

**Government Money Purchase Pension Plan
Committee**

2017 Activity Report

**Government Money Purchase Pension Plan
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, NL
A1B 4J6**

Honourable Tom Osborne
Minister of Finance
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
Confederation Building
St. John's, NL A1B 4J6

Dear Minister Osborne:

As the Chair of the Committee responsible for the Government Money Purchase Pension Plan (GMPP), I hereby submit the 2017 Activity Report for the Committee. In accordance with the Transparency and Accountability Act, the GMPP is a category 3 government entity and is required to prepare an annual activity report to present information on its activities of the preceding year. The report was prepared under the committee's direction and the committee is accountable for the results contained herein.

The GMPP Committee's mandate is to administer the GMPP, including the setting of investment policy, the recommendation for appointment of an administrator/custodian and the monitoring of plan performance. The GMPP is a capital accumulation plan, that is, the level of benefits provided at retirement are dependent on the contributions and the income earned on those contributions during an employee's career. It is critical that participating employees become actively engaged in the management of their respective plan assets in order to ensure security in retirement and is the key strategic issue for the GMPP Committee. Plan members have been reluctant to make any investment choice, and instead are allowing their funds to be directed to the low risk, low return default investment. Employees should be aware of both the potential risks and rewards of making an active decision and the possible impact of their return goals. As such, efforts are continuously ongoing to educate plan members on the importance of taking an active interest in their investments.

This annual report outlines the activities of the GMPP Committee and the growth in assets and membership during 2017. It represents the first report on activities identified in the Committee's 2017-2019 Activity Plan.

I am pleased to submit the 2017 Annual Activity Report for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Michelle Jewer
Chair of the GMPP Committee

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1.0 OVERVIEW

The GMPP provides pension coverage for part time employees of government and its agencies and employees of government funded organizations that are ineligible to participate in any of the other government sponsored pension plans. The GMPP Committee was established by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council to oversee the operations of the Government Money Purchase Pension Plan. Employer representatives are appointed by virtue of their positions in government, while employee representatives are appointed based on the recommendation of the various unions. Committee members are responsible to ensure that contributions accumulated to the credit of the employee are invested prudently in the investment classes prescribed by the Committee and to promote the plan and educate employees on the importance of taking an active interest in their investments.

Government Money Purchase Pension Plan Committee Members

(As of December 31, 2017)

Government and Employer Representatives:

Michelle Jewer	Assistant Deputy Minister, Financial Planning and Benefits Administration, Department of Finance
Janice Butt	Director, Pensions and Debt Management, Department of Finance
Vacant	Manager, Pension Benefits, Department of Finance
Vacant	Executive Director, Newfoundland and Labrador School Board Association
Lisa Phelan	Eastern Health Authority
James Doody	Director, Human Resource Secretariat

Employee Representatives:

Bert Blundon	Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees
Ian Crewe	Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association
Pamela Toope	Association of Allied Health Professionals
Dawn Learning	National Representative, Canadian Union of Public Employees
Debbie Forward	Registered Nurses' Union Newfoundland and Labrador

The retirement security of a GMPP member depends on the member's investment decision, which in turn depends on the member's investment profile and risk tolerance. Consequently, it is critical that members take an active interest in their portfolio. To facilitate prudent investment decisions by members, the Committee has established and implemented a Statement of Investment Policies and Procedures which specifies the investment options to be provided to members. These options include Guaranteed Investment Accounts (GIAs) and market based funds, including an equity fund, a bond fund, a global equity fund, a balanced fund and target date funds.

To assist in fulfilling its mandate to educate plan members, the Committee has retained the services of Great West Life Assurance Company (GWL) who fulfills the roles of both the custodian and administrator of the GMPP. The Committee also retains an investment consultant, Russell Investments, to assist in the design, implementation, and ongoing evaluation of all aspects of the pension investment program.

