## NOTE 8 – DEFINED BENEFIT PENSION PLANS

Substantially all full-time and qualifying part-time County employees participate in either the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS), the Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Retirement System (LEOFF), or the Seattle City Employees' Retirement System (SCERS). PERS and LEOFF are statewide local government retirement systems administered by the State of Washington's Department of Retirement Systems under cost-sharing, multiple-employer defined benefit and defined contribution retirement plans.

The Department of Retirement Systems (DRS), a department within the primary government of the State of Washington, issues a publicly available Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) that includes financial statements and required supplementary information for each plan. The DRS CAFR may be obtained by writing to: Department of Retirement Systems, Communications Unit, P.O. Box 48380, Olympia, WA 98504-8380.

Historical trend and other information regarding SCERS is presented in the Seattle City Employees' Retirement System annual financial report. A copy of this report may be obtained at: Seattle City Employees' Retirement System, 801 Third Avenue, Suite 300, Seattle, WA 98104.

### Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) Plans 1, 2, and 3

#### Plan Descriptions

PERS is a cost-sharing, multiple-employer retirement system comprised of three separate plans for membership purposes: Plans 1 and 2 are defined benefit plans and Plan 3 is a combination defined benefit/defined contribution plan. Membership in the system includes elected officials; state employees; employees of the Supreme, Appeals, and Superior courts (other than judges in a judicial retirement system); employees of legislative committees; community and technical colleges, college and university employees (not in national higher education retirement programs); judges of district and municipal courts; and employees of local governments. PERS participants who joined the system by September 30, 1977, are Plan 1 members. Those who joined on or after October 1, 1977 and by either February 28, 2002, for state and higher education employees, or August 31, 2002, for local government employees, are Plan 2 members unless they exercise an option to transfer their membership to Plan 3. PERS participants joining the system on or after March 1, 2002, for state and higher education employees, or September 1, 2002, for local government employees, have the option of choosing membership in either PERS Plan 2 or PERS Plan 3. The option must be exercised within 90 days of employment. An employee is reported in Plan 2 until a choice is made. Employees who fail to choose within 90 days default to PERS Plan 3. The PERS defined benefit retirement payments are financed from a combination of investment earnings and employer and employee contributions. PERS retirement benefit provisions are established in state statute and may be amended only by the State Legislature.

Plan 1 retirement benefits are vested after an employee completes five years of eligible service. Plan 1 members are eligible for retirement at any age after 30 years of service, or at the age of 60 with five years of service, or at the age of 55 with 25 years of service. The annual pension is 2 percent of the average final compensation per year of service, capped at 60 percent. The average final compensation is based on the greatest compensation during any 24 eligible consecutive compensation months. If qualified, after reaching the age of 66 a cost-of-living allowance is granted based on years of service credit and is capped at 3 percent annually.

**NOTE 8 – CONTINUED**

Plan 2 retirement benefits are vested after an employee completes five years of eligible service. Plan 2 members may retire at the age of 65 with five years of service, or at the age of 55 with 20 years of service, with an allowance of 2 percent of the average final compensation per year of service. The average final compensation is based on the greatest compensation during any eligible consecutive 60-month period. Plan 2 retirements prior to the age of 65 receive reduced benefits. If retirement is at age 55 or older with at least 30 years of service, a 3 percent per year reduction applies; otherwise an actuarial reduction will apply. There is no cap on years of service credit and a cost-of-living allowance is granted (indexed to the Seattle Consumer Price Index), capped at 3 percent annually.

Plan 3 has a dual benefit structure. Employer contributions finance a defined benefit component, and member contributions finance a defined contribution component. The defined benefit portion provides a benefit calculated at 1 percent of the average final compensation per year of service. The average final compensation is based on the greatest compensation during any eligible consecutive 60-month period. Plan 3 members become eligible for retirement if they have: at least ten years of service; or five years including twelve months that were earned after age 54; or five service credit years earned in PERS Plan 2 prior to June 1, 2003. Plan 3 retirements prior to the age of 65 receive reduced benefits. If retirement is at age 55 or older with at least 30 years of service, a 3 percent per year reduction applies; otherwise, an actuarial reduction will apply. There is no cap on years of service credit and Plan 3 provides the same cost-of-living allowance as Plan 2. The defined contribution portion can be distributed in accordance with an option selected by the member, either as a lump sum or pursuant to other options authorized by the Employee Retirement Benefits Board.

