WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2024 REGULAR SESSION

Enrolled

Senate Bill 439

By Senators Nelson, Oliverio, Azinger, Barrett, Clements, Grady, Hamilton, Hunt, Phillips, Plymale, Queen, Chapman, Stuart, Woelfel, Takubo, and Deeds

[Passed March 9, 2024, in effect from passage]

AN ACT to amend and reenact §16-5V-2, §16-5V-5, §16-5V-6, §16-5V-8, and §16-5V-14a of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended; and to amend said code by adding thereto two new sections, designated §16-5V-6c and §16-5V-6d, all relating to the Emergency Medical Services Retirement System; defining terms; updating terms to comply with federal laws; authorizing certain 911 personnel to be members of the Emergency Medical Services Retirement System under certain circumstances; requiring costs of the vote to participate be borne by participating employers in relative proportion to members employed; providing for transfer of assets pertaining to 911 personnel; requiring certain computations to be made by the Consolidated Public Retirement Board; requiring administrative costs of the Consolidated Public Retirement Board for transfer of assets pertaining to 911 personnel be borne by participating employers in relative proportion to members transferred; terminating liability of the Public Employees Retirement System in certain circumstances; authorizing use of certain funds for purchase of service credit; and providing for purchase of service credit.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

**ARTICLE 5V. EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES RETIREMENT SYSTEM ACT.**

§16-5V-2. Definitions.

As used in this article, unless a federal law or regulation or the context clearly requires a different meaning:

(a) "Accrued benefit" means on behalf of any member two and six-tenths percent per year of the member’s final average salary for the first 20 years of credited service. Additionally, two percent per year for 21 through 25 years and one and one-half percent per year for each year over 25 years will be credited with a maximum benefit of 67 percent. A member’s accrued benefit may not exceed the limits of Section 415 of the Internal Revenue Code and is subject to the provisions of §16-5V-12 of this code.

(1) The board may, upon the recommendation of the board’s actuary, increase the employees’ contribution rate to 10 and five-tenths percent should the funding of the plan not reach 70 percent funded by July 1, 2012. The board shall decrease the contribution rate to eight and one-half percent once the plan funding reaches the 70 percent support objective as of any later actuarial valuation date.

(2) Upon reaching the 75 percent actuarial funded level, as of an actuarial valuation date, the board shall increase the two and six-tenths percent to two and three-quarter percent for the first 20 years of credited service. The maximum benefit will also be increased from 67 percent to 90 percent.

(3) For 911 personnel with assets transferred pursuant to §16-5V-6d of this code who did not elect to pay back higher past contributions with interest, "accrued benefit" means, on behalf of the member, two percent per year of the member’s final average salary for all credited service that was credited as a result of transferred assets. Additionally, two and three-quarter percent for the first 20 years of new credited service earned from date of membership in this plan will be credited. Additionally, two percent per year for 21 through 25 years of new credited service earned from date of membership in this plan and one and one-half percent per year for each year over 25 years earned from date of membership in this plan will be credited. A maximum benefit of 90 percent of a member’s final average salary may be paid. A member’s accrued benefit may not exceed the limits of Section 415 of the Internal Revenue Code and is subject to the provisions of §16-5V-12 of this code.

(4) For 911 personnel with assets transferred pursuant to §16-5V-6d of this code who did elect to pay back higher past contributions, with interest, for eligible 911 service credit, "accrued benefit" means on behalf of the member two percent per year of the member’s final average salary for all non-911 credited service that was credited as a result of transferred assets. Additionally, two and three-quarter percent for the first 20 years of 911 credited service will be credited. Additionally, two percent per year for 21 through 25 years of 911 credited service and one and one-half percent per year for each year over 25 years of 911 credited service will be credited. A maximum benefit of 90 percent of a member’s final average salary may be paid. A member’s accrued benefit may not exceed the limits of Section 415 of the Internal Revenue Code and is subject to the provisions of §16-5V-12 of this code.

(b) "Accumulated contributions" means the sum of all retirement contributions deducted from the compensation of a member, or paid on his or her behalf as a result of covered employment, together with regular interest on the deducted amounts.

(c) "Active military duty" means full-time active duty with any branch of the armed forces of the United States, including service with the National Guard or reserve military forces when the member has been called to active full-time duty and has received no compensation during the period of that duty from any board or employer other than the armed forces.

(d) "Actuarial equivalent" means a benefit of equal value computed upon the basis of the mortality table and interest rates as set and adopted by the board in accordance with the provisions of this article.

 (e) "Annual compensation" means the wages paid to the member during covered employment within the meaning of Section 3401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code, but determined without regard to any rules that limit the remuneration included in wages based upon the nature or location of employment or services performed during the plan year plus amounts excluded under Section 414(h)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code and less reimbursements or other expense allowances, cash or noncash fringe benefits or both, deferred compensation and welfare benefits. Annual compensation for determining benefits during any determination period may not exceed the maximum compensation allowed as adjusted for cost of living in accordance with §5-10D-7 of this code and Section 401(a)(17) of the Internal Revenue Code.

