



Office of the Washington State Auditor  
Pat McCarthy

# Financial Statements Audit Report

## Valley Regional Fire Authority

For the period January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023

*Published March 6, 2025*

Report No. 1036746



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**Office of the Washington State Auditor  
Pat McCarthy**

March 6, 2025

Board of Governance  
Valley Regional Fire Authority  
Auburn, Washington

**Report on Financial Statements**

Please find attached our report on Valley Regional Fire Authority's financial statements.

We are issuing this report in order to provide information on the District's financial activities and condition.

Sincerely,

Pat McCarthy, State Auditor  
Olympia, WA

***Americans with Disabilities***

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## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

### Report on Internal Control over Financial Reporting and on Compliance and Other Matters Based on an Audit of Financial Statements Performed in Accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*

#### **Valley Regional Fire Authority January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023**

Board of Governance  
Valley Regional Fire Authority  
Auburn, Washington

We have audited, in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, the financial statements of Valley Regional Fire Authority, as of and for the year ended December 31, 2023, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the District's financial statements, and have issued our report thereon dated February 27, 2025.

We issued an unmodified opinion on the fair presentation of the District's financial statements in accordance with its regulatory basis of accounting. We issued an adverse opinion on the fair presentation with regard to accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAP) because the financial statements are prepared by the District using accounting practices prescribed by state law and the State Auditor's *Budgeting, Accounting and Reporting System* (BARS) manual described in Note 1, which is a basis of accounting other than GAAP. The effects on the financial statements of the variances between the basis of accounting described in Note 1 and accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, although not reasonably determinable, are presumed to be material.

### **REPORT ON INTERNAL CONTROL OVER FINANCIAL REPORTING**

In planning and performing our audit of the financial statements, we considered the District's internal control over financial reporting (internal control) as a basis for designing audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances for the purpose of expressing our opinions on the financial statements, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the District's internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of the District's internal control.

A *deficiency in internal control* exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct, misstatements on a timely basis. A *material weakness* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the District's financial statements will not be prevented, or detected and corrected on a timely basis. A *significant deficiency* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control that is less severe than a material weakness, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance.

Our consideration of internal control was for the limited purpose described above and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies and therefore, material weaknesses or significant deficiencies may exist that were not identified.

Given these limitations, during our audit we did not identify any deficiencies in internal control that we consider to be material weaknesses.

## **REPORT ON COMPLIANCE AND OTHER MATTERS**

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the District's financial statements are free from material misstatement, we performed tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts and grant agreements, noncompliance with which could have a direct and material effect on the financial statements. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our audit, and accordingly, we do not express such an opinion.

The results of our tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*.

## **PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT**

The purpose of this report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the District's internal control or on compliance. This report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the District's internal control and compliance. Accordingly, this communication is not suitable for any other purpose. However,

this report is a matter of public record and its distribution is not limited. It also serves to disseminate information to the public as a reporting tool to help citizens assess government operations.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pat McCarthy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and "M".

Pat McCarthy, State Auditor

Olympia, WA

February 27, 2025

# INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

## Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

### Valley Regional Fire Authority January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023

Board of Governance  
Valley Regional Fire Authority  
Auburn, Washington

## REPORT ON THE AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

### Unmodified and Adverse Opinions

We have audited the financial statements of Valley Regional Fire Authority, as of and for the year ended December 31, 2023, and the related notes to the financial statements, as listed in the financial section of our report.

### Unmodified Opinion on the Regulatory Basis of Accounting (BARS Manual)

As described in Note 1, the District has prepared these financial statements to meet the financial reporting requirements of state law and accounting practices prescribed by the State Auditor's *Budgeting, Accounting and Reporting System* (BARS) Manual. Those accounting practices differ from accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAP). The differences in these accounting practices are also described in Note 1.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the cash and investments of Valley Regional Fire Authority, and its changes in cash and investments, for the year ended December 31, 2023, on the basis of accounting described in Note 1.

### Adverse Opinion on U.S. GAAP

The financial statements referred to above were not intended to, and in our opinion, they do not, present fairly, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, the financial position of Valley Regional Fire Authority, as of December 31, 2023, or the changes in financial position or cash flows thereof for the year then ended, because of the significance of the matter discussed below.

## **Basis for Unmodified and Adverse Opinions**

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS) and *Government Auditing Standards*. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of the District, and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit unmodified and adverse opinions.