Phillips, Hager & North Investment Management Limited (PH&N) has been retained to manage all market based investment products and Morneau Shepell, on an as needed basis, provides advice on various pension issues relating to compliance with pension legislation and the *Income Tax Act*.

2.0 MANDATE

Pursuant to section 12.1 of the *Government Money Purchase Pension Plan Act*, the GMPP Committee is established by the Lieutenant Governor in Council and mandated to administer the GMPP. The mandate is delivered by completing the following activities:

- Development, implementation and review of investment alternatives to provide plan members with the ability to make an active investment decision with respect to their accumulated funds
- Promotion of the plan and education of plan members on the importance of taking an active interest in their investments
- Oversight of investment options to ensure that contributions accumulated to the credit of plan members are invested prudently in the investment classes prescribed by the Committee
- Oversight of the services provided by the Record Keeper and the performance of the Investment Manager

3.0 HIGHLIGHTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Administration Costs - December 31, 2017

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>
Investment Management Costs (PH&N)	\$ 388,273	\$ 336,133
Russell Investments	16,100	15,960
Annual Pension Plan Registration	12,500	12,500*
Support Staff	0**	0**
Total Administration Costs	<u>\$ 416,873</u>	<u>\$ 364,593</u>

* Amount restated. Incorrectly reported as \$7,500 in 2016 report.

**There were no support costs incurred in 2017 as the position was vacant.

Since the inception of the GMPP in 1989, actuarial consulting and support staff costs have been paid from employer contributions that are forfeited when members who are not vested terminate from the plan and take a refund of their contributions. The balance in the forfeitures account was \$3,044,897 as of December 31, 2017 as compared with \$2,582,291 as of December 31, 2016 (*note: December 31, 2016 balance incorrectly reported as \$2, 585,386 in 2016 report*).

Investment management fees for Philips Hager & North, which are based on a percentage of the total plan assets which they manage, are paid by the plan member from their investment earnings. Great West Life administration costs are funded entirely from plan member contributions.

Membership Status

Plan membership has increased from 33,953 accounts in 2016 to 34,432 accounts in 2017. The number of accounts includes both active participants and terminated employees who have left their funds on deposit with GWL. Of the total number of accounts, 13,019 are members who contributed during 2017. Efforts are continuously on-going to contact many of the account holders to advise them of their transfer options should they wish to move their funds from the plan. The following table details the change in membership from 2016 to 2017.

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>
Membership, January 1	<u>33,953</u>	<u>33,940</u>
Additions		
Enrolments during the year	<u>2,599</u>	<u>2,518</u>
Less: Exits		
Terminations	1,924	2,326
Death Benefits	30	43
Retirements	<u>166</u>	<u>136</u>
	<u>2,120</u>	<u>2,505</u>
Membership, December 31	<u>34,432</u>	<u>33,953</u>