(f) "Annual leave service" means accrued annual leave.

(g) "Annuity starting date" means the first day of the month for which an annuity is payable after submission of a retirement application. For purposes of this subsection, if retirement income payments commence after the normal retirement age, "retirement" means the first day of the month following or coincident with the latter of the last day the member worked in covered employment or the member’s normal retirement age and after completing proper written application for retirement on an application supplied by the board.

(h) "Board" means the Consolidated Public Retirement Board.

(i) "Contributing service" or "contributory service" means service rendered by a member while employed by a participating public employer for which the member made contributions to the plan. Contributory service that was transferred in full from the Public Employees Retirement System will qualify as contributory service in this plan.

(j) "County commission or political subdivision" has the meaning ascribed to it in this code.

(k) "County firefighter" means an individual employed in full-time employment as a firefighter with a county commission.

(l) "Covered employment" means: (1) Employment as a full-time emergency medical technician, emergency medical technician/paramedic, or emergency medical services/registered nurse, and the active performance of the duties required of emergency medical services officers; or (2) employment as a full-time employee of a county 911 public safety answering point; or (3) employment as a full-time county firefighter; or (4) the period of time during which active duties are not performed but disability benefits are received under this article; or (5) concurrent employment by an emergency medical services officer, 911 personnel, or county firefighter in a job or jobs in addition to his or her employment as an emergency medical services officer, 911 personnel, or county firefighter where the secondary employment requires the emergency medical services officer, 911 personnel, or county firefighter to be a member of another retirement system which is administered by the Consolidated Public Retirement Board pursuant to this code: *Provided,* That the emergency medical services officer, 911 personnel, or county firefighter contributes to the fund created in this article the amount specified as the member’s contribution in §16-5V-8 of this code.

(m) "Credited service" means the sum of a member’s years of service, active military duty, disability service, service transferred from the Public Employees Retirement System, and accrued annual and sick leave service.

 (n) "Dependent child" means either:

(1) An unmarried person under age eighteen who is:

(A) A natural child of the member;

(B) A legally adopted child of the member;

(C) A child who at the time of the member’s death was living with the member while the member was an adopting parent during any period of probation; or

(D) A stepchild of the member residing in the member’s household at the time of the member’s death; or

(2) Any unmarried child under age 23:

(A) Who is enrolled as a full-time student in an accredited college or university;

(B) Who was claimed as a dependent by the member for federal income tax purposes at the time of the member’s death; and

(C) Whose relationship with the member is described in paragraph (A), (B), or (C), subdivision (1) of this subsection.

(o) "Dependent parent" means the father or mother of the member who was claimed as a dependent by the member for federal income tax purposes at the time of the member’s death.

(p) "Disability service" means service received by a member, expressed in whole years, fractions thereof or both, equal to one half of the whole years, fractions thereof, or both, during which time a member receives disability benefits under this article.

(q) "Early retirement age" means age 45 or over and completion of 20 years of contributory service.

(r) "Effective date" means January 1, 2008.

(s) "Emergency medical services officer" means an individual employed by the state, county or other political subdivision as a medical professional who is qualified to respond to medical emergencies, aids the sick and injured and arranges or transports to medical facilities, as defined by the West Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services. This definition is construed to include employed ambulance providers and other services such as law enforcement, rescue, or fire department personnel who primarily perform these functions and are not provided any other credited service benefits or retirement plans. These persons may hold the rank of emergency medical technician/basic, emergency medical technician/paramedic, emergency medical services/registered nurse, or others as defined by the West Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services and the Consolidated Public Retirement Board.

(t) "Employer error" means an omission, misrepresentation, or deliberate act in violation of relevant provisions of the West Virginia Code, the West Virginia Code of State Rules, or the relevant provisions of both the West Virginia Code and of the West Virginia Code of State Rules by the participating public employer that has resulted in an underpayment or overpayment of contributions required.

(u) "Final average salary" means the average of the highest annual compensation received for covered employment by the member during any five consecutive plan years within the member’s last 10 years of service while employed, prior to any disability payment. If the member did not have annual compensation for the five full plan years preceding the member’s attainment of normal retirement age and during that period the member received disability benefits under this article, then "final average salary" means the average of the monthly salary determined paid to the member during that period as determined under §16-5V-19 of this code multiplied by 12. Final average salary does not include any lump sum payment for unused, accrued leave of any kind or character.

(v) "Full-time employment" means permanent employment of an employee by a participating public employer in a position which normally requires 12 months per year service and requires at least 1,040 hours per year service in that position.

(w) "Fund" means the West Virginia Emergency Medical Services Retirement Fund created by this article.