## **Matter Giving Rise to Adverse Opinion on U.S. GAAP**

Auditing standards issued by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) require auditors to formally acknowledge when governments do not prepare their financial statements, intended for general use, in accordance with GAAP. As described in Note 1 of the financial statements, the financial statements are prepared by the District in accordance with state law using accounting practices prescribed by the BARS Manual, which is a basis of accounting other than accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. The effects on the financial statements of the variances between the regulatory basis of accounting and accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, although not reasonably determinable, are presumed to be material and pervasive.

## **Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements**

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with the financial reporting provisions of state law and the BARS Manual described in Note 1. This includes determining that the basis of accounting is acceptable for the presentation of the financial statements in the circumstances. Management is also responsible for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the District's ability to continue as a going concern for twelve months beyond the financial statement date, including any currently known information that may raise substantial doubt shortly thereafter.



## Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinions. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS and *Government Auditing Standards* will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

Performing an audit in accordance with GAAS and *Government Auditing Standards* includes the following responsibilities:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit;
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements;
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the District's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed;
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements;
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the District's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time; and
- We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.

## Supplementary Information

Our audit was conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the financial statements that collectively comprise the District's financial statements. The Schedule of Liabilities is presented for purposes of additional analysis, as required by the prescribed BARS manual. This schedule is not a required part of the financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other

records used to prepare the financial statements. The information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements or to the financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. In our opinion, the information is fairly stated, in all material respects, in relation to the financial statements as a whole.

## **OTHER REPORTING REQUIRED BY GOVERNMENT AUDITING STANDARDS**

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we have also issued our report dated February 27, 2025 on our consideration of the District's internal control over financial reporting and on the tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts and grant agreements and other matters. The purpose of that report is to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the District's internal control over financial reporting or on compliance. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the District's internal control over financial reporting and compliance.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pat McCarthy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Pat McCarthy, State Auditor

Olympia, WA

February 27, 2025

## **FINANCIAL SECTION**

### **Valley Regional Fire Authority January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023**

#### **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

Fund Resources and Uses Arising from Cash Transactions – 2023  
Notes to Financial Statements – 2023

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY AND OTHER INFORMATION**

Schedule of Liabilities – 2023

**Valley Regional Fire Authority**  
**Fund Resources and Uses Arising from Cash Transactions**  
**For the Year Ended December 31, 2023**

		<b>Total for All Funds (Memo Only)</b>	<b>001 Current Expense</b>	<b>201 Debt Service</b>	<b>301 Capital Projects</b>
<b>Beginning Cash and Investments</b>					
308	Beginning Cash and Investments	21,354,900	20,876,910	150,599	327,391
388 / 588	Net Adjustments	-	-	-	-
<b>Revenues</b>					
310	Taxes	16,931,789	15,397,521	1,534,268	-
320	Licenses and Permits	169,257	169,257	-	-
330	Intergovernmental Revenues	4,365,164	4,365,164	-	-
340	Charges for Goods and Services	15,194,601	15,194,601	-	-
350	Fines and Penalties	-	-	-	-
360	Miscellaneous Revenues	1,003,093	959,742	33,691	9,660
Total Revenues:		<u>37,663,904</u>	<u>36,086,285</u>	<u>1,567,959</u>	<u>9,660</u>
<b>Expenditures</b>					
510	General Government	-	-	-	-
520	Public Safety	31,947,599	31,947,599	-	-
530	Utilities	-	-	-	-
540	Transportation	-	-	-	-
550	Natural/Economic Environment	-	-	-	-
560	Social Services	-	-	-	-
570	Culture and Recreation	-	-	-	-
Total Expenditures:		<u>31,947,599</u>	<u>31,947,599</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Excess (Deficiency) Revenues over Expenditures:		<u>5,716,305</u>	<u>4,138,686</u>	<u>1,567,959</u>	<u>9,660</u>
<b>Other Increases in Fund Resources</b>					
391-393, 596	Debt Proceeds	-	-	-	-
397	Transfers-In	-	-	-	-
385	Special or Extraordinary Items	-	-	-	-
381, 382, 389, 395, 398	Other Resources	235,335	235,335	-	-
Total Other Increases in Fund Resources:		<u>235,335</u>	<u>235,335</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Other Decreases in Fund Resources</b>					
594-595	Capital Expenditures	1,649,627	1,367,385	-	282,242
591-593, 599	Debt Service	1,694,079	148,479	1,545,600	-
597	Transfers-Out	-	-	-	-
585	Special or Extraordinary Items	-	-	-	-
581, 582, 589	Other Uses	-	-	-	-
Total Other Decreases in Fund Resources:		<u>3,343,706</u>	<u>1,515,864</u>	<u>1,545,600</u>	<u>282,242</u>
<b>Increase (Decrease) in Cash and Investments:</b>		<b><u>2,607,934</u></b>	<b><u>2,858,157</u></b>	<b><u>22,359</u></b>	<b><u>(272,582)</u></b>
<b>Ending Cash and Investments</b>					
50821	Nonspendable	-	-	-	-
50831	Restricted	172,958	-	172,958	-
50841	Committed	-	-	-	-
50851	Assigned	5,076,727	5,021,918	-	54,809
50891	Unassigned	18,713,149	18,713,149	-	-
<b>Total Ending Cash and Investments</b>		<b><u>23,962,834</u></b>	<b><u>23,735,067</u></b>	<b><u>172,958</u></b>	<b><u>54,809</u></b>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this statement.

