

**Government Money Purchase Pension Plan  
Committee**

**2019 Activity Report**

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

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

Dear Minister Coady:

As the Chair of the Committee responsible for the Government Money Purchase Pension Plan (GMPP), I hereby submit the 2019 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 2019. It represents the third report on activities identified in the Committee's 2017-2019 Activity Plan. I am pleased to advise that financial markets were quite strong in 2019 resulting in a \$37.8 million increase in asset values.

I am pleased to submit the 2019 Annual Activity Report for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Theresa Heffernan  
Chair

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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 pursuant to section 12.1 of the **Government Money Purchase Pension Plan Act** 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, 2019)

#### Government and Employer Representatives:

Theresa Heffernan	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 Regional Health Authority
James Doody	Director, Human Resource Secretariat Service Centre & Corporate Service Delivery

#### Employee Representatives:

Bert Blundon	Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees
Deana Hatcher	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

NOTE: The GMPP Committee did not meet in 2019.

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 adheres to a Statement of Investment Policies and Procedures, which outlines 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 Canada Life Assurance Company (Canada Life) 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) was retained to manage market based investment products and Eckler Ltd., provides advice on various pension issues relating to compliance with pension legislation and the **Income Tax Act** as required.

## 2.0 HIGHLIGHTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

### Administration Costs - December 31, 2019

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
Investment Management Costs (PH&N)	\$ 499,637	\$ 497,412
Annual Pension Plan Registration	<u>12,500</u>	<u>12,500</u>
Total Administration Costs	<u>\$ 512,137</u>	<u>\$509,912</u>

\*There were no costs associated with actuarial consulting and support staff in 2018 or 2019.

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 \$4,365,582 as of December 31, 2019 as compared with \$3,633,432 as of December 31, 2018.

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

### Membership Status

Plan membership has increased from 34,740 accounts in 2018 to 34,929 accounts in 2019. The number of accounts includes both active participants and terminated employees who have left their funds on deposit with Canada Life. Of the total number of accounts, 13,391 are members who contributed during 2019. Efforts are ongoing to contact account holders to advise them of transfer options should they wish to move their funds from the plan. The following table illustrates the change in membership from 2018 to 2019.

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
<b>Membership, January 1</b>	<u>34,740</u>	<u>34,432</u>
<b>Additions</b>		
Enrolments during the year	<u>3,290</u>	<u>2,738</u>
<b>Less: Exits</b>		
Terminations	2,901	2,281
Death Benefits	41	28
Retirements	<u>159</u>	<u>121</u>
<b>Membership, December 31</b>	<u>34,929</u>	<u>34,740</u>