(x) "Hour of service" means:

(1) Each hour for which a member is paid or entitled to payment for covered employment during which time active duties are performed. These hours shall be credited to the member for the plan year in which the duties are performed; and

(2) Each hour for which a member is paid or entitled to payment for covered employment during a plan year, but where no duties are performed due to vacation, holiday, illness, incapacity including disability, layoff, jury duty, military duty, leave of absence, or any combination thereof and without regard to whether the employment relationship has terminated. Hours under this subdivision shall be calculated and credited pursuant to West Virginia Division of Labor rules. A member will not be credited with any hours of service for any period of time he or she is receiving benefits under §16-5V-19 or §16-5V-20 of this code; and

(3) Each hour for which back pay is either awarded or agreed to be paid by the employing county commission or political subdivision, irrespective of mitigation of damages. The same hours of service shall not be credited both under subdivision (1) or subdivision (2) of this subsection and under this subdivision. Hours under this paragraph shall be credited to the member for the plan year or years to which the award or agreement pertains, rather than the plan year in which the award, agreement, or payment is made.

(y) "Medical examination" means an in-person or virtual examination of a member’s physical or mental health, or both, by a physician or physicians selected or approved by the board; or, at the discretion of the board, a medical record review of the member’s physical or mental health, or both, by a physician selected or approved by the board.

(z) “Member" means either: (1) A person first hired as an emergency medical services officer by an employer which is a participating public employer of the Emergency Medical Services Retirement System after the effective date of this article, as defined in subsection (r) of this section; or (2) an emergency medical services officer of an employer which is a participating public employer of the Public Employees Retirement System first hired prior to the effective date and who elects to become a member pursuant to this article; or (3) a person first hired by a county 911 public safety answering center after the participating public employer elects to participate in the Emergency Medical Services Retirement System; or (4) a county firefighter hired on or after June 10, 2022; or (5) a county firefighter of an employer which is a participating public employer of the Public Employees Retirement System first hired prior to June 10, 2022, and who elects to become a member pursuant to §16-5V-6a of this code; or (6) a person first hired by a county 911 public safety answering center prior to July 1, 2022, and who elects to become a member pursuant to §16-5V-6c of this code. A member shall remain a member until the benefits to which he or she is entitled under this article are paid or forfeited.

(aa) "Monthly salary" means the W-2 reportable compensation received by a member during the month.

(bb) "Normal form" means a monthly annuity which is one twelfth of the amount of the member’s accrued benefit which is payable for the member’s life. If the member dies before the sum of the payments he or she receives equals his or her accumulated contributions on the annuity starting date, the named beneficiary shall receive in one lump sum the difference between the accumulated contributions at the annuity starting date and the total of the retirement income payments made to the member.

(cc) "Normal retirement age" means the first to occur of the following:

(1) Attainment of age 50 years and the completion of 20 or more years of regular contributory service, excluding active military duty, disability service, and accrued annual and sick leave service;

(2) While still in covered employment, attainment of at least age 50 years and when the sum of current age plus regular contributory years of service equals or exceeds 70 years;

(3) While still in covered employment, attainment of at least age 60 years and completion of 10 years of regular contributory service; or

(4) Attainment of age 62 years and completion of five or more years of regular contributory service.

(dd) "Participating public employer" means: (1) Any county commission, political subdivision, or county 911 public safety answering point in the state which has elected to cover its emergency medical services officers or 911 personnel, as defined in this article, under the West Virginia Emergency Medical Services Retirement System; or (2) any county commission who employs county firefighters.

(ee) "Plan" means the West Virginia Emergency Medical Services Retirement System established by this article.

(ff) "Plan year" means the 12-month period commencing on January 1 of any designated year and ending the following December 31.

(gg) "Political subdivision" means a county, city, or town in the state; any separate corporation or instrumentality established by one or more counties, cities, or towns, as permitted by law; any corporation or instrumentality supported in most part by counties, cities, or towns; and any public corporation charged by law with the performance of a governmental function and whose jurisdiction is coextensive with one or more counties, cities, or towns: *Provided*, That any public corporation established under §7-15-4 of this code is considered a political subdivision solely for the purposes of this article.

(hh) "Public Employees Retirement System" means the West Virginia Public Employees Retirement System created by West Virginia Code.

(ii) "Regular interest" means the rate or rates of interest per annum, compounded annually, as the board adopts in accordance with the provisions of this article.

(jj) "Required beginning date" means April 1 of the calendar year following the later of: (1) The calendar year in which the member attains age 70.5 (if born before July 1, 1949) or age 72 (if born after June 30, 1949); or (2) the calendar year in which he or she retires or otherwise separates from covered employment.

(kk) "Retirant" means any member who commences an annuity payable by the plan.

(ll) "Retire" or "retirement" means a member’s withdrawal from the employ of a participating public employer and the commencement of an annuity by the plan.

(mm) "Retirement income payments" means the monthly retirement income payments payable under the plan.

(nn) "Spouse" means the person to whom the member is legally married on the annuity starting date.

(oo) "Surviving spouse" means the person to whom the member was legally married at the time of the member’s death and who survived the member.

(pp) "Totally disabled" means a member’s inability to engage in substantial gainful activity by reason of any medically determined physical or mental impairment that can be expected to result in death or that has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 months.

