



COUNTY of VENTURA
COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Sevet Johnson, PsyD
County Executive Officer

Mike Pettit
Assistant County Executive Officer

Kaye Mand
County Chief Financial Officer

Shawn Atin
Assistant County Executive
Officer/
Human Resources Director
Labor Relations

June 27, 2023

Board of Directors
Ventura County Fire Protection District
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, California 93009

Subject: Public Hearing Regarding Adoption of an Amendment to the 2021-2024 Memorandum of Agreement between the Ventura County Fire Protection District and the Ventura County Professional Firefighters' Association, With No Material Impact on Funding Status of Retirement System; and Waiver of Second Public Hearing.

Recommendations

It is recommended that your Board:

1. Commence a public hearing on adoption of an amendment to the 2021–2024 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Ventura County Fire Protection District (District) and the Ventura County Professional Firefighters' Association (VCPFA); and
2. Waive the second public hearing required by Article 20, Section 2006(B), of the Personnel Rules and Regulations, and adopt the proposed amendment to the MOA at the conclusion of the hearing.

Fiscal/Mandates Impact

Mandatory:	No
Source of Funding:	Fire Protection District
Funding Match Required:	No
Impact on Other Departments:	None

Summary of Fiscal Impact:

	<u>FY 2023-24</u>
Total Cost	\$110,160

The fiscal impact figure is based on approximately 34 eligible legacy retirement plan members who have retired from County service as of July 30, 2020. The corresponding monthly benefit is \$270. The fiscal impact assumes payment of the monthly benefit for all

of FY 2023-24 and does not factor in the reduced retirement contributions (as explained below) to be paid by the County that are anticipated to offset the costs of the monthly benefit.

California Government Code sections 31515.5 and 23026 require that the County give written notice of any salary and benefit changes, including an explanation of the financial impact of the change on the funding of the County's retirement system. The benefits provided under the proposed Health Reimbursement Arrangement will be a post-employment benefit, which is excluded from pensionable income. Accordingly, we do not expect the recommended action to have a material impact on the funding status of the retirement system.

Discussion

On April 17, 2023, the Ventura County Employees' Retirement Association (VCERA) Board of Retirement acted by resolution (Resolution) to exclude a portion of the Flexible Credit Allowance from pensionable income for legacy (non-PEPRA) retirement plan participants. VCERA's actions are expected to result in a loss to retirement income for legacy plan members with a retirement date of July 30, 2020, or later. The loss of retirement income will vary by retiree based on age and years of service at time of retirement.

The County requested from VCERA an actuarial study calculating the funding impact of excluding the non-cashable flexible benefit credits from pensionable income. Segal, VCERA's actuary, completed and submitted the actuarial study on April 19, 2023 (Exhibit 1). The Segal study determined that the exclusion of the non-cashable flexible benefit credits from pensionable income would result in a net reduction in the retirement plan's unfunded actuarial accrued liability (UAAL), net increase to the plan's funded ratio, and a reduction to County-paid retirement contributions. Segal provided a 15-year projection of the normal cost and UAAL contributions before and after VCERA's Resolution. Segal projects for the County's total employer-paid contributions to decrease by approximately \$122.4 million for the period July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2037.

The County and VCPFA commenced meet and confer sessions over the effects of VCERA's action in the fall 2022. The County proposed to implement and fund a Legacy Retiree Healthcare Reimbursement Subsidy (Subsidy) for eligible retirees. The Subsidy is intended to be a partial replacement of lost pension benefits. The Subsidy will be funded exclusively by the County, in part, with the projected retirement contribution savings and any interest that those contributions will earn.

The parties reached an agreement on June 13, 2023, to establish the Legacy Retiree Healthcare Contribution (Exhibit 2). A summary of the agreement is as follows:

The District will provide plan members a monthly Legacy Retiree Healthcare Contribution (Contribution) that will be funded into the VCPFA-administered medical

trust described in Article 5, Section 503 of VCPFA MOA, established by VCPFA to pay health-related expenses for eligible retirees and dependents

To be eligible for benefits under the proposed Contribution plan, employees must: (1) be eligible for a VCERA legacy (non-PEPRA) retirement plan; (2) have commenced employment with the County no later than April 16, 2023; and (3) and must retire from County service on or after July 30, 2020, and be an annuitant.

The Contribution plan will provide retirees a monthly healthcare benefit upon the employee's retirement from the District and the commencement of VCERA annuity payments. The monthly benefit will range from \$270 for safety retirement members and \$210 for non-safety (miscellaneous) retirement members. The monthly benefit may increase annually by up to a maximum of three percent (3%) based on changes to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the Los Angeles area for the previous twelve (12) months immediately before the new plan year. For example, should the change in the CPI-Los Angeles area be 1.5%, the monthly benefit shall be increased by 1.5% for the new plan year, and should the change in the CPI-Los Angeles be 3.5%, the monthly benefit shall be increased by the 3% maximum for the new plan year.

VCPFA agrees to indemnify, defend and hold the District harmless from any and all liability, claims, demands, suits or any other loss, damage or injury to persons or property arising from or related to the provisions of this provision, including income tax withholding liabilities or tax penalties related to any contribution to the VCPFA-administered medical trust.

Should the District intend to terminate or amend the Contribution plan, the District will provide 30 days' notice to VCPFA. The District agrees to engage in good faith bargaining with respect to the effects of any amendments to this section. In the event the Agreement amendment eliminates or reduces the Legacy Retiree Healthcare Contribution, such amendment will not reduce the contribution for current retirees and the amended amount for future retirees will not reduce below the amount negotiated at inception.

Additionally, the County and VCPFA agreed to add language that establishes a Medical Opt-Out Option for VCPFA members who do not wish to participate in County Sponsored health plans because they have provided proof of medical coverage through an outside source. The Medical Opt-out Option provision was added to this and all other County labor agreements to ensure the County' Flexible Credit Allowance program complies with regulatory requirements - among other reasons.

A copy of the proposed amendment to the MOA is attached as Exhibit 2. We recommend that your Board commence a public hearing on the adoption of the MOA between the County and VCPFA, waive a second hearing, and adopt the proposed amendment at the end of the hearing.

This letter has been reviewed by the County Executive Office, the Auditor-Controller's Office, the Ventura County Civil Service Commission, and County Counsel. If you have any questions regarding this item, please call me at (805) 654-2561.

Respectfully submitted,



Shawn Atin
Assistant County Executive Officer/Human Resources Director



Sevet Johnson, PsyD
County Executive Officer

c: Jeffery S. Burgh, Auditor-Controller
Tiffany N. North, County Counsel
Mike Pettit, Assistant County Executive Officer
Kaye Mand, Assistant County Executive Officer/Chief Financial Officer
Ventura County Professional Firefighters' Association

Attachments:

- Exhibit 1 – Segal Actuarial Study, dated April 19, 2023, Ventura County Employees' Retirement Association Alameda Decision Implementation
- Exhibit 2 – VCPFA 2021 – 2024 MOA Amendment
- Exhibit 3 - Civil Service Commission Letter