4.0 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

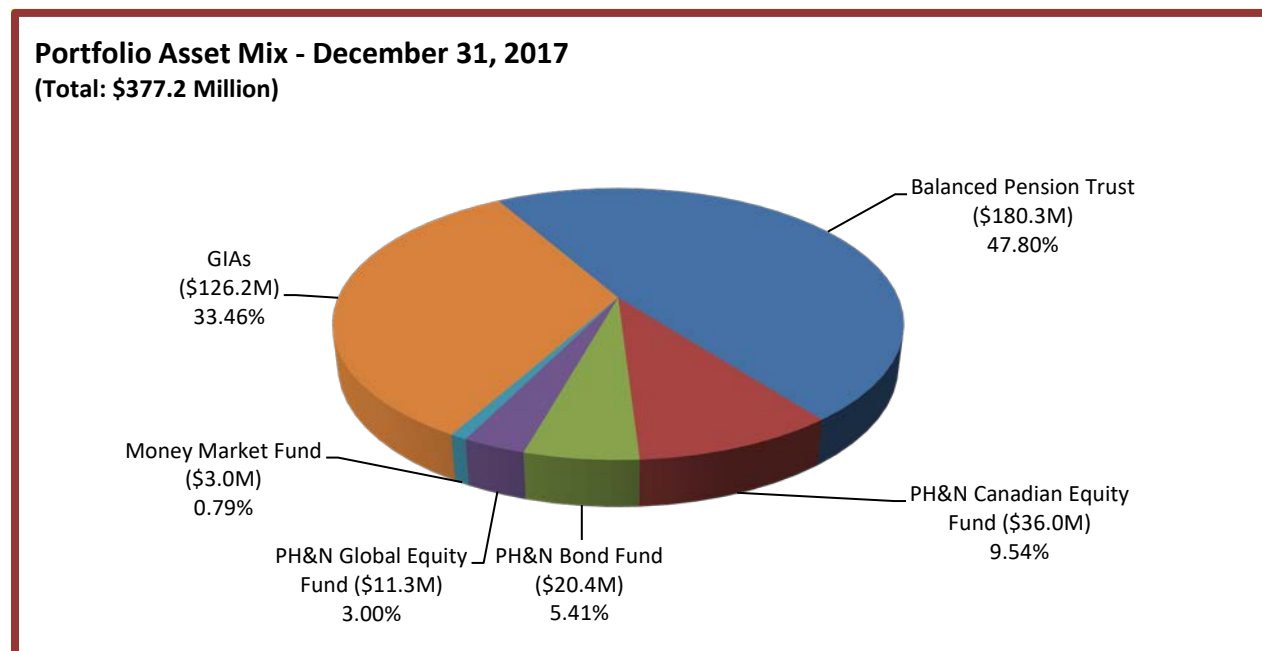
Market Value

Employee contributions for the year totalled \$16.49 million of which \$383,117 were Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVC's) and \$1,465,734 were transfers from other pension plans. Plan members may deposit AVC's to the plan, subject to RRSP limitations under the *Income Tax Act*. These AVC's are not matched by the employer. Employer contributions for the year totalled \$14.66 million and investment income was \$21.3 million. The Statement of Changes in Assets for the Year Ended December 31, 2017 is shown below:

Statement of Changes in Assets for the Year Ended December 31 (Market Value)		
	<u>2017</u> (\$Millions)	<u>2016</u> (\$Millions)
Opening Balance, January 1	<u>\$356.5</u>	<u>\$339.2</u>
Contributions to the Plan	31.1	31.0
Investment Income	<u>21.3</u>	<u>20.3</u>
Total Additions	<u>52.4</u>	<u>51.3</u>
Refunds to Terminating Plan Members	31.7	34.0
Administration Costs	<u>0.0</u>	<u>0.0</u>
Total Deductions	<u>31.7</u>	<u>34.0</u>
Net change in assets	<u>20.7</u>	<u>17.3</u>
Market Value, December 31	<u>\$ 377.2</u>	<u>\$ 356.5</u>

Portfolio Asset Mix

Based on the asset decisions of plan members and the direction of the employer's share to the balanced fund, the asset mix of the portfolio as of December 31, 2017 is illustrated in the following chart:



Investment Performance as of December 31, 2017

The following table details the performance of the GMPP market based funds to December 31, 2017:

Government Money Purchase Pension Plan (GMPP) Summary of Investment Returns as at December 31, 2017 with Benchmark comparisons				
Investment Options	Three Months %	One Year %	Four Years Annualized % P.A	Ten Years Annualized % P.A
Balanced Pension Trust	4.20	10.34	9.25	6.52
Benchmark	3.90	8.48	7.66	5.57
Canadian Equity Fund	3.81	6.45	8.33	5.19
S&P/TSX Composite Index	4.45	9.10	7.57	4.65
Bond Fund	2.02	2.63	4.51	5.15
FTSE TMX Canada Universe Bond Index	2.02	2.52	4.09	4.67
Global Equity Fund	8.51	26.76	17.15	9.25
MSCI World ex Canada Index	5.70	14.35	12.63	7.53