For purposes of this subsection:

(1) A member is totally disabled only if his or her physical or mental impairment or impairments is so severe that he or she is not only unable to perform his or her previous work as an emergency medical services officer, 911 personnel, or county firefighter but also cannot, considering his or her age, education, and work experience, engage in any other kind of substantial gainful employment which exists in the state regardless of whether: (A) The work exists in the immediate area in which the member lives; (B) a specific job vacancy exists; or (C) the member would be hired if he or she applied for work. For purposes of this article, substantial gainful employment is the same definition as used by the United States Social Security Administration.

(2) "Physical or mental impairment" is an impairment that results from an anatomical, physiological, or psychological abnormality that is demonstrated by medically accepted clinical and laboratory diagnostic techniques. The board may require submission of a member’s annual tax return for purposes of monitoring the earnings limitation.

(qq) "Year of service" means a member shall, except in his or her first and last years of covered employment, be credited with years of service credit based upon the hours of service performed as covered employment and credited to the member during the plan year based upon the following schedule:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Hours of Service | Years of Service Credited |
| Less than 500 | 0 |
| 500 to 999 | 1/3 |
| 1000 to 1499 | 2/3 |
| 1500 or more | 1 |

During a member’s first and last years of covered employment, the member shall be credited with one twelfth of a year of service for each month during the plan year in which the member is credited with an hour of service for which contributions were received by the fund. A member is not entitled to credit for years of service for any time period during which he or she received disability payments under §16-5V-19 or §16-5V-20 of this code. Except as specifically excluded, years of service include covered employment prior to the effective date.

Years of service which are credited to a member prior to his or her receipt of accumulated contributions upon termination of employment pursuant to §16-5V-18 of this code or §5-10-30 of this code shall be disregarded for all purposes under this plan unless the member repays the accumulated contributions with interest pursuant to section §16-5V-18 of this code or has, prior to the effective date, made the repayment pursuant to §5-10-18 of this code.

(rr) "911 personnel" means an individual employed in full-time employment with a county 911 public safety answering point.

§16-5V-5. Article to be liberally construed; supplements federal Social Security; federal qualification requirements.

(a) The provisions of this article shall be liberally construed so as to provide a general retirement system for emergency medical services officers, county firefighters, or 911 personnel eligible to retire under the provisions of this plan. Nothing in this article may be construed to permit a county to substitute this plan for federal Social Security now in force in West Virginia.

(b) The board shall administer the plan in accordance with its terms and may construe the terms and determine all questions arising in connection with the administration, interpretation and application of the plan. The board may sue and be sued, contract and be contracted with and conduct all the business of the system in the name of the plan. The board may employ those persons it considers necessary or desirable to administer the plan. The board shall administer the plan for the exclusive benefit of the members and their beneficiaries subject to the specific provisions of the plan.

(c) The plan is intended to meet the federal qualification requirements of Section 401(a) and related sections of the Internal Revenue Code as applicable to governmental plans. Notwithstanding any other provision of state law, the board shall administer the plan to fulfill this intent for the exclusive benefit of the members and their beneficiaries. Any provision of this article referencing or relating to these federal qualification requirements is effective as of the date required by federal law. The board may propose rules for promulgation and amend or repeal conflicting rules in accordance with the authority granted to the board pursuant to §5-10D-1 of this code to assure compliance with the requirements of this section.

(d) The board shall determine any costs incurred by the board attributable to the voluntary transfer of members of the Public Employees Retirement System to the plan pursuant to the provisions of §16-5V-6c and §16-5V-6d of this code. These costs include the cost to make necessary modifications to the existing line of business computer system, and any personnel costs, including employee benefits. The board shall determine the pro rata share of each participating public 911 employer liable for these costs pursuant to this article. Each participating 911 employer shall pay the board its pro rata share. The board is authorized to receive funds from the participating public 911 employers as required by this section for purposes of paying costs as set forth in this article.

§16-5V-6. Members.

(a) Any emergency medical services officer, county firefighter, or 911 personnel hired on or after the effective date the participating public employer elected to become a participating public employer shall be a member of this retirement plan as a condition of employment and upon membership does not qualify for membership in any other retirement system administered by the board, so long as he or she remains employed in covered employment: *Provided,* That any emergency medical services officer, county firefighter, or 911 personnel who has concurrent employment in an additional job or jobs which would require the emergency medical services officer, county firefighter, or 911 personnel to be a member of the West Virginia Deputy Sheriffs Retirement System, the West Virginia Municipal Police Officers and Firefighters Retirement System, or the West Virginia Natural Resources Police Officer Retirement System shall participate in only one retirement system administered by the board, and the retirement system applicable to the concurrent employment for which the employee has the earliest date of hire shall prevail.