Statewide there are 1,169 participating employers in PERS. Membership in PERS consisted of the following as of the latest actuarial valuation date for the plans of September 30, 2004:

| | |
|---|---|
| Retirees and Beneficiaries Receiving Benefits | 66,846 |
| Terminated Plan Members Entitled to, But Not Yet Receiving, Benefits | 21,031 |
| Active Plan Members Vested | 103,039 |
| Active Plan Members Nonvested | 53,217 |
| Total | 244,133 |

Funding Policy

Each biennium, the state Pension Funding Council adopts Plan 1 employer contribution rates, Plan 2 employer and employee contribution rates, and Plan 3 employer contribution rates. Employee contribution rates for Plan 1 are established by statute at 6 percent and do not vary from year to year. The employer and employee contribution rates for Plan 2 and the employer contribution rate for Plan 3 are developed by the Office of the State Actuary to fully fund Plan 2 and the defined benefit portion of Plan 3. All employers are required to contribute at the level established by the Legislature. The PERS Plan 3 defined contribution is a noncontributing plan for employers. Employees who participate in the defined contribution portion of PERS Plan 3 do not contribute to the defined benefit portion of PERS Plan 3. The Employee Retirement Benefits Board sets Plan 3 employee contribution rates. Six rate options are available ranging from 5 to 15 percent; two of the options are graduated rates dependent on the employee's age. The methods used to determine the contribution requirements are established under state statute in accordance with chapters 41.40 and 41.45 RCW.

**NOTE 8 – CONTINUED**

The required contribution rates expressed as a percentage of current-year covered payroll, as of December 31, 2005, were as follows:

| | PERS Plan 1 | PERS Plan 2 | PERS Plan 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Employer* | 2.44% | 2.44% | 2.44%** |
| Employee | 6.00% | 1.18% | *** |

* The employer rates include the employer administrative expense fee currently set at 0.19%.
** Plan 3 defined benefit portion only.
*** Variable from 5.0% minimum to 15.0% maximum based on rate selected by the PERS 3 member.

Both the County and the employees made the required contributions. The County's required contributions for the years ended December 31 were (in thousands):

| | PERS Plan 1 | PERS Plan 2 | PERS Plan 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2003 | $ 1,074 | $ 7,352 | $ 562 |
| 2004 | 1,027 | 7,786 | 896 |
| 2005 | 1,182 | 10,310 | 1,348 |

**Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Retirement System (LEOFF)**

Plan Descriptions

LEOFF is a cost-sharing multiple-employer retirement system comprised of two separate defined benefit plans. Membership in the system includes all full-time, fully compensated, local law enforcement officers and firefighters. LEOFF is comprised primarily of non-state employees, with the Department of Fish and Wildlife enforcement officers, who were first included prospectively effective July 27, 2003, being an exception. LEOFF participants who joined the system by September 30, 1977, are Plan 1 members. Those who joined on or after October 1, 1977, are Plan 2 members. Effective July 1, 2003, the LEOFF Plan 2 Retirement Board was established to provide governance of LEOFF Plan 2. The Board's duties include adopting contribution rates and recommending policy changes to the Legislature for the LEOFF Plan 2 retirement plan. Effective January 1, 2003, firefighter emergency medical technicians (EMTs) may transfer PERS Plan 1 or Plan 2 service credit to LEOFF Plan 2 if, while employed for the city, town, county or district, the EMT's job was relocated to a fire department from another city, town, county or district. LEOFF defined benefits are financed from a combination of investment earnings, employer and employee contributions, and a special funding situation in which the state pays the remainder through state legislative appropriations. LEOFF retirement benefit provisions are established in state statute and may be amended by the State Legislature.

