

ISPA Pension Board Update

If we haven't met, I am one of the two ISPA appointed representatives for the MFPRSI Board of Trustees and currently work as a Police Officer in Ames. I also served on the ISPA Board from 2007-2015. I have a passion for serving fellow first responders, so I was honored to be asked to serve in this new role.

In my first year on the MFPRSI Board I have been very impressed with the knowledge of the staff and their dedication to maintaining the System for both the members and employers. They are a consistent resource and I encourage you to take advantage of the outreach schedule and website. There are a lot of resources on the website that will answer many common questions. I've been part of many conversations at a briefing/roll call table or car to car with another officer in a parking lot where pension benefits have been discussed. In many of these conversations we were close to the right answer but could have gotten what we needed much more efficiently by simply getting it from the right source. I've also been a part of a few where someone was planning their future on information that was drastically different than reality.

Another big realization that I've had while serving in this role is the difference between my current role and my time on the ISPA Board. While I the ISPA Board, I was almost exclusively focused on benefits of the members. While that is still part of my role as a Trustee, my focus becomes much broader as a fiduciary for the System. The System exists to administer benefits that are defined in Iowa Code. My role now is not to push for new member benefits, but to ensure the health of the System for all members and employers for years to come. If the System isn't sound, neither are the benefits.

With that perspective in mind, there are some benefit trends the System monitors because changes in law or legal precedence can have major impacts on the health and sustainability of the system. One of the big trends the Board is currently monitoring is Disability Retirements. As a Police Officer, it is desirable to have disability benefits, especially for mental injury, available to anyone who is damaged by the challenges of this job to a degree that they can no longer perform their duty to the citizens they serve. As a Board member, I realize that this presents challenges to the system that must carefully be examined and researched. This is a topic currently being discussed nationwide and one that will continue to evolve in the coming years. There are no simple answers and while there is an urgent need for solutions, we must ensure that any solution we enact does not harm the system. I encourage you to reach out if you have questions or ideas on this topic. As your representative, I value your input on this important matter.