(b) Any emergency medical services officer employed in covered employment by an employer which is currently a participating public employer of the Public Employees Retirement System shall notify in writing both the county commission in the county or officials in the political subdivision in which he or she is employed and the board of his or her desire to become a member of the plan by December 31, 2007. Any emergency medical services officer who elects to become a member of the plan ceases to be a member, or have any credit for covered employment in any other retirement system administered by the board, and shall continue to be ineligible for membership in any other retirement system administered by the board so long as the emergency medical services officer remains employed in covered employment by an employer which is currently a participating public employer of this plan: *Provided,* That any emergency medical services officer who does not affirmatively elect to become a member of the plan continues to be eligible for any other retirement system as is, from time to time, offered to other county employees but is ineligible for this plan regardless of any subsequent termination of employment and rehire.

(c) Any emergency medical services officer who was employed as an emergency medical services officer prior to the effective date, but was not employed on the effective date of this article, shall become a member upon rehire as an emergency medical services officer. For purposes of this section, the member’s years of service and credited service prior to the effective date shall not be counted for any purposes under this plan unless the emergency medical services officer has not received the return of his or her accumulated contributions in the Public Employees Retirement System pursuant to §5-10-30 of this code. The member may request in writing to have his or her accumulated contributions and employer contributions from covered employment in the Public Employees Retirement System transferred to the plan. If the conditions of this subsection are met, all years of the emergency medical services officer’s covered employment shall be counted as years of service for the purposes of this article.

(d) Any emergency medical services officer employed in covered employment on the effective date of this article who has timely elected to transfer into this plan as provided in subsection (b) of this section shall be given credited service at the time of transfer for all credited service then standing to the emergency medical services officer’s service credit in the Public Employees Retirement System regardless of whether the credited service (as that term is defined in §5-10-2 of this code) was earned as an emergency medical services officer. All credited service standing to the transferring emergency medical services officer’s credit in the Public Employees Retirement System at the time of transfer into this plan shall be transferred into the plan created by this article and the transferring emergency medical services officer shall be given the same credit for the purposes of this article for all service transferred from the Public Employees Retirement System as that transferring emergency medical services officer would have received from the Public Employees Retirement System as if the transfer had not occurred. In connection with each transferring emergency medical services officer receiving credit for prior employment as provided in this subsection, a transfer from the Public Employees Retirement System to this plan shall be made pursuant to the procedures described in this article: *Provided,* That any member of this plan who has elected to transfer from the Public Employees Retirement System into this plan pursuant to subsection (b) of this section may not, after having transferred into and becoming an active member of this plan, reinstate to his or her credit in this plan any service credit relating to periods in which the member was not in covered employment as an emergency medical services officer and which service was withdrawn from the Public Employees Retirement System prior to his or her elective transfer into this plan.

(e) Once made, the election made under this section is irrevocable. All emergency medical services officers employed by an employer which is a participating public employer of the Public Employees Retirement System after the effective date and emergency medical services officers electing to become members as described in this section shall be members as a condition of employment and shall make the contributions required by this article.

(f) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this article, any individual who is a leased employee is not eligible to participate in the plan. For purposes of this plan, a "leased employee" means any individual who performs services as an independent contractor or pursuant to an agreement with an employee leasing organization or similar organization. If a question arises regarding the status of an individual as a leased employee, the board has final power to decide the question.

§16-5V-6c. 911 personnel.

(a) In accordance with the provisions of this article, the board shall administer the voluntary transfer of 911 personnel who are members of the Public Employees Retirement System to the Emergency Medical Services Retirement System.

(b) 911 personnel, employed by a participating public employer, who are actively contributing members of the Public Employees Retirement System shall be eligible to participate in a vote directly to the board pursuant to subsection (c) of this section: *Provided*, That the 911 personnel are employed with a participating public employer in the month prior to the election and for the duration of the election and that their participating public employer does not choose to opt-out of this option to transfer existing employees. The board will notify all participating public employers with 911 personnel of their option to opt-out of transferring existing employees prior to the election. Participating public employers with 911 personnel have until June 28, 2024, to opt out. Participating public employers with 911 personnel who opt out and Public Employees Retirement System employers who are not participating public employers in this plan in the month prior to the election will be barred from future options to transfer existing 911 personnel into this plan for a period of no less than three years from the election and must pay any future transfer costs to the board. In addition, for any future transfers, the board will calculate the initial pro rata share of costs that would have been assessed at the initial transfer and those costs must be paid to the plan.

(c) The election period for the vote shall conclude on August 30, 2024. All election forms received by the board on or before August 30, 2024, shall be counted, and any members eligible to vote who do not submit an election form to the board prior to or on August 30, 2024, shall be counted as not electing to transfer to the plan. If at least 75 percent of members eligible to vote pursuant to subsection (b) of this section affirmatively elect to transfer to the plan within the period provided in this subsection, then the board shall notify the employers of all members who affirmatively elected to do so during that period, and contributions to the plan shall begin during October 2024 for those electing to transfer. If more than 25 percent of those members eligible to vote pursuant to subsection (b) of this section do not affirmatively elect to transfer to the plan within that period, the Public Employees Retirement System continues as the retirement system for all 911 members eligible to vote. The vote pursuant to this subsection shall be directly to the board and the results shall be unknown to all employers until the time period for voting ends: *Provided*, That any employee eligible to vote pursuant to subsection (b) of this section shall have access through his or her employer to educational materials regarding the vote provided by the board. All members who complete an election form and all participating public employers with 911 personnel eligible to vote shall be notified in writing by the board by September 30, 2024, of the results of the election.

