of those electing, 75% are assumed to take the maximum period available to them and 25% take half the maximum period available. The maximum period available is estimated by excluding time periods before the employee was eligible for an unreduced service retirement benefit.

Unless otherwise noted, the assumptions above are for the ERS plan. Refer to the valuation reports for a detailed exhibit of the assumptions for both plans.

**Employees' Retirement System of the County of Milwaukee  
Funding Plan, Assumptions and Methods, History of Assets and Liabilities**

**III History of Assets and Liabilities**

Shown below are supplemental schedules required by government accounting standards. These results are strictly for comparison purposes for any relevant Statement No. 67 or Statement No. 68 results.

**Schedule of Funding Progress – ERS  
(in thousands of dollars)**

| <b>Actuarial Valuation Date</b> | <b>Actuarial value of Assets (a)</b> | <b>Actuarial Accrued Liability (b)</b> | <b>Funded Ratio (a/b)</b> | <b>Unfunded Actuarial Liability (b - a)</b> | <b>Covered Payroll (c)</b> | <b>Unfunded as a percentage of covered Payroll {(b-a)/c}</b> |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| 12/31/2019                      | \$ 1,730,856                         | \$ 2,320,335                           | 74.6%                     | \$ 589,480                                  | \$ 200,366                 | 294.2%                                                       |
| 12/31/2018                      | 1,731,726                            | 2,293,063                              | 75.5%                     | 561,337                                     | 191,044                    | 293.8%                                                       |
| 12/31/2017                      | 1,739,808                            | 2,307,849                              | 75.4%                     | 568,041                                     | 189,451                    | 299.8%                                                       |
| 12/31/2016                      | 1,740,422                            | 2,256,308                              | 77.1%                     | 515,886                                     | 186,214                    | 277.0%                                                       |
| 12/31/2015                      | 1,767,420                            | 2,262,851                              | 78.1%                     | 495,431                                     | 194,872                    | 254.2%                                                       |
| 12/31/2014                      | 1,773,638                            | 2,222,620                              | 79.8%                     | 448,982                                     | 191,433                    | 234.5%                                                       |
| 12/31/2013                      | 1,772,750                            | 2,069,547                              | 85.7%                     | 296,797                                     | 188,605                    | 157.4%                                                       |
| 12/31/2012                      | 1,768,435                            | 2,025,319                              | 87.3%                     | 256,884                                     | 189,132                    | 135.8%                                                       |
| 12/31/2011                      | 1,836,543                            | 2,059,554                              | 89.2%                     | 223,011                                     | 190,748                    | 116.9%                                                       |
| 12/31/2010                      | 1,929,428                            | 2,091,927                              | 92.2%                     | 162,499                                     | 221,647                    | 73.3%                                                        |
| 12/31/2009                      | 1,956,444                            | 2,097,332                              | 93.3%                     | 140,888                                     | 237,040                    | 59.4%                                                        |

**Schedule of Funding Progress – OBRA  
(in thousands of dollars)**

| <b>Actuarial Valuation Date</b> | <b>Actuarial value of Assets (a)</b> | <b>Actuarial Accrued Liability (b)</b> | <b>Funded Ratio (a/b)</b> | <b>Unfunded Actuarial Liability (b - a)</b> | <b>Covered Payroll (c)</b> | <b>Unfunded as a percentage of covered Payroll {(b-a)/c}</b> |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| 12/31/2019                      | \$ 3,430                             | \$ 8,285                               | 41.4%                     | \$ 4,855                                    | \$ 3,226                   | 150.5%                                                       |
| 12/31/2018                      | 2,943                                | 6,169                                  | 47.7%                     | 3,226                                       | 3,388                      | 95.2%                                                        |
| 12/31/2017                      | 2,205                                | 5,396                                  | 40.9%                     | 3,191                                       | 3,282                      | 97.2%                                                        |
| 12/31/2016                      | 1,514                                | 4,380                                  | 34.6%                     | 2,866                                       | 3,640                      | 78.7%                                                        |
| 12/31/2015                      | 1,311                                | 3,805                                  | 34.4%                     | 2,494                                       | 3,926                      | 63.5%                                                        |
| 12/31/2014                      | 1,560                                | 3,484                                  | 44.8%                     | 1,924                                       | 3,925                      | 49.0%                                                        |
| 12/31/2013                      | 1,603                                | 3,411                                  | 47.0%                     | 1,808                                       | 3,478                      | 52.0%                                                        |
| 12/31/2012                      | 1,662                                | 2,869                                  | 57.9%                     | 1,207                                       | 7,736                      | 15.6%                                                        |
| 12/31/2011                      | 1,236                                | 2,444                                  | 50.5%                     | 1,209                                       | 8,939                      | 13.5%                                                        |
| 12/31/2010                      | 1,402                                | 5,520                                  | 25.4%                     | 4,117                                       | 8,936                      | 46.1%                                                        |
| 12/31/2009                      | 1,039                                | 5,069                                  | 20.5%                     | 4,030                                       | 6,901                      | 58.4%                                                        |