



Public Employees Pension Service Association

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E-mail info@pepsa.org or luci@capitolconnections.com Telephone (651) 224-8146
Website www.PEPSA.org

SPRING 2019

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By RaNae Whitbeck

Greetings to all of you. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support of PEPSA. I have been a member for many years. I first became aware of the organization through Elwyn Boe, the director of Koochiching County Community Services, early in my social work career. Elwyn was passionate about PEPSA and would speak to each of us individually about joining at least once a year. As a young social worker, I had other interests and was not thinking about pensions. Later a dear friend, also on the current PEPSA board, convinced me to join. I started to come to the quarterly meetings in St. Cloud; and I was hooked. The group was and is truly dedicated to protecting our pensions. They come from all walks of life and volunteer their time and energy to ensure that pension protection issues are not forgotten by our legislators.

I am now the president of PEPSA and am honored to be in this position. I plan to work for several more years. However, I also have dreams for the future. Since my primary job responsibilities as a social worker are advocating for services for the disabled and the elderly, I am familiar with many pensions and the difference they can make. PERA is one of the best; and we must protect it at all costs. We must be vigilant in our advocacy and support. It is difficult to live on Social Security alone. That is why we need PEPSA.

To those of you who have renewed your membership thank you so very much. To those of you who have not, please consider doing so and encouraging those around you to do the same. We need all our members, old and new. Increasing our numbers is vital to making PEPSA a strong, viable agency.
Have a great summer!

Thank you to Don Nikkola who served as our PEPSA Board President since 2016. Also, a big thank you to Joan Boesen and Marilyn Huntley for their years of service on the PEPSA Board of Directors.

Message from the Executive Director

Hope everyone survived this difficult winter and is enjoying these first days of Spring.

On behalf of the Board of Directors I too want to thank you for your continued support of PEPSA and all we do to assure the long-term viability of the PERA pensions for each of you. Your financial support is critical to the mission of PEPSA being successful.

If you are interested in serving on the Board of Directors, please contact the PEPSA office or send an email through the website. There is always room at the table.

Thank you to those of you who have paid your 2019 dues and Thanks to those of you who will send in your payment after you see this reminder!!

What's New!

There will be a new and improved PEPSA website unveiled in the next couple weeks so stay tuned.

The date for the annual meeting is not set yet but it will be in St. Cloud at a new location early in September. Watch for details shortly.

If you are part of any employee or retiree group that would have folks interested in joining PEPSA, contact me and I will provide you with some flyers for them to use for enrollment.

If your city or county would consider including

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PEPSA information for Open Enrollment, please let me know. They do not need to endorse PEPSA – just share our information.

Remember we are not affiliated with any union or political organization. We just work closely with PERA, the employer lobbyists and others who wish to ensure the future of these important pensions.

Hope to hear from you and see you in September at the annual meeting.

Sincerely,



Luci R. Botzek, JD
PEPSA Executive Director

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THE LATEST FROM PERA

PERA Legislative Update

The Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) has been working to advance several board-sponsored initiatives this legislative session, though the lighter agenda is still in stark contrast to the omnibus bill from 2018 that included significant reforms for all Minnesota plans. Three of this year's initiatives are currently included in the Omnibus Retirement Bill awaiting action by the Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement (LCPR). The two most notable for PERA members and employers are extensions to the Phased Retirement Option (PRO) and to pension aid paid to employers as part of a 1997 reform package.

The PRO allows individuals who meet certain criteria to continue working a reduced schedule with their public employer as early as age 62 while collecting their retirement annuity. The PRO was first introduced into the PERA General Plan in 2009 as a means to support employers in retaining qualified public employees, though it is often viewed as a member benefit by participants. PERA is seeking to make this feature a permanent part of our plan.

The Board recently voted to support an extension of local government aid established in 1997 paid to PERA-participating employers that supports employer contributions to the General Plan. When the aid was established in 1997 as part of a larger reform and uniformity package, it was anticipated that the General Plan would be fully funded in 2020

when the additional contributions and aid were expected to end. At the time the statutes were written so that the contributions continue if the plan is not fully funded, even though the aid to employers was slated to stop in 2020. PERA has been working with employer partners to pursue the continuance of the aid, which totals just under \$14 million annually.

After the legislative session ends May 20, PERA's administration will begin work on interim policy reviews related to topics brought forth by both member and employer representative groups, such as overtime and disability benefits. We appreciate the support of the PEPSA membership and continue to look forward working with PEPSA to ensure sustainability and equity within our plans.