(d) Any costs incurred by the board attributable to this section shall be borne by all 911 personnel employers of persons eligible to transfer in proportion to the number of persons employed by that employer who are eligible to transfer. The board shall determine its costs incurred attributable to this election to transfer and shall determine the pro rata share of these costs to be borne by the 911 personnel participating employers.

(e) Notwithstanding any other provision of this article to the contrary, a person employed as 911 personnel may be a member of this retirement plan subject to the provisions of this section. Full-time employment as 911 personnel satisfies the definition of "covered employment" as defined in this article.

(f) Any 911 personnel who elects to become a member of the plan does not qualify for active membership in any other retirement system administered by the board, so long as he or she remains employed in covered employment: *Provided,* That any 911 personnel who has concurrent employment in an additional job or jobs which would require the 911 personnel to be an active member of the West Virginia Deputy Sheriffs Retirement System, the West Virginia Municipal Police Officers and Firefighters Retirement System, or the West Virginia Natural Resources Police Officer Retirement System shall actively participate in only one retirement system administered by the board, and the retirement system applicable to the concurrent employment for which the employee has the earliest date of hire shall prevail. Any 911 personnel shall continue to receive his or her accrued benefit of other retirement systems administered by the board, except in the case of Public Employees Retirement System, when credit and assets are transferred to the Emergency Services Retirement System.

(g) Any 911 personnel who was employed as 911 personnel prior to July 1, 2024, but was not employed on July 1, 2024, shall become a member upon rehire as 911 personnel. For purposes of this section, the member’s years of service and credited service prior to July 1, 2024, may be counted so long as the 911 personnel has not received the return of his or her accumulated contributions in the Public Employees Retirement System pursuant to §5-10-30 of this code. The member may request in writing to have his or her accumulated contributions and employer contributions from covered employment in the Public Employees Retirement System transferred to the plan and will receive two percent of the member’s final average salary for each year transferred. If the conditions of this subsection are met, all years of the 911 personnel’s covered employment shall be counted as years of service for the purposes of this article.

(h) Any 911 personnel employed in covered employment on July 1, 2024, who has timely elected to transfer into this plan as provided in subsection (b) of this section shall be given credited service at the time of transfer for all credited service then standing to the 911 personnel’s service credit in the Public Employees Retirement System regardless of whether the credited service, as defined in §5-10-2 of this code, was earned as a 911 personnel. All credited service standing to the transferring 911 personnel’s credit in the Public Employees Retirement System at the time of transfer into this plan shall be transferred into the plan created by this article, and the transferring 911 personnel shall be given the same credit for the purposes of this article for all service transferred from the Public Employees Retirement System as that transferring 911 personnel would have received from the Public Employees Retirement System as if the transfer had not occurred but with accrued benefit multipliers subject to the provisions of §16-5V-12 of this code. In connection with each transferring 911 personnel receiving credit for prior employment as provided in this subsection, a transfer from the Public Employees Retirement System to this plan shall be made pursuant to the procedures described in this article: *Provided,* That any member of this plan who has elected to transfer from the Public Employees Retirement System into this plan pursuant to subsection (g) of this section may not, after having transferred into and becoming an active member of this plan, reinstate to his or her credit in this plan any service credit relating to periods in which the member was not in covered employment as a 911 personnel and which service was withdrawn from the Public Employees Retirement System prior to his or her elective transfer into this plan.

(i) Once made, the election made under this section is irrevocable. All 911 personnel electing to become members as described in this section, shall be members as a condition of employment and shall make the contributions required by this article.

§16-5V-6d. Transfer of 911 personnel assets from Public Employees Retirement System.

(a) If at least 75 percent of those actively contributing members of the Public Employees Retirement System currently employed as 911 personnel eligible to vote affirmatively elect to transfer to the Emergency Medical Services Retirement System within the period provided in §16-5V-6c of this code, then the board shall transfer to the Emergency Medical Services Retirement System all members who affirmatively elected to do so during that period. If more than 25 percent of actively contributing members of the Public Employees Retirement System currently employed as 911 personnel eligible to vote do not affirmatively elect to transfer to the Emergency Medical Services Retirement System within that period, the Public Employees Retirement System continues as the retirement system for all 911 members eligible to vote. Any costs incurred by the board attributable to this section shall be borne by all employers of persons transferring. The board shall determine its costs incurred attributable to this transfer and shall determine the pro rata share of these costs to be borne by the participating public 911 personnel employers.

(b) The Consolidated Public Retirement Board shall transfer assets from the Public Employees Retirement System Trust Fund into the West Virginia Emergency Medical Services Trust Fund no later than December 31, 2024.

