



Update

Dear Friends,

January 10, 2024

Since my election to the KPERS Board of Trustees I have a new disclaimer that I must include in these updates from now on: "The views expressed in this update represent my views and/or the views of the Coalition. They do not in any way represent the views of KPERS Board of Trustees nor do I speak for them." (Ernie Claudel)

The next meeting of KCPR will be held on February 8, 2024, via Zoom.

KCPR January 10, 2024, UPDATE

The watch words are "Nothing gets accomplished until someone does it."

Some of our discussions and actions at today's meeting were as follows:

- I. Many things 'up in the air.'
 - A. The attempts to find a date for a Lobby Day at the Capitol are up in the air. We requested February 5th or the 13th, but neither of these are available. We will have to publish an updated UPDATE once something is settled.
 - B. There is apparently quite a push to fix Tier III, but less for a COLA, so we have work to do.
 - C. Since this is a (bill) 'carry over year', it appears that our best opportunity is to push the existing COLA bill, HB2252 and SB198. You will recall these were identical bills.
 - D. The candidate list for the 2024 primary can be found on the Kansas Secretary of State website. www.kssos.org This contains some interesting information for Eastern Kansas.
 - E. It has been noted that the committee working on the legislative pay increase has stated that the raise is needed because the last raise came in 2009. We would agree, but that is only 13 years as compared to 27 years.
 - F. I have included the contact information for the two committees mentioned below.
- II. One of my big concerns is that there is a need for some leverage. This has been mentioned previously, but we need people from the local area (reasonable driving distance) to be in support of our push for a COLA. During one of the committee sessions last year, where we testified, I noticed that the five of us from KCPR who are registered lobbyists, (5) were the only ones in attendance and 3 of us testified. Please plan to attend at least one of the appropriate committee meetings. The schedule for next week is listed at the end of the UPDATE, and I will make every effort to inform you of the schedule.
- III. As a bit of information: If the idea of changing KPERS to a 401K type comes up in conversation with legislators note the following: *There is NO research that indicates that a Defined Contribution (401K) pension type program is better than a Defined*

Benefit retirement plan like the KPERS Pension Plan for recruiting and retaining public employees. The Defined Benefit is not only better for the individual, but also, a more efficient use of employer money.

What Can You Do?

- 1. I have often included the following caution in my writings (#2 below). Now I have an answer for the legislators who ask this. I have a good source of information that has indicated that the state has close to \$4 Billion in excess this year. I think they can afford to provide us with a COLA!!**
- 2. Further caution: The oft asked question, "Where do we get the money?" The answer to this is, 'that is your problem' as we as employees have always done (and contributed) what was required, the legislature has not! (This may seem harsh, but in the past when we have suggested the source, the idea has been used to fund something else!)*
3. There was only one committee member change in the two committees that impact KPERS most directly. House Member Mike Thompson is new to the House Committee and there are only a couple of room changes on the Senate Committee. The other change is the Committee meeting room for the House. The contact information for both committees is attached.
4. If you go to www.kslegislature.org the information is provided. Go to standing committees. You are looking for Senate Financial Institutions and Insurance. In the House, the committee is Financial Institutions and Pensions. The House committee meets on Monday and Wednesday at 9:00 AM and will more often take up KPERS related bills.
5. The Kansas Secretary of State is posting the candidates for the 2024 primary election. Remember that all the Kansas Senate and House are up for re-election. It will still be helpful if you can provide me with any inside information you might have from your local areas.
- 6. It has been suggested that we need to collect as many letters as we can that express the need for a benefit increase. We will then determine which can be put together to provide the legislature with an idea of the need. If you could do that or help us, find folks in real need and help them state that need. If you can collect them handwritten, mail them to me. These need to express a real need: There is no need for perfect punctuation, high quality paper, etc. Several folks have contacted me through KPERS, and I will ask them to provide something handwritten.*
7. KEEP your 'cards and letters' flowing as stated above.
- 8. When you communicate with your legislators, remind them that we are in the 27th year without a permanent benefit increase.*
- 9. REMEMBER, the excuse that KPERS cannot have a COLA because it is a defined benefit is inaccurate. I have gone as far as to say that that 'excuse' is an insult to my intelligence.*
10. The Governor will be active in the State. Express to her at every opportunity that we need to have her put a 'Benefit Increase' in her budget.

11. We need to start writing to the Governor as well and demanding action on a benefit increase. To do this you are going to have to go online and follow the directions, as the security protocols are understandable, but you just need to follow them on the Governor's website.

Our Discoveries

1. Another disappointment is that our writers (communicators) are not receiving replies to their email, especially from leadership. Sadly, I am informed by many that the 'no reply' position is WAY too common for most all the legislators. *Please do not use this as an excuse to stop communicating.*
2. The thought of the KCPR Steering Committee is that we all need to regularly and repeatedly make a request to the legislative leadership for a benefit increase.
3. Their contact information is as follows:
 - a. Speaker of the House: Topeka Phone 785-296-2302, dan.hawkins@house.ks.gov
His home address is 9406 Harvest Ln., Wichita, Ks 67212, phone 316-722-7307
 - b. President of the Senate: 785-296-2419, Ty.Masterson@senate.ks.gov
Home: PO Box 324, Andover, Ks 67002, phone 855-255-2446
4. You might, if you live in their area and can vote for them, tell them that you are not planning to vote for anyone who does not support a KPERS Retiree benefit increase.

Committee Meetings Scheduled Relating to KPERS

Upcoming Meetings

Monday, January 22

House Financial Institutions and Pensions- 9:00 AM; 582-N

KPERS Overview Information

Possible hearing on HB 2103 (Alternative Investments Cap)

Wednesday, January 24

House Financial Institutions and Pensions - 9:00 AM; 582-N

KPERS Overview continued

Thursday, January 25

Senate Financial Institutions and Insurance - 9:30 AM; 546-S

KPERS Overview

Have a wonderful 2024!!

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