**NOTE 1 – Summary of Significant Accounting Policies**

The Valley Regional Fire Authority (VRFA) was incorporated on January 1, 2007, and operates under the laws of the State of Washington applicable to a Regional Fire Authority. The Authority is a special purpose local government and provides first responder fire and emergency medical services to the residents of the cities of Algona, Auburn, and Pacific.

The Authority reports financial activity in accordance with the *Cash Basis Budgeting, Accounting and Reporting System (BARS)* Manual prescribed by the Washington State Auditor’s Office under the authority of Washington State Law, Chapter 43.09 RCW. This manual prescribes a financial reporting framework that differs from generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) in the following manner:

- Financial transactions are recognized on a cash basis of accounting as described below.
- Component units are required to be disclosed, but are not included in the financial statements.
- Government-wide statements, as defined in GAAP, are not presented.
- All funds are presented, rather than a focus on major funds.
- The *Schedule of Liabilities* is required to be presented with the financial statements as supplementary information.
- Supplementary information required by GAAP is not presented.
- Ending balances are not presented using the classifications defined in GAAP.

**A. Fund Accounting**

Financial transactions of the government are reported in individual funds. Each fund uses a separate set of self-balancing accounts that comprises its cash and investments, revenues, and expenditures. The Authority’s resources are allocated to and accounted for in individual funds depending on their intended purpose. Each fund is reported as a separate column in the financial statements. The total column is presented as “memo only” because any interfund activities are not eliminated. The following fund types are used:

GOVERNMENTAL FUND TYPES:

General (Current Expense) Fund (001)

This fund is the primary operating fund of the VRFA. It accounts for all financial resources except those required or elected to be accounted for in another fund.

Debt Service Fund (201)

This fund accounts for the financial resources that are restricted, committed, or assigned to expenditures for principal, interest, and related costs on general long-term debt.

Capital Project Fund (301)

This fund accounts for financial resources which are restricted, committed, or assigned for the acquisition, upgrade or construction of capital facilities and other capital assets.

**B. Basis of Accounting and Measurement Focus**

Financial statements are prepared using the cash basis of accounting and measurement focus. Revenues are recognized when cash is received, and expenditures are recognized when paid.

**C. Cash and Investments**

See Note 3, Deposits and Investments.

**D. Capital Assets**

Capital assets are assets with an initial individual cost of more than \$5,000, are not an inventory or consumable item, and have an estimated useful life in excess of one year. Capital assets of the VRFA are recorded as capital expenditures when purchased.

**E. Compensated Absences**

VRFA employees accrue vacation leave at a variable rate based on years of service. In general, employees are allowed to accumulate vacation leave up to what would be earned in two years of employment.

Sick leave may accumulate up to 960 hours for day-shift employees and 1,300 hours for twenty-four-hour shift employees. Sick leave accumulations over these hours are paid annually at a rate of 25% of the hours over 960 and 1,300 hours respectively. Upon separation or retirement, some VRFA employees are eligible to receive a sick leave payout based on hire date, length of service and union affiliation. Payments are recognized as expenditures when paid.

The accrued value of vacation and sick leave balances on December 31, 2023, is \$2,008,385.

**F. Long-Term Debt**

See Note 5, Debt Service Requirements

**G. Restricted Portion of Ending Cash and Investments**

Beginning and Ending Cash and Investments are reported as restricted when it is subject to restrictions on use imposed by external parties or due to internal commitments established by the VRFA Board of Governance. When expenditures that meet restrictions are incurred, the Authority intends to use the most restricted resources first.