Note: Total returns are gross-of-fee and reported in Canadian dollars

5.0 2017 OBJECTIVE AND RESULTS

The GMPP Committee is mandated to assist the Minister of Finance with the administration of the Government Money Purchase Pension Plan and provide recommendations on matters referred to them by the Minister. Additionally, the GMPP Committee is responsible for assisting pension plan members in their decisions related to the allocation of employee and employer contributions to a variety of investment vehicles, for the purpose of achieving the maximum accumulation of benefits at retirement. In its 2017-19 Activity Plan, the GMPP Committee established an annual objective based upon these responsibilities. The following is therefore a summary of the Committee's mandated work, as of December 31, 2017.

Objective: By December 31, 2017 the GMPP will have advised the responsible Minister on the administration of the Government Money Purchase Pension Plan.

Indicators and Summary of Results:

- *Developed, implemented and/or reviewed investment alternatives to provide plan members with the ability to make an active investment decision with respect to their accumulated funds*

No new investment alternatives were developed, implemented and/or reviewed during 2017.

- *Promoted the plan and educated plan members on the importance of taking an active interest in their investments*

Members can obtain information about their investment options by accessing the Group Retirement Service website provided by GWL. This website was accessed approximately 4,000 times in 2017. In addition, the GWL Call Centre received over 3,900 calls from plan members during the year.

- *Provided oversight of investment options to ensure that contributions accumulated to the credit of plan members are invested prudently in the investment classes prescribed by the Committee*

During 2017, employees availed of all the options prescribed by the Committee; however there was no significant change in the overall distribution of assets. The Committee will continue to encourage members to take an active interest in asset selection.

- *Provided oversight of the services provided by the Record Keeper and the performance of the Investment Manager*

GWL continues to provide quality custodial and administrative services. Phillips, Hager, North Investment Counsel's investment performance in the various asset classes continues to meet or exceed the benchmark established for all of the various asset classes with the exception of the PH&N Canadian Equity Fund.

- *When requested, provided recommendations to the responsible Minister on matters referred to the Committee*

The Committee did not receive a specific request from the Minister of Finance to provide recommendations on matters related to the administration of the Government Money Purchase Pension Plan.

6.0 2018 OBJECTIVE

During the 2018 fiscal year, the GMPP will continue to fulfil its mandate to support the Minister of Finance in the administration of the Money Purchase Pension Plan. As such, the GMPP has established the following objective for the 2018 fiscal year as a means to measure its performance:

Objective: By December 31, 2018 the GMPP will have advised the responsible Minister on the administration of the Government Money Purchase Pension Plan.

Indicators:

- *Developed, implemented and/or reviewed investment alternatives to provide plan members with the ability to make an active investment decision with respect to their accumulated funds*
- *Promoted the plan and educated plan members on the importance of taking an active interest in their investments*
- *Provided oversight of investment options to ensure that contributions accumulated to the credit of plan members are invested prudently in the investment classes prescribed by the Committee*
- *Provided oversight of the services provided by the Record Keeper and the performance of the Investment Manager*
- *When requested, provided recommendations to the responsible Minister on matters referred to the Committee*

7.0 CONTACT INFORMATION

1. Great West Life
London, ON
N6A 4K1

Telephone: 1-800-724-3402

Website: www.grsaccess.com

2. Pensions and Debt Management Division
Department of Finance
Main Floor, East Block
Confederation Building
St. John's, NL
A1B 4J6

Telephone: (709)729-3931

Website: http://www.fin.gov.nl.ca/fin/pensions/plans_GMPP.html

3. Phillips Hager & North Investment Counsel
Suite 2320, Box 207
1 Adelaide Street East
Toronto, ON
M5C 2V9

Telephone: 1-(800)-661-6141

Website: www.phn.com