Plan 1 retirement benefits are vested after an employee completes five years of eligible service. Plan 1 members are eligible for retirement with five years of service at the age of 50. The benefit per year of service calculated as a percent of final average salary is as follows:

| Term of Service | Percent of Final Average |
|---|---|
| 20 or more years | 2.0% |
| 10 but less than 20 years | 1.5% |
| 5 but less than 10 years | 1.0% |

**NOTE 8 – CONTINUED**

The final average salary is the basic monthly salary received at the time of retirement, provided a member has held the same position or rank for 12 months preceding the date of retirement. Otherwise, it is the average of the highest consecutive 24 months' salary within the last 10 years of service. If membership was established in LEOFF after February 18, 1974, the service retirement benefit is capped at 60 percent of final average salary. A cost-of-living allowance is granted (indexed to the Seattle Consumer Price Index).

Plan 2 retirement benefits are vested after an employee completes five years of eligible service. Plan 2 members may retire at the age of 50 with 20 years of service, or at the age of 53 with five years of service, with an allowance of 2 percent of the final average salary per year of service. The final average salary is based on the 60 consecutive highest-paid service credit months. Plan 2 retirements prior to the age of 53 are reduced 3 percent for each year that the benefit commences prior to age 53. There is no cap on years of service credit and a cost-of-living allowance is granted (indexed to the Seattle Consumer Price Index), capped at 3 percent annually.

Statewide there are 369 participating employers in LEOFF. Membership in LEOFF consisted of the following as of the latest actuarial valuation date for the plans of September 30, 2004:

| | |
|---|---|
| Retirees and Beneficiaries Receiving Benefits | 8,542 |
| Terminated Plan Members Entitled to, But Not Yet Receiving, Benefits | 528 |
| Active Plan Members Vested | 12,079 |
| Active Plan Members Nonvested | 3,523 |
| Total | 24,672 |

Funding Policy

Starting on July 1, 2000, Plan 1 employers and employees will contribute zero percent as long as the plan remains fully funded. Employer and employee contribution rates are developed by the Office of the State Actuary to fully fund the plan. Plan 2 employers and employees are required to pay at the level adopted by the Department of Retirement Systems in accordance with chapter 41.45 RCW. All employers are required to contribute at the level required by state law. The Legislature, by means of a special funding arrangement, appropriated money from the state General Fund to supplement the current service liability and fund the prior service costs of Plan 1 in accordance with the requirements of the Pension Funding Council. However, this special funding situation is not mandated by the state constitution and this funding requirement could be returned to the employers by a change of statute. The methods used to determine the contribution rates are established under state statute in accordance with chapters 41.26 and 41.45 RCW.

The required contribution rates expressed as a percentage of current-year covered payroll, as of December 31, 2005, were as follows:

| | LEOFF Plan 1 | LEOFF Plan 2 |
|---|---|---|
| Employer* | 0.19% | 4.39% |
| Employee | 0.00% | 6.99% |

* The employer rates include the employer administrative expense fee currently set at 0.19%.

**NOTE 8 – CONTINUED**

Both the County and the employees made the required contributions. The County's required contributions for the years ended December 31 were (in thousands):

| | LEOFF Plan 1 | LEOFF Plan 2 |
|---|---|---|
| 2003 | $ 6 | $ 1,466 |
| 2004 | 4 | 1,622 |
| 2005 | 3 | 1,815 |

**Seattle City Employees' Retirement System (SCERS)**

SCERS is a cost-sharing, multiple-employer retirement plan administered in accordance with chapter 4.36 of the Seattle Municipal Code. County employees of the Department of Public Health who have established membership in SCERS remain covered by the City Retirement System. Employees of Public Transportation who are former employees of Seattle Transit are also covered by the system. SCERS provides retirement, death, and disability benefits.