### 3.0 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

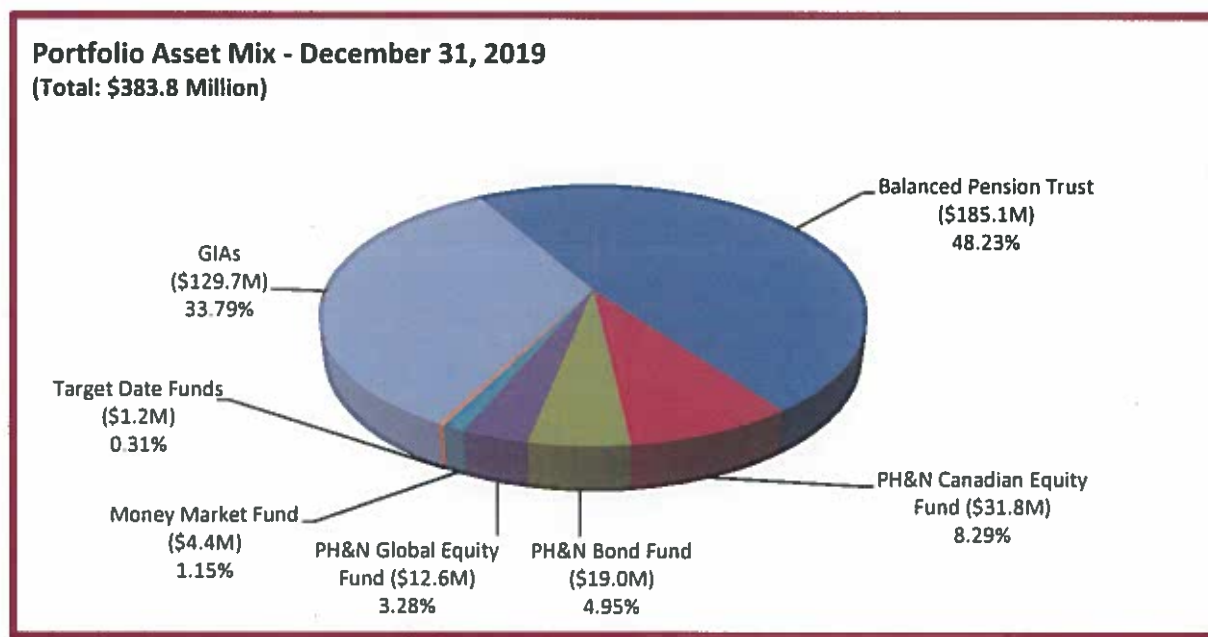
#### Market Value

Employee contributions for the year totalled \$18.41 million of which \$381,055 were Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVC's) and \$2,599,174 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 \$15.43 million and investment income was \$37.8 million. The Statement of Changes in Assets for the Year Ended December 31, 2019 is shown below:

Statement of Changes in Assets for the Year Ended December 31 (Market Value)		
	<u>2019</u> (\$Millions)	<u>2018</u> (\$Millions)
<b>Opening Balance, January 1</b>	<b><u>\$359.9</u></b>	<b><u>377.2</u></b>
Contributions to the Plan (\$18.41M + \$15.43M)	33.8	30.3
Investment Income	37.8	-6.6
<b>Total Additions</b>	<b><u>71.6</u></b>	<b><u>23.7</u></b>
Refunds to Terminating Plan Members	47.7	41.0
Administration Costs	0.0	0.0
<b>Total Deductions</b>	<b><u>47.7</u></b>	<b><u>41.0</u></b>
Net change in assets	<u>23.9</u>	<u>-17.3</u>
<b>Market Value, December 31</b>	<b><u>\$ 383.8</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 359.9</u></b>

#### 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, 2019 is illustrated in the following chart:



## Investment Performance as of December 31, 2019

The following table illustrates the performance of the GMPP market based funds to December 31, 2019:

Government Money Purchase Pension Plan (GMPP) Summary of Investment Returns as at December 31, 2019 with Benchmark comparisons				
Investment Options	Three Months %	One Year %	Four Years Annualized % per annum	Ten Years Annualized % per annum
Balanced Pension Trust	3.66	16.13	7.90	7.91
BPT Benchmark	2.94	15.80	7.29	7.22
Canadian Equity Fund	3.75	22.75	10.14	7.60
S&P/TSX Capped Composite Index	3.17	22.88	10.28	6.90
Bond Fund	-0.86	6.86	3.34	4.59
FTSE Canada Universe Bond Index	-0.85	6.87	3.09	4.31
Global Equity Fund	8.72	26.30	13.40	13.65
GEF Benchmark C\$	6.32	21.22	9.38	11.90

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

## 4.0 2019 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 a summary of the Committee's mandated work, as of December 31, 2019.

**Objective:** By December 31, 2019 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.

New investment alternatives were not developed, implemented and/or reviewed during 2019 as there were none required.

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

Two group retirement education sessions were held by Canada Life during 2019. A total of 32 plan members attended these sessions.

Members can obtain information about their investment options by accessing the Group Retirement Service website provided by Canada Life. This website was accessed approximately 6,200 times in 2019. In addition, the Canada Life Call Centre received approximately 4,400 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 2019, employees availed of all the options prescribed by the Committee; however, there was no significant change in the overall distribution of assets. The Committee, through Canada Life, 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.

During 2019, meetings were held between Department of Finance Officials, and both Canada Life (record keeper), and PH&N (investment manager) for the market-based funds. Canada Life continues to provide quality custodial and administrative services. PH&N's investment performance in the various asset classes continued to meet or exceed the benchmark established for all of the various asset classes for 2019 with the exception of the PH&N Canadian Equity Fund and PH&N Bond 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 GMPP.

## 5.0 CONTACT INFORMATION

1. Canada Life  
255 Dufferin Ave., T. 540  
London, ON  
N6A 4K1  
Telephone: 1(800)724-3402  
Website: [www.qrsaccess.com](http://www.qrsaccess.com)
2. Pensions and Debt Management Division  
Department of Finance  
Main Floor, East Block  
Confederation Building  
St. John's, NL  
A1B 4J6  
Telephone: 1(709)729-3931  
Website: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/fin/pensions/plans-gmpp/>
3. Phillips, Hager & North Investment Management Limited  
155 Wellington Street West  
Toronto, ON  
M5V 3K7  
Telephone: 1(800)661-6141  
Website: [www.phn.com](http://www.phn.com)