Restrictions of Ending Cash and Investments consist of revenue received from a voter-approved excess levy, and are used for debt service on bonds issued as a result of this levy passage. See Note 5, Debt Service Requirements. The total of Restricted Ending Cash and Investments on December 31, 2023, is \$172,958.

**NOTE 2 – Budget Compliance**

The Authority adopts annual appropriated budgets for each of its three funds. These budgets are appropriated at the fund level. The budget constitutes the legal authority for expenditures at that level. Annual appropriations for these funds lapse at the fiscal year end.

Annual appropriated budgets are adopted on the same basis of accounting as used for financial reporting.

The appropriated and actual expenditures for the legally adopted budgets were as follows:

<b>Fund</b>	<b>Final Appropriated Amount</b>	<b>Actual Expenditures</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Current Expense	\$ 36,041,107	\$ 33,463,463	\$(2,577,644)
Debt Service	1,545,600	1,545,600	-
Capital Projects	330,000	282,242	(47,758)

Budgeted amounts are authorized to be transferred between departments within any fund or object classes within departments. However, any revisions that alter the total expenditures of a fund, or that change the number of authorized employee positions or certain terms and conditions of employment must be approved by the Authority's legislative body.

**NOTE 3 – Deposits and Investments**

Investments are reported at fair market value. Deposits and Investments by fund on December 31, 2023, are as follows:

<u>Type of Deposit or Investment</u>	<u>Total</u>
Bank Deposits – General Fund	\$ 954,598
LGIP – General Fund	22,780,219
LGIP – Debt Service Fund	172,953
LGIP – Capital Projects Fund	<u>54,809</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>\$23,962,579</u></b>

It is the Authority's policy to invest temporary cash surpluses with the State of Washington Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP). The interest earned on LGIP investments is prorated to the various funds.

Investments in the State Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP)

The Authority is a voluntary participant in the LGIP, an external investment pool operated by the Washington State Treasurer. The pool is not rated and not registered with the SEC. Rather, oversight is provided by the State Finance Committee in accordance with Chapter 43.250 RCW. Investments in the LGIP are reported at amortized cost, which is the same as the value of the pool per share. The LGIP does not impose any restrictions on participant withdrawals. The Office of the State Treasurer prepares a stand-alone financial report for the pool. A copy of the report is available from the Office of the State Treasurer, PO Box 40200, Olympia, Washington 98504-0200, or online at [www.tre.wa.gov](http://www.tre.wa.gov).

Custodial Credit Risk

Custodial credit risk for deposits is the risk that, in event of a failure of a depository financial institution, the Authority would not be able to recover deposits or would not be able to recover collateral securities that are in possession of an outside party. The VRFA's bank deposits are held in its accounts with Heritage Bank. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) insures the VRFA's deposits up to \$250,000 per account. The Washington Public Deposit Protection Commission (WPDPC) covers amounts over the FDIC limit through collateral held in a multiple financial institution collateral pool. All deposits and investments are held by the VRFA in its own name.

**NOTE 4 – Property Taxes and Fire Benefit Service Charge**

The King and Pierce County Treasurers act as agents to collect property tax levies and fire benefit service charges (FBSC) for all taxing authorities including the VRFA. Both counties distribute collections on the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month for the prior month’s receipts.

Property tax and FBSC revenues are recognized when received by the VRFA. Delinquent taxes and FBSC are considered to be fully collectible because a lien affixes to the property after taxes are levied.

The VRFA’s assessed valuation for its regular property tax levy and excess property tax levy for its 2015 Refunding Bonds (see note 5) is:

<b>Levy Certification Date</b>	<b>Tax Collection Year</b>	<b>Assessed Valuation</b>
12/20/2022	2023	\$19,704,923,995
02/10/2022	2022	16,305,169,916

The VRFA’s levy rates are:

<b>Tax Collection Year</b>	<b>Levy Rate (Dollars per \$1,000 of Assessed Value)</b>		
	<b>Regular</b>	<b>Excess (see note 5)</b>	<b>Total</b>
2023	\$0.78607	\$0.07905	\$0.86512
2022	0.93724	0.09598	1.03322

The property tax amounts levied and collected are:

<b>Tax Collection Year</b>	<b>Regular Tax Levy</b>	<b>Excess Tax Levy (see note 6)</b>	<b>Total Tax Levy</b>	<b>Amount Collected</b>	<b>Percent Collected</b>
2023	15,489,450	1,555,000	17,044,450	16,931,789	99.34%
2022	15,281,857	1,550,000	16,831,857	16,999,758	101.00%