(c) The amount of assets to be transferred for each transferring 911 personnel shall be computed using the July 1, 2023, actuarial valuation of the Public Employees Retirement System, and updated with 7.25 percent annual interest to the date of the actual asset transfer. The market value of the assets of the transferring 911 personnel in the Public Employees Retirement System shall be determined as of the end of the month preceding the actual transfer. To determine the computation of the asset share to be transferred the board shall:

(1) Compute the market value of the Public Employees Retirement System assets as of July 1, 2023, actuarial valuation date under the actuarial valuation approved by the board;

(2) Compute the actuarial accrued liabilities for all Public Employees Retirement System retirees, beneficiaries, disabled retirees, and terminated inactive members as of July 1, 2023, actuarial valuation date;

(3) Compute the market value of active member assets in the Public Employees Retirement System as of July 1, 2023, by reducing the assets value under subdivision (1) of this subsection by the inactive liabilities under subdivision (2) of this subsection;

(4) Compute the actuarial accrued liability for all active Public Employees Retirement System members as of July 1, 2023, actuarial valuation date approved by the board;

(5) Compute the funded percentage of the active members’ actuarial accrued liabilities under the Public Employees Retirement System as of July 1, 2023, by dividing the active members’ market value of assets under subdivision (3) of this subsection by the active members’ actuarial accrued liabilities under subdivision (4) of this subsection;

(6) Compute the actuarial accrued liabilities under the Public Employees Retirement System as of July 1, 2023, for active 911 personnel transferring to the Emergency Medical Services Retirement System;

(7) Determine the assets to be transferred from the Public Employees Retirement System to the Emergency Medical Services Retirement System by multiplying the active members’ funded percentage determined under subdivision (5) of this subsection by the transferring active members’ actuarial accrued liabilities under the Public Employees Retirement System under subdivision (6) of this subsection and adjusting the asset transfer amount by interest at 7.25 percent for the period from the calculation date of July 1, 2023, through the first day of the month in which the asset transfer is to be completed.

(d) Once a 911 personnel has elected to transfer from the Public Employees Retirement System, transfer of that amount as calculated in accordance with the provisions of subsection (c) of this section by the Public Employees Retirement System shall operate as a complete bar to any further liability to the Public Employees Retirement System and constitutes an agreement whereby the transferring 911 personnel forever indemnifies and holds harmless the Public Employees Retirement System from providing him or her any form of retirement benefit whatsoever until that emergency medical services officer obtains other employment which would make him or her eligible to reenter the Public Employees Retirement System with no credit whatsoever for the amounts transferred to the Emergency Medical Services Retirement System.

(e) 911 personnel who timely elected to transfer into this plan may request in writing that the Consolidated Public Retirement Board compute a quote of the amount owed for the member’s transferred 911 service to be eligible for the 2.75 percent multiplier. The quote shall be provided to the member within 60 days of the board’s receipt of the written request and the employer’s verification of 911 service. Other Public Employees Retirement System employment is eligible for transfer, but only at the 2 percent multiplier. To determine the computation of the quote provided, the board shall:

(1) Compute the contributions made by each 911 personnel for eligible 911 years under Public Employees Retirement System.

(2) Compute the contributions that would have been required under Emergency Medical Services Retirement System for eligible 911 years.

(3) Compute the difference with interest at 7.25 percent that each 911 personnel would have been required to pay had he or she originally participated in Emergency Medical Services Retirement System for eligible 911 years.

(4) Full reinstatement amount must be repaid no later than December 31, 2029, or prior to the member’s effective retirement date, whichever occurs first.

(f) Commencement of retirement for transferring 911 personnel may occur on or after January 1, 2025.

 (g) Any administrative costs to the board associated with this transfer shall be borne by the participating public 911 personnel employers of the transferring members, in relative proportion to the number of members employed.

§16-5V-8. Members' contributions; employer contributions.

(a) There shall be deducted from the monthly salary of each member and paid into the fund an amount equal to eight and one-half percent of his or her monthly salary. An additional amount shall be paid to the fund by the county commission or political subdivision in which the member is employed in covered employment in an amount determined by the board: *Provided*, That in no year may the total of the employer contributions provided in this section, to be paid by the county commission or political subdivision, exceed 10 and one-half percent of the total payroll for the members in the employ of the county commission or political subdivision.

(b) Any active member who has concurrent employment in an additional job or jobs and the additional employment requires the member to be a member of another retirement system which is administered by the Consolidated Public Retirement Board pursuant to §5-10D-1 *et seq.* of this code shall contribute to the fund the sum of eight and one-half percent of his or her monthly salary earned as an emergency medical services officer, county firefighter, or 911 personnel as well as the sum of eight and one-half percent of his or her monthly salary earned from any additional employment which additional employment requires the emergency medical services officer, county firefighter, or 911 personnel to be a member of another retirement system which is administered by the Consolidated Public Retirement Board pursuant to §5-10D-1 *et seq.* of this code. An additional percent of the monthly salary of each member shall be paid to the fund by the concurrent employer by which the member is employed in an amount determined by the board: *Provided*, That in no year may the total of the employer contributions provided in this section, to be paid by the concurrent employer, exceed 10 and one-half percent of the payroll for the concurrent member employees.