Employees covered by this plan may retire after 30 years of service regardless of age; after age 52 with 20 years or more of service; after age 57 with ten or more years of service; and after age 62 with five or more years of service. Disability retirement is available after ten years of service. The unmodified monthly retirement allowance is based on a percentage of average salary for every year of service to a maximum of 60 percent. The average salary for this plan is defined as the highest consecutive twenty-four months average rate of pay. The percentage for each year of service used to compute the retirement benefit depends on the age at retirement and the years of service. It ranges from 1.2 percent at age 52 with 20 years of service to a maximum of 2 percent for each year of service. The maximum allowance a member can receive is the unmodified plan, which has no provision for a beneficiary and, at the member's death, stops all payments. Several optional retirement benefit formulas exist which provide for beneficiaries with reduced monthly allowances.

The SCERS member contribution rate is 8.03 percent of compensation except for members qualifying for lower rates prior to June 1972. The County is required to contribute at an actuarially determined rate. The current rate is 8.03 percent of annual covered payroll. The contribution requirements of plan members and the County are established and may be amended by the Board of Administration. Both the County and the employees made the required contributions. The County's required employer contributions for the years 2003, 2004, and 2005 ending December 31 were $818, $776, and $704 thousand, respectively.

**Component Unit – Harborview Medical Center (HMC)**

HMC personnel are University of Washington (UW) employees. HMC faculty and professional staff participate in the University of Washington Retirement Plan (UWRP), an IRC Section 403 (b) defined contribution retirement plan authorized by the Board of Regents. HMC staff participate in a plan authorized by the State of Washington Department of Retirement Systems (DRS). Plan participation is defined by position, with the majority of HMC employees enrolled in one of the three Public Employees' Retirement Systems (PERS) plans.

All plans include contributions by both employee and employer. Employee contributions are tax-deferred. Employer contributions are paid semimonthly by the UW in accordance with rates specified by the retirement systems.

## NOTE 8 – CONTINUED

### Component Unit – Washington State Major League Baseball (WSMLB) Stadium Public Facilities District (PFD)

Employees of the District have the option of participating in either the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) or the Stadium PFD Retirement Plan. Employer contributions are paid by the District in accordance with rates specified by the individual plans. Total payroll covered by all systems for the year ended December 31, 2005, was $35 thousand.

Employees are also able to select the Stadium PFD Retirement Plan as an alternative benefit plan to PERS. The Plan is designated as a profit-sharing plan in accordance with Section 401 (a) (27) (B) of the Internal Revenue Code. No contributions by participants are required or permitted other than authorized rollover contributions. All contributions to the plan vest immediately. Actual contributions made to the plan in 2005 were $2 thousand.

### Component Unit – Cultural Development Authority of King County (CDA)

All CDA personnel participate in the Public Employees' Retirement Systems (PERS). PERS is a statewide local government retirement system administered by the State of Washington's Department of Retirement Systems under cost-sharing, multiple-employer defined benefit public employee retirement systems.

## NOTE 9 – POST-RETIREMENT HEALTHCARE BENEFITS

In accordance with the Washington Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Retirement System (LEOFF) Act (chapter 41.26 RCW), the County provides certain healthcare benefits for retired full-time, fully compensated law enforcement officers who established membership in the LEOFF I retirement system on or before September 30, 1977. Substantially all of the County's law enforcement officers who established membership in the LEOFF I retirement system may become eligible for those benefits when they reach normal retirement age. The King County Sheriff's Office, in conjunction with the King County Disability Board, reimburses retired LEOFF I police officers for reasonable medical charges as described in the LEOFF Act. In 2005, 325 retirees received benefits under this act. As of December 31, 2005, there were 20 active officers with an average age of 58 who may become eligible for those benefits when they reach normal retirement age.

The cost of retiree healthcare benefits is recognized as an expenditure in the General Fund as claims are paid. For 2005 those costs total $1,867 thousand, with an average cost per retiree of $6 thousand.