

**Action Requested/Required:**

- ☒ Vote/Action Requested
☐ Discussion or Presentation Only
☐ Public Hearing
Report Date: _____
Hearing Date: _____
Voting Date: _____

Department: Administration **Presenter(s) & Title:** Nathan Ingram, Assistant City Mgr

Agenda Item Title:

Discussion and Possible Action to Readopt the City of Canton's Defined Benefit Pension Plan Documents

Summary:

The City of Canton is a member of the Georgia Municipal Employees Benefit System (GMEBS) Defined Benefit Retirement Plan, as are many cities throughout the state. GMEBS filed draft plan documents with the Internal Revenue Service to reaffirm the tax status of the plan. After receiving a favorable opinion from the IRS, GMEBS requests that all plan members readopt their plan agreements with GMEBS using new IRS related guidelines. There are no changes to the plan formerly approved by the City.

Budget Implications:

Budgeted? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A

Total Cost of Project: _____ Check if Estimated ☐

Fund Source: General Fund ☐ Water & Sewer ☐ Sales Tax ☐ Other: _____

Staff Recommendations:

Motion to Approve the Readoption of the City of Canton's Defined Benefit Retirement Plan through GMEBS including all amendments and to provide for the Mayor to execute said documents.

Reviews:

Has this been reviewed by Management and Legal Counsel, if required? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Attachments:

GMEBS Defined Benefit Retirement Plan Ordinance and Adoption Agreement; GMA Memo Regarding Plan Restatement; IRS Opinion Letter



**RISK MANAGEMENT AND
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS
SERVICES**

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City Manager, Douglasville

Vice-Chair
Shelly Berryhill
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Vince Williams
Mayor, Union City

EXECUTIVE STAFF

Randy Logan
Deputy Executive Director

January 25, 2024

MEMORANDUM VIA E-MAIL

(lorrie.waters@cantonga.gov)

TO: Ms. Lorrie Waters
Human Resources Director

FROM: Mr. Kevin Jeselnik
Assistant General Counsel

**SUBJECT: Action Required: Georgia Municipal Employees Benefit System
Defined Benefit Retirement Plan Restatement**

The city of Canton previously adopted the Georgia Municipal Employees Benefit System ("GMEBS") Defined Benefit Retirement Plan ("Plan"), which is comprised of the Basic Plan Document, Adoption Agreement, and General Addendum. The Plan is considered a "qualified plan" under the Internal Revenue Code, which is important to ensure the tax-exempt status of the trust fund.

To protect the Plan's tax-qualified status, GMEBS filed draft restated Plan documents, updated to include recent amendments and comply with changes in federal tax law, with the IRS on June 29, 2022. On August 31, 2023, the IRS issued a favorable opinion letter ("IRS opinion letter") for the restated Plan documents. The IRS opinion letter provides assurance to employers providing retirement benefits for their employees through the GMEBS Plan that GMEBS is maintaining a qualified pension benefit program that allows employees to accrue benefits tax-free until retirement benefits are distributed to them.

To ensure continued tax-qualified status for all GMEBS-member retirement plans, all participating employers must readopt their plans using the most recent IRS-approved document templates. To this end, we have completed the attached Adoption Agreement and General Addendum, which include the benefit and eligibility provisions that you currently have in place, for the city's approval.

If the draft documents are acceptable, please have the designated representatives sign and date where indicated (Adoption Agreement, p. 38, and General Addendum, p. 8). Next, please scan and email the documents to Gina Gresham at rgresham@gacities.com no later than **March 25, 2024**. We will then countersign the documents and return electronic copies to you. Please note, GMEBS will not execute documents that have been edited by the city. If the documents require revisions, please let us know before adopting them.

Ms. Lorrie Waters

January 25, 2024

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The draft documents will take effect on the date of their approval by the city. **Please note that per O.C.G.A. § 47-5-40, the Adoption Agreement has been drafted in the form of an ordinance.**

Please note the General Addendum contains certain provisions (Section 16) which do not fit squarely within the standard GMEBS General Addendum format. Thus, it will be necessary to file the city's Plan with the IRS for a separate opinion letter. Following the city's approval of the enclosed restated Plan documents, we will work with GMEBS's tax counsel to prepare the IRS filing documents for the city's signature.

We have also attached a copy of the restated Basic Plan Document and Amendment 1, which do not need to be adopted by the city. Finally, we have included a summary of key amendments to the Plan relating to the restatement.

If you have any questions about the contents of this letter or require further information, please contact Gina Gresham.

Encl.

C: Mr. Robert Dyer, City Attorney, City of Canton (w/ encl.)