CAPITOL UPDATE

By Luci Botzek, PEPSA Lobbyist

Greetings of Spring to each of you and your families.

Legislative Update

One of the annual rituals of Spring is the final weeks of the Minnesota Legislative Session.

Adjournment this year is May 20 – conference committees will start after May 1 and predictions on the ending of the session are even more challenging this year than normal with divided government in place in Minnesota.

There is a 2019 Omnibus Pension Bill this session but currently it languishes before it can proceed through the rest of the process and possible enactment into law.

Most of the provisions in the 2019 bill are technical. There is language to extend the Phased Retirement Option Program for PERA employees – that will be LOST should there not be a bill passed this session.

There are also two significant funding provisions which are a primary reason the bill is being held up – first dollars to support the MERF merger and provide some financial support to the City of Minneapolis.

The second extends the state aid to local units of government that has been in place since 1997 when the employer contribution was increased. These are critical provisions but securing the support of all necessary parties is a task not yet completed.

PERA Board

Information relating to the recent election for PERA Board vacancies was shared at a recent meeting. A couple points worthy of consideration – first the response rate is down for those choosing to vote and those who do vote tend to be over 50.

Our world today is a busy one, but it seems we all should be concerned with the management of the PERA pension that is so important to all of us, regardless of our age.

Nothing is certain in this very uncertain world so time spent educating yourself on the candidates for the PERA Trustee positions and paying attention to the legislative process would seem to be time well spent going forward.

PEPSA continues to work with PERA and Pension Commission staff to make sure your PERA

pension will be there for you in the years ahead. That is our only issue and we do not get mixed up with union or political issues, they are important obviously but for discussions elsewhere. Thank you for your continued support of PEPSA. Each of you is important to the success of our efforts.

If you have not paid your 2019 dues, please do so. Our dues are very insignificant compared to other groups, but your contribution is needed to maintain our presence at the table of these important discussions.

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Please renew your membership if haven't done so already. The annual membership for current employees is \$25 and \$20 for retirees.

PEPSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

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Region 14

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Email: region14@pepsa.org

If you live in one of these counties and have interest in serving on PEPBA Board of Directors – call Luci at 651-224-8146.

***Region 2: Dodge, Fillmore, Goodhue, Houston, Olmstead, Rice, Steele. Wabasha, Waseca. Winona**

***Region 9: Clearwater, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Marshall, Pennington, Red Lake, Roseau**

***Region 11: Big Stone, Chippewa, Grant, Kandiyohi, Lac Que Parle, Renville, Stevens, Swift, Traverse, Yellow Medicine**

***Region 12: Cottonwood, Jackson, Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, Rock**



PEPSA Members...Help Us Help You!

The cost of a paper newsletter and other various mailings is a huge cost to the PEPSA budget. Help us help you protect your pension by sharing your e-mail address with us. This will allow us to send you the newsletter electronically, keep you advised of your membership status, advise you with an alert if there are significant threats to pensions at the capitol requiring you to contact your local legislators quickly before a vote, and reduce the cost of notifying you of the annual meeting and other activities. More and more, our daily lives depend on electronic communication and PEPSA must keep pace. Help our volunteer board keep your membership costs low as we work to protect your PERA pension.

PLEASE NOTIFY PEPSA IF YOU HAVE A NAME OR ADDRESS CHANGE

Send us your e-mail address to info@pepsa.org or luci@capitolconnections.com

Moving?

Change of Address Form



Name _____

New Address _____

City _____

State Zip _____

Email _____

County of Employment _____

5/19

Please fill out and send or email to the PEPSA Administrative office at:

**Public Employees Pension Service Assoc.
1711 West County Rd B #207 South
Roseville, MN 55113**

Ctrl+CLICK to follow link Email:

info@pepsa.org or call PEPSA at 651-224-8146



Please use this form for you PAC Contribution, or to spread the word about the importance of PEPSA to a co-worker (please encourage them to join – safety in numbers!)

New Membership Form

Name _____

New Address _____

City _____

State Zip _____

Email _____

County of Employment _____

Annual Dues

Contributions or gifts to PEPSA are not tax deductible as charitable membership dues, the portion allocable to lobbying, is 75%)

Active Employee \$25.00 per year

PERA Retiree \$20.00 per year

PAC Contribution _____

This is not an invoice

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