The FBSC applied and collected is:

<b>FBSC Collection Year</b>	<b>Amount Charged</b>	<b>Amount Collected</b>	<b>Percent Collected</b>
2023	\$13,750,000	\$13,742,980	99.95%
2022	11,500,000	11,458,463	99.64%

**NOTE 5 – Long-Term Liabilities**

The debt service requirements for general obligations are as follows:



Year	Principal	Interest	Total
2024	1,325,000	224,800	1,549,800
2025	1,375,000	171,800	1,546,800
2026	1,430,000	116,800	1,546,800
2027	1,490,000	59,600	1,549,600
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$ 5,620,000</b>	<b>573,000</b>	<b>\$ 6,193,000</b>

During the year ended December 31, 2023, the following changes occurred in compensated absences:

	Beginning Balance 1/1/2023	Additions	Reductions	Ending Balance 12/31/2023
Compensated Absences	1,852,639	155,746	-	2,008,385

The accompanying Schedule of Long-Term Liabilities (09) provides more details of the outstanding debt and liabilities of the VRFA and summarizes the VRFA's debt transactions for the year ended December 31, 2023.

**NOTE 6 – Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB)**

**Retiree Medical Benefit**

On December 13, 2016, the VRFA Board of Governance adopted Resolution Number 134, which amended VRFA Board of Governance Resolution Number 86, and provides for a fixed monthly amount of \$550 to be paid to non-LEOFF 1 retirees for purposes of post-retirement medical expenditures. The plan may be changed or discontinued by a resolution of the Board. Participation is limited to five retirees per year and the receipt of benefits ends upon the earlier of twelve years, eligibility for Medicare or death of the retiree.

This defined benefit OPEB plan is administered by VRFA on a pay-as-you-go basis. During the actuarial valuation period, the plan had 120 active members and 16 retired members. As of December 31, 2023, the actuarial OPEB liability of the plan was \$1,555,362. VRFA paid \$154,550 in benefits for the year ended December 31, 2023.

**LEOFF 1 Retiree Medical Benefit**

In addition to pension benefits described in Note 7, the City of Auburn provides post-retirement benefits, in accordance with state statutes, to all LEOFF 1 retirees of the VRFA. The City provides long-term care, medical insurance, and reimburses all validated claims for medical, dental and hospitalization costs incurred by retirees. VRFA has no liability for LEOFF 1 retirees.

**NOTE 7 – Pension Plans**

**State Sponsored Pension Plans**

All VRFA full-time and qualifying part-time employees participate in the LEOFF 2, PERS 2 and PERS 3 plans following statewide retirement systems administered by the Washington State Department of Retirement Systems, under cost-sharing, multiple-employer public employee defined benefit and defined contribution retirement plans.

The State Legislature establishes, and amends, laws pertaining to the creation and administration of all public retirement systems.

The Department of Retirement Systems (DRS), a department within the primary government of the State of Washington, issues a publicly available Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) that includes financial statements and required supplementary information for each plan.

The DRS ACFR may be downloaded from the DRS website at [www.drs.wa.gov](http://www.drs.wa.gov).

On June 30, 2023 (the measurement date of the plans), the Authority's proportionate share of the collective net pension liabilities as reported on the Schedule 09, was as follows:

	Allocation %	Liability (Asset)
PERS 1	0.011595%	\$ 264,683
PERS 2/3	0.014941%	(612,384)
LEOFF 1	0.017617%	(522,877)
LEOFF 2	0.381987%	(9,162,333)

**Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Retirement System (LEOFF) Plan 1**

Upon formation of the VRFA, the City of Auburn retained liability for LEOFF 1 pension and other post-employment benefits for all members of the former Auburn Fire Department as of December 31, 2006, who continued employment with the VRFA. As of December 31, 2023, VRFA employed no employees that were participants in the LEOFF 1 pension system. Contributions and liabilities for retired employees that were LEOFF 1 plan members are obligations of the City of Auburn. There were no LEOFF 1 members from the former Pacific Fire Department that were employed by the VRFA. The LEOFF 1 plan is fully funded, and no further employer contributions have been required since June 2000. If the plan becomes underfunded, funding of the remaining liability will require new legislation. Starting on July 1, 2000, employers and employees contribute zero percent.

**Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Retirement System (LEOFF) Plan 2**

The Authority also participates in the LEOFF Plan 2. The Legislature, by means of a special funding arrangement, appropriates money from the state general fund to supplement the current service liability and fund the prior service costs of Plan 2 in accordance with the recommendations of the Pension Funding Council and the LEOFF Plan 2 Retirement Board. This special funding situation is not mandated by the state constitution and could be changed by statute.

**Section 401(a) Defined Contribution Pension Plan**

PERS employees of VRFA participate in a 401(a) defined contribution plan in lieu of participating in Social Security. This plan is administered by Mission Square Retirement. The VRFA makes contributions to this plan at the same rate and level as set by Social Security each year. In 2023, the contribution rate was 6.2% with a maximum contribution per employee of \$9,932, and VRFA contributions totaled \$110,643.

### **Section 457(b) Deferred Compensation Plan**

Eligible VRFA employees may participate in a 457(b) deferred compensation plan. The VRFA makes contributions to this plan at rates dependent on the provisions of either an employee's collective bargaining agreement or policy for employees that are not in a bargaining unit. Employees have a choice of multiple plan providers including the State of Washington and Empower Retirement. In 2023, VRFA made contributions totaling \$900,584 to this plan.

### **NOTE 8 – Risk Management**

#### **Employment Security**

In accordance with Title 50 RCW, the VRFA is self-insured for purposes of Unemployment Compensation. During 2023, there were no claims for unemployment compensation.

#### **Workers Compensation**

Title 51 RCW requires the VRFA to ensure payment of benefits for job-related injuries and diseases through the Workers' Compensation fund or through self-insurance. The VRFA participates in the State of Washington's Workers' Compensation program. Premiums are based on individual employer's reported payroll hours and insurance rates based on each employer's risk classification and past experience. The premium is paid by employer and employee contributions.

#### **General Liability**

The VRFA is a member of the Washington Cities Insurance Authority (WCIA). Utilizing Chapter 48.62 RCW (self-insurance regulation) and Chapter 39.34 RCW (Interlocal Cooperation Act), nine cities originally formed WCIA on January 1, 1981. WCIA was created for the purpose of providing a pooling mechanism for jointly purchasing insurance, jointly self-insuring, and / or jointly contracting for risk management services. WCIA has a total of 169 members.

New members initially contract for a three-year term, and thereafter automatically renew on an annual basis. A one-year withdrawal notice is required before membership can be terminated. Termination does not relieve a former member from its unresolved loss history incurred during membership.

Liability coverage is written on an occurrence basis, without deductibles. Coverage includes general, automobile, public officials' errors or omissions, stop gap, and employee benefits liability. Limits are \$4 million per occurrence in the self-insured layer, and \$16 million in limits above the self-insured layer is provided by reinsurance. Total limits are \$20 million per occurrence subject to aggregate and sublimits. The Board of Directors determines the limits and terms of coverage annually.

All members are provided a separate cyber risk policy and premises pollution liability coverage group purchased by WCIA. The cyber risk policy provides coverage and separate limits for security and privacy, event management, and cyber extortion, with limits up to \$1 million and subject to member deductibles, sublimits, and a \$5 million pool aggregate. Premises pollution liability provides members with a \$2 million incident limit and \$10 million pool aggregate subject to a \$100,000 per incident Member deductible.

Insurance for property, automobile physical damage, fidelity, inland marine, and equipment breakdown are purchased on a group basis. Various deductibles apply by type of coverage. Property coverage is self-funded from the members' deductible to \$750,000, for all perils other than flood and earthquake, and insured above that to \$400 million per occurrence subject to aggregates and sublimits. Automobile physical damage coverage is self-funded from the members' deductible to \$250,000 and insured above that to \$100 million per occurrence subject to aggregates and sublimits.

In-house services include risk management consultation, loss control field services, and claims and litigation administration. WCIA contracts for certain claims investigations, consultants for personnel issues and land use issues, insurance brokerage, actuarial, and lobbyist services.

WCIA is fully funded by its members, who make annual assessments on a prospectively rated basis, as determined by an outside, independent actuary. The assessment covers loss, loss adjustment, reinsurance and administrative expenses. As outlined in the interlocal, WCIA retains the right to additionally assess the membership for any funding shortfall.

An investment committee, using investment brokers, produces additional revenue by investment of WCIA's assets in financial instruments which comply with all State guidelines.

A Board of Directors governs WCIA, which is comprised of one designated representative from each member. The Board elects an Executive Committee and appoints a Treasurer to provide general policy direction for the organization. The WCIA Executive Director reports to the Executive Committee and is responsible for conducting the day-to-day operations of WCIA.

