

July 1 marks Kent County's new fiscal year

Happy New Year!

Fiscal Year 2023 started July 1, 2022, which means the new Kent County budget is in effect.

Due to the new fiscal year and the Independence Day holiday on Monday, July 4, employees were requested to submit time sheets early. Please, promptly submit any Friday or Saturday work hour adjustments first thing Tuesday (July 5) morning.



The \$35.8 million general fund budget and the \$22.9 million sewer fund budget approved by Levy Court in late April includes a 4% cost of living adjustment for active employees plus a full 2% step increase for eligible employees receiving an “effective” performance evaluation and not topped out on their pay grade. Employees with less than 9 but more than 3 months as of June 30 are eligible for a half (1%) step, and those with less than 3 months service are not eligible for a step increase. A 2% cost of living adjustment was also authorized for active retiree pensions (*former employees that retired directly from Kent County service*).

On the employee benefits side, Levy Court adjusted the County's annual pension contribution to \$3,970,654. County Retirement Fund investments grew 15.9% in 2021 on top of a 13.4% increase in 2020, resulting in a lower actuarially determined contribution (ADC) for the upcoming fiscal year. Employee contributions account for about 9% of the total ADC. Similarly, the annual contribution to the retiree benefits (OPEB) fund decreased a bit to \$2,521,091. For healthcare, Commissioners increased the employee cost share (2%) for the individual only high plan health insurance from \$88.06 to \$89.80 per month consistent with DVHT/Aetna's minimal premium increase, with the dependent health insurance cost share (20%) also increasing about 2% effective June 1. Health insurance deductions are made one month in advance, meaning the higher cost share amounts were deducted in June for the month of July. The budget retains the employee/eligible retiree premium for dental insurance at \$3.10 per month and the dependent premium at \$42.00 for a monthly premium of \$45.10 combined with a calendar year maximum benefit of \$2,000.

Other budget related items include the addition of 5 new Paramedic positions in the Department of Public Safety - Emergency Medical Services Division; 3 new Dispatcher and GIS Analyst positions in Department of Public Safety - Emergency Communication Division; a new Accountant position in the Department of Finance - Accounting Section; as well as a new Housing & Community Development Specialist in the Department of Planning Services - CDBG Section. Commissioners also approved a new Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator Apprentice program with one full-time position, but up to 3 candidates can enroll in the program; reclassification of 3 positions; and funds to complete a compensation study in anticipation of annual federal minimum wage increases culminating on January 1, 2025 at \$15.00 per hour.

In addition, the overall \$7.5 million capital projects fund budget includes multi-year installment allocations for ongoing and future capital projects including the Countywide I.T. Enterprise Solution underway, console replacements for the Department of Public Safety, County complex HVAC upgrades, and various County parks improvements, among others. The all funds combined \$108 million budget figure accounts for revenues and obligations for trash districts, streetlight districts, grant funds received through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), among others.

The pay increase (two days' worth) will be reflected in the July 8 paycheck, with the full increase in the July 22 paycheck. Pension contributions and salary based voluntary life insurance deductions will also increase beginning with the July 8 paycheck.

(Posted 07/01/22)