Ms. Marinetty Bienvenu, Director, Retirement Quality Assurance (w/o encl.)

Ms. Michelle Warner, Director, GMEBS Retirement and DC Programs (w/o encl.)

Ms. Gwin Hall, Senior Associate General Counsel (w/o encl.)

I. AN ORDINANCE

An Ordinance to amend and restate the Retirement Plan for the Employees of the City of Canton, Georgia, in accordance with and subject to the terms and conditions set forth in the attached Adoption Agreement, any Addendum to the Adoption Agreement, the Georgia Municipal Employees Benefit System (GMEBS) Basic Plan Document, and the GMEBS Trust Agreement. When accepted by the authorized officers of the City and GMEBS, the foregoing shall constitute a Contract between the City and GMEBS, all as authorized and provided by O.C.G.A. § 47-5-1 et seq.

BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and Council of the City of Canton, Georgia, and it is hereby ordained by the authority thereof:

Section 1. The Retirement Plan for the Employees of the City of Canton, Georgia, is hereby amended and restated as set forth in and subject to the terms and conditions stated in the following Adoption Agreement, any Addendum to the Adoption Agreement, the Georgia Municipal Employees Benefit System (GMEBS) Basic Plan Document, and the GMEBS Trust Agreement.

Ordinance continued on page 38

AN ORDINANCE (continued from page 1)

Section 2. Except as otherwise specifically required by law or by the terms of the Basic Plan Document or Adoption Agreement (or any Addendum), the rights and obligations under the Plan with respect to persons whose employment with the City was terminated or who vacated office with the City for any reason whatsoever prior to the effective date of this Ordinance are fixed and shall be governed by such Plan, if any, as it existed and was in effect at the time of such termination.

Section 3. The effective date of this Ordinance shall be the date of its approval by the Governing Authority **(not earlier than the first day of the current Plan Year in which the Plan is adopted, unless a retroactive corrective amendment is permitted under EPCRS, Rev. Proc. 2021-30 (or subsequent updated guidance))**.

Section 4. All Ordinances and parts of ordinances in conflict herewith are expressly repealed.

Approved by the Mayor and Council of the City of Canton, Georgia this _____ day of _____, 20____.

Attest:

CITY OF CANTON, GEORGIA

City Clerk

Mayor

(SEAL)

Approved:

City Attorney

The terms of the foregoing Adoption Agreement are approved by the Board of Trustees of Georgia Municipal Employees Benefit System.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Board of Trustees of Georgia Municipal Employees Benefit System has caused its Seal and the signatures of its duly authorized officers to be affixed this _____ day of _____, 20____.

Board of Trustees
Georgia Municipal Employees
Benefit System

(SEAL)

Secretary



Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service
Tax Exempt and Government Entities
Employee Plans

August 31, 2023

Ice Miller

Attn: Lisa Erb Harrison

One American Square, Suite 2900

Indianapolis, In. 46282-0200

Re: Application for opinion letter

Dear Ms. Harrison:

The enclosed letter is being sent to you under the provisions of a power of attorney currently on file with the Internal Revenue Service.

If you have any questions, please contact Janell Hayes, badge number 1000203103, by phone at (513) 975-6319.

Sincerely,

Aimee Beimesche

Aimee Beimesche

Manager Pre-approved Plans Program

Enclosure:
Letter to taxpayer

GEORGIA MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION INC
201 PRYOR STREET SW
ATLANTA, GA 30303

Date:
08/31/2023
Employer ID number:
58-0907810
Case number:
202200321
File folder number:
FFN: 317E0630001-001
Letter Serial number:
Q705465a
Plan number:
01-001
Plan description:
Non-Standardized Pre-Approved Defined
Benefit Plan
Date of submission:
06/30/2022
Person to contact:
Name: Janell Hayes
ID number: 1000203103
Telephone: 513-975-6319
Hours: 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
EST. Mon-Fri

Dear Applicant:

In our opinion, the form of the plan shown above is acceptable for employers to use for their employees' benefit under Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Section 401.

We considered the changes in qualification requirements in the 2020 Cumulative List of Notice 2020-14, 2020-13 Internal Revenue Bulletin (I.R.B.) 555. Our opinion relates only to the acceptability of the form of the plan under the IRC. We didn't consider the effect of other federal or local statutes.