### **NOTE 9 – Health and Welfare**

The VRFA is a member of the Association of Washington Cities Employee Benefit Trust Health Care Program (AWC Trust HCP). Chapter 48.62 RCW provides that two or more local government entities may, by Interlocal agreement under Chapter 39.34 RCW, form together or join a pool or organization for the joint purchasing of insurance and/or joint self-insurance, to the same extent that they may individually purchase insurance, or self-insure.

An agreement to form a pooling arrangement was made pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 39.34 RCW, the Interlocal Cooperation Act. The AWC Trust HCP was formed on January 1, 2014, when participating cities, towns, and non-city entities of the AWC Employee Benefit Trust in the State of Washington joined together by signing an Interlocal Governmental Agreement to jointly self-insure certain health benefit plans and programs for participating employees, their covered dependents and other beneficiaries through a designated account within the Trust.

As of December 31, 2023, 264 cities/towns/non-city entities participate in the AWC Trust HCP.

The AWC Trust HCP allows members to establish a program of joint insurance and provides health and welfare services to all participating members.

In April 2020, the Board of Trustees adopted a large employer policy, requiring newly enrolling groups with 600 or more employees to submit medical claims experience data in order to receive a quote for medical coverage. Outside of this, the AWC Trust HCP pools claims without regard to individual member experience. The pool is actuarially rated each year with the assumption of projected claims run-out for all current members.

The AWC Trust HCP includes medical insurance through the following carriers: Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Washington, Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Washington Options, Inc., Regence BlueShield, Asuris Northwest Health, Delta Dental of Washington, Willamette Dental Group, and Vision Service Plan. Eligible members are cities and towns within the State of Washington. Non-City Entities (public agency, public corporation, intergovernmental agency, or political subdivision within the State of Washington) are eligible to apply for coverage into the AWC Trust HCP, submitting an application to the Board of Trustees for review as required in the Trust Agreement.

Participating employers pay monthly premiums to the AWC Trust HCP. The AWC Trust HCP is responsible for payment of all covered claims. In 2023, the AWC Trust HCP purchased stop loss insurance for Regence/Asuris and Kaiser plans at an Individual Stop Loss (ISL) of \$2.0 million

through United States Fire Insurance Company. The aggregate policy is for 200% of expected medical claims.

Participating employers contract to remain in the AWC HCP for a minimum of three years. Participating employers with over 250 employees must provide written notice of termination of all coverage a minimum of 12 months in advance of the termination date, and participating employers with fewer than 250 employees must provide written notice of termination of all coverage a minimum of 6 months in advance of termination date. When all coverage is being terminated, termination will only occur on December 31. Participating employers terminating a group or line of coverage must notify the HCP a minimum of 60 days prior to termination. A participating employer's termination will not obligate that member to past debts, or further contributions to the HCP. Similarly, the terminating member forfeits all rights and interest to the HCP Account.

The operations of the Health Care Program are managed by the Board of Trustees or its delegates. The Board of Trustees is comprised of four regionally elected officials from Trust member cities or towns, the Employee Benefit Advisory Committee Chair and Vice Chair, and two appointed individuals from the AWC Board of Directors, who are from Trust member cities or towns. The Trustees or its appointed delegates review and analyze Health care program related matters and make operational decisions regarding premium contributions, reserves, plan options and benefits in compliance with Chapter 48.62 RCW. The Board of Trustees has decision authority consistent with the Trust Agreement, Health Care Program policies, Chapter 48.62 RCW and Chapter 200-110-WAC.

The accounting records of the Trust HCP are maintained in accordance with methods prescribed by the State Auditor's Office under the authority of Chapter 43.09 RCW. The Trust HCP also follows applicable accounting standards established by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB). In 2018, the retiree medical plan subsidy was eliminated, and is noted as such in the report for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2018. Year-end financial reporting is done on an accrual basis and submitted to the Office of the State Auditor as required by Chapter 200-110 WAC. The audit report for the AWC Trust HCP is available from the Washington State Auditor's Office.

#### **NOTE 10 – Related Party Transactions**

In 2023, the VRFA contracted with the City of Auburn for certain geographic information service (GIS) support. Amounts paid to the City of Auburn for this service totaled \$7,500 in 2023.

As outlined in Note 7, the City of Auburn is responsible for the liability for retired and active LEOFF 1 personnel of its former fire department to include medical and long-term care insurance payments and any other expenses incurred in accordance with the City of Auburn LEOFF 1 Policies and Procedures.

