

Two minutes with the Boss

Pension Issues

Here's a prime example of what I have been talking about regarding our pension issues. Below is the title of a document and just one of the items of business mentioned in it regarding the below named conference held late last year.

DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference
Draft 2008 Legislative Action Program

*For Municipal — County Intergovernmental Committee Review
November 9, 2007*

DRAFT CONFERENCE PRIORITIES

The following are the Conference's DRAFT legislative Priorities, which identify the issues DMMC expects to focus time, energy, and resources on in 2008.

REFORM POLICE AND FIRE PENSION PLANS

Municipalities are constantly forced to accept police and fire pension increases that significantly raise costs to local residents and divert limited resources from other important needs. Yet these pension systems have no effective ethics, oversight or reporting responsibilities. Without affecting members pension benefits, we believe reform measures are needed to make these pension systems more accountable to their members and to the public.

Nice, huh?

Well, here's proof of what many of our city fathers, or should I say Bozos, think of your defined benefit pension plans, although they are obviously very careful not to call it by name. Read it again.

“Municipalities are constantly forced to accept police and fire pension increases that significantly raise costs to local residents and divert limited resources from other important needs.”

Like what important needs? Fighting employee unions? Golf outings? The hiring of PR people to help the image of the county board or other municipalities? Other obvious pork barrel projects? Or is it just to reduce taxes at the police officers' expense so these politicians can get re-elected? And hey, maybe they think they can do this by fooling with our pensions, which are partially funded by municipalities.

The mayors and managers are claiming that our pension systems have no effective ethics or reporting sense. Oh, so all these pension board loyal mayoral appointments and elected

members from the ranks represented by professional, experienced pension attorneys have no ethics?

They make an allegation with nothing to back it up. How typical of some governmental units.

And here's what's interesting. They say they want reform that will not affect members' pension benefits. They just want them to be more accountable. Oh, really? Would be nice if they articulated just how they are going to do that, wouldn't it? But I guess you had to be invited to their November 9, 2007, conference—which I wasn't—to find out. Nobody I know is talking about how they are going to hold down costs and reform something that I didn't know needed reforming, but I think I can predict how they want to do that.

Maybe our madder-than-a-hatter mayors really want to make changes that will keep your defined benefit pension plan in your future. But I don't believe that. Simply because they state that they are "forced to accept police and fire increases." I think this is all smoke and mirrors to get legislation going to dump your pensions as they now exist and go to the defined contribution way.

But if I'm wrong here and this is not a push to legislate a defined contribution that provides no set or defined benefit when you pension out, but dictates that you will receive only what *you* put in your retirement account, then someone tell me true.

Outline your goals, ambitions, and investment dreams on this issue so I can believe that our fine mayors and other associates are not trying to screw us all.

I will be patiently waiting for an answer. A discourse on how they want to reform your pension systems that I think is working pretty well, since I keep getting my checks and my local board is responsive to my and others needs. It doesn't need fixing. The municipalities and the mayors who run them just do not want to put any money into your pension.

So show me how you will guarantee that you, as mayor, village leaders, and legislators, will not attack our pensions and provide and maintain a *defined* benefit for all future law enforcement officers.

Make me a believer.

We'll get back to you on this sooner than later. You need to be constantly alert to this problem. If you fall asleep here they are going to take pensions as you know them away from you. Not for us old retired guys, but for new employees first, and if they can, you who are currently working will eventually be included in this madness.

Stay safe.q