(c) All required deposits shall be remitted to the board no later than 15 days following the end of the calendar month for which the deposits are required. If the board upon the recommendation of the board actuary finds that the benefits provided by this article can be actuarially funded with a lesser contribution, then the board shall reduce the required member and employer contributions proportionally. Any county commission or political subdivision which fails to make any payment due the Emergency Medical Services Retirement Fund by the fifteenth day following the end of each calendar month in which contributions are due may be required to pay the actuarial rate of interest lost on the total amount owed for each day the payment is delinquent. Accrual of the loss of earnings owed by the delinquent county commission or political subdivision commences after the fifteenth day following the end of the calendar month in which contributions are due and continues until receipt of the delinquent amount. Interest compounds daily and the minimum surcharge is $50.

§16-5V-14a. Rollovers and transfers to purchase service credit or repay withdrawn contributions.

(a) Notwithstanding any provision of this article to the contrary that would otherwise prohibit or limit rollovers and plan transfers to this system, the plan shall accept the following rollovers and plan transfers on behalf of a member solely for the purpose of purchasing permissive service credit, in whole or in part, as otherwise provided in this article or for the repayment of withdrawn or refunded contributions, in whole and in part, with respect to a previous forfeiture of service credit as otherwise provided in this article or for the purpose of paying higher contributions with interest for credit towards eligible 911 service upon initial transfer into this plan: (A) One or more rollovers within the meaning of Section 408(d)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code from an individual retirement account described in Section 408(a) of the Internal Revenue Code or from an individual retirement annuity described in Section 408(b) of the Internal Revenue Code; (B) one or more rollovers described in Section 402(c) of the Internal Revenue Code from a retirement plan that is qualified under Section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code or from a plan described in Section 403(b) of the Internal Revenue Code; (C) one or more rollovers described in Section 457(e)(16) of the Internal Revenue Code from a governmental plan described in Section 457 of the Internal Revenue Code; or (D) direct trustee-to-trustee transfers or rollovers from a plan that is qualified under Section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code, from a plan described in Section 403(b) of the Internal Revenue Code or from a governmental plan described in Section 457 of the Internal Revenue Code: *Provided*, That any rollovers or transfers pursuant to this section shall be accepted by the system only if made in cash or other asset permitted by the board and only in accordance with such policies, practices and procedures established by the board from time to time. For purposes of this article, the following definitions and limitations apply:

(1) "Permissive service credit" means service credit which is permitted to be purchased under the terms of the retirement system by voluntary contributions in an amount which does not exceed the amount necessary to fund the benefit attributable to the period of service for which the service credit is being purchased, all as defined in Section 415(n)(3)(A) of the Internal Revenue Code: *Provided*, That no more than five years of "nonqualified service credit", as defined in Section 415(n)(3)(C) of the Internal Revenue Code, may be included in the permissive service credit allowed to be purchased (other than by means of a rollover or plan transfer), and no nonqualified service credit may be included in any such purchase (other than by means of a rollover or plan transfer) before the member has at least five years of participation in the retirement system.

(2) "Repayment of withdrawn or refunded contributions" means the payment into the retirement system of the funds required pursuant to this article for the reinstatement of service credit previously forfeited on account of any refund or withdrawal of contributions permitted in this article, as set forth in Section 415(k)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

(3) Any contribution (other than by means of a rollover or plan transfer) to purchase permissive service credit under any provision of this article must satisfy the special limitation rules described in Section 415(n) of the Internal Revenue Code, and shall be automatically reduced, limited, or required to be paid over multiple years if necessary to ensure such compliance. To the extent any such purchased permissive service credit is qualified military service within the meaning of Section 414(u) of the Internal Revenue Code, the limitations of Section 415 of the Internal Revenue Code shall be applied to such purchase as described in Section 414(u)(1)(B) of the Internal Revenue Code.

(4) For purposes of Section 415(b) of the Internal Revenue Code, the annual benefit attributable to any rollover contribution accepted pursuant to this section shall be determined in accordance with Treasury Regulation §1.415(b)-1(b)(2)(v), and the excess, if any, of the annuity payments attributable to any rollover contribution provided under the retirement system over the annual benefit so determined shall be taken into account when applying the accrued benefit limitations of Section 415(b) of the Internal Revenue Code and section twelve of this article.

(b) Nothing in this section may be construed as permitting rollovers or transfers into this system or any other system administered by the retirement board other than as specified in this section, and no rollover or transfer shall be accepted into the system in an amount greater than the amount required for the purchase of permissive service credit or repayment of withdrawn or refunded contributions.

(c) Nothing in this section shall be construed as permitting the purchase of service credit or repayment of withdrawn or refunded contributions except as otherwise permitted in this article.