#### **NOTE 11 – Subscription Based Information Technology Agreements**

During the year ended December 31, 2023, the Authority adopted guidance for the presentation and disclosure of Subscription Based Information Technology Agreements (SBITA), as required by the Washington State Auditor's Office BARS manual. This resulted in the addition of a subscription liability that has been reported on the Schedule of Liabilities.

The Authority utilizes approximately eleven contracts that are classified as SBITAs, for software services such as records management, network and data security, enterprise resource planning, and office productivity. In 2023, payments made for these software services totaled \$148,479.

Because of rapidly changing technology and software functionality, it is not anticipated that any existing agreement will extend beyond five years. The estimated annual liability for future SBITA obligations is:

<b>For the Year ending December 31</b>	<b>Total</b>
2024	\$207,835
2025	209,317
2026	210,930
2027	162,210
2028	164,116
<b>Total</b>	<u><u>\$954,408</u></u>

**NOTE 12 – Other**

On November 7, 2023, voters of the VRFA service area approved Proposition 1, which authorizes the issuance of up to \$96.5 million of Unlimited Tax General Obligation (UTGO) bonds to be utilized for land acquisition and construction of new facilities. On December 17, 2024, bonds with a principal value of \$50,445,000 were issued, and the special tax levy to fund the debit service will begin in 2025. A second bond issue, for the remaining authorization, is expected to occur in late 2026.

**NOTE 13 – Subsequent Events**

In 2024, a lawsuit was filed in Pierce County Superior Court, against VRFA for damages alleged to have occurred during a VRFA response. While the VRFA denies responsibility for the allegations contained in the lawsuit, the potential liability associated with this claim cannot be estimated. VRFA maintains liability insurance coverage in excess of the total damages that were alleged to have occurred as stated on the plaintiff's original claim for damages.

**Valley Regional Fire Authority  
Schedule of Liabilities  
For the Year Ended December 31, 2023**

ID. No.	Description	Due Date	Beginning Balance	Additions	Reductions	Ending Balance
<b>General Obligation Debt/Liabilities</b>						
251.12	2015 Refunding Bonds	12/1/2027	6,890,000	-	1,270,000	5,620,000
	<b>Total General Obligation Debt/Liabilities:</b>		<b>6,890,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,270,000</b>	<b>5,620,000</b>
<b>Revenue and Other (non G.O.) Debt/Liabilities</b>						
259.12	Compensated Abscences		1,852,639	155,746	-	2,008,385
264.30	Pension Liability		289,184	-	24,501	264,683
264.40	Other Post Employment Benefits		1,599,661	-	44,299	1,555,362
263.57	Subscription Based IT Arrangements		1,102,887	-	148,479	954,408
	<b>Total Revenue and Other (non G.O.) Debt/Liabilities:</b>		<b>4,844,371</b>	<b>155,746</b>	<b>217,279</b>	<b>4,782,838</b>
	<b>Total Liabilities:</b>		<b>11,734,371</b>	<b>155,746</b>	<b>1,487,279</b>	<b>10,402,838</b>

## ABOUT THE STATE AUDITOR'S OFFICE

The State Auditor's Office is established in the Washington State Constitution and is part of the executive branch of state government. The State Auditor is elected by the people of Washington and serves four-year terms.

We work with state agencies, local governments and the public to achieve our vision of increasing trust in government by helping governments work better and deliver higher value.

In fulfilling our mission to provide citizens with independent and transparent examinations of how state and local governments use public funds, we hold ourselves to those same standards by continually improving our audit quality and operational efficiency, and by developing highly engaged and committed employees.

As an agency, the State Auditor's Office has the independence necessary to objectively perform audits, attestation engagements and investigations. Our work is designed to comply with professional standards as well as to satisfy the requirements of federal, state and local laws. The Office also has an extensive quality control program and undergoes regular external peer review to ensure our work meets the highest possible standards of accuracy, objectivity and clarity.

Our audits look at financial information and compliance with federal, state and local laws for all local governments, including schools, and all state agencies, including institutions of higher education. In addition, we conduct performance audits and cybersecurity audits of state agencies and local governments, as well as state whistleblower, fraud and citizen hotline investigations.

The results of our work are available to everyone through the more than 2,000 reports we publish each year on our website, [www.sao.wa.gov](http://www.sao.wa.gov). Additionally, we share regular news and other information via an email subscription service and social media channels.

We take our role as partners in accountability seriously. The Office provides training and technical assistance to governments both directly and through partnerships with other governmental support organizations.

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