You must provide the following to each employer who adopts this plan:

- . A copy of this letter
- . A copy of the approved plan
- . Copies of any subsequent amendments including their dates of adoption
- . Direct contact information including address and telephone number of the plan provider

Our opinion of the plan's form acceptability is a determination of the plan's qualification as adopted by a particular employer only under the circumstances, and to the extent, described in Revenue Procedure (Rev. Proc.) 2017-41, 2017-29 I.R.B. 92. The employer who adopts this plan can generally rely on this letter to the extent described in Rev. Proc. 2017-41. Thus, Employee Plans Determinations, except as provided in Section 12 of Rev. Proc. 2023-4, 2023-01 I.R.B. 162 (as updated annually), will not issue a determination letter to an employer who adopts this plan. Review Rev. Proc. 2023-4 to determine if an adopting employer is eligible to submit a determination letter application and, if so, how. The employer must also follow the terms of the plan in operation.

Except as provided below, our opinion doesn't apply to the requirements of IRC Sections 401(a)(4), 401(a)(26), 401(l), 410(b), and 414(s). Our opinion doesn't apply to IRC Sections 415 and 416 if an employer maintains or ever maintained another qualified plan for one or more employees covered by this plan.

Our opinion doesn't apply to:

- . Treasury Regulations (Treas. Reg.) Section 1.401(a)-1(b)(2) requirements where the normal retirement age under the employer's plan is below 62.
- . Proposed Treas. Reg. 1.401(a)-1(b)(2) requirements where the employer's plan is a governmental plan and its normal retirement age doesn't satisfy one of the safe harbors under the proposed regulations.

Our opinion doesn't constitute a determination:

- . That the plan is an IRC Section 414(d) governmental plan. Nor is this a ruling as to the tax treatment of contributions that are picked up by the governmental employing unit per IRC Section 414(h)(2).
- . That the plan is an IRC Section 414(e) church plan.

A non-electing church plan may not rely on our opinion for rules governing pre-Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) participation and coverage.

Our opinion applies to the requirements of IRC Sections 410(b) and 401(a)(26) (other than the 401(a)(26) requirements that apply to a prior benefit structure) if 100% of all non-excludable employees benefit under the plan.

Employers who choose a safe harbor benefit formula and a safe harbor compensation definition may also rely on this opinion letter for the non-discriminatory amounts requirement under IRC Section 401(a)(4).

If this plan provides for voluntary employee contributions subject to IRC Section 401(m), the employer may rely on the opinion letter for the form of the nondiscrimination test of IRC Section 401(m)(2) if the employer uses a safe harbor compensation definition.

Except as provided in Section 5.18(2) of Rev. Proc. 2017-41, an employer who adopts a cash balance plan cannot rely on an opinion letter for the requirements of IRC Section 411(b)(1) where the cash balance formula uses a structure of principal credits that increase with age, service, or other measure during a participant's employment.

This opinion letter doesn't cover any provisions in trust or custodial account documents:

- . Trusts or custodial account documents can't contain a provision that the provisions of the trust override the provisions of the plan.
- . This plan's provisions override any conflicting provision in the trust or custodial account documents used with the plan.
- . An adopting employer may not rely on this letter to the extent a trust or custodial account's provisions in a separate part of the plan override or conflict with the plan document provisions.
- . This letter does not constitute a ruling or determination as to the exempt status of related trusts or custodial accounts under IRC Section 501(a).

An employer who adopts this plan may not rely on this letter when the employer:

- . Uses the plan to amend or restate a plan which wasn't previously qualified.
- . Adopts it before the opinion letter is issued.
- . Doesn't correctly complete the adoption agreement or other elective provisions in the plan.
- . Made amendments that cause the plan not to be considered identical to the pre-approved plan, as described in Section 8.03 of Rev. Proc. 2017-41.

Our opinion doesn't:

- . Apply to what is contained in any applicable documents referenced outside the plan or adoption agreement, such as a collective bargaining agreement.
- . Consider issues under ERISA Title I, which are administered by the Department of Labor.

You must include your address and telephone number on the pre-approved plan or the plan's adoption agreement, if applicable, so that adopting employers can contact you directly.

If you, the pre-approved plan provider, have questions about your case, you can:

- . Call the telephone number at the top of the first page of this letter. This number is only for the provider's use. Individual participants or adopting employers with questions about the plan should contact you.
- . Write to us - provide your telephone number and the best time to call if we need more information.

Whether you call or write, reference the letter serial number and file folder number at the top of the first page of this letter.

Let us know if you change or discontinue sponsorship of this plan.

Keep a copy of this letter for your records.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel Dragoo".

Daniel Dragoo
Director, EP Rulings & Agreements

cc: ICE MILLER LLP
ATTENTION: LISA ERB HARRISON
ONE AMERICAN SQUARE, SUITE 2900
INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46282