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DEFERRED COMPENSATION PLAN BOARD REPORT 08-51



Date: December 5, 2008

To: Board of Deferred Compensation Administration

From: Investments Committee/Staff

Subject: Revised Enrollment Form

Recommendation:

That the Board of Deferred Compensation Administration receive and file the following information regarding a revised enrollment form for the Deferred Compensation Plan.

Discussion:

Ongoing revisions to forms is not typically a topic upon which staff reports to the Board. Routine updating is a fairly constant process, and revisions are typically of a minor and technical nature. However, in connection with the ongoing redesign of the Plan's communication materials, staff has recently led an effort to create a more substantive overhaul of the Plan's enrollment form. The goal of this project has been to make the form more visual, logical, and otherwise user-friendly.

Attached to this report are the new form as well as old form for comparison. Highlights of the changes include:

- Color to make the form more engaging and attractive;
- Bold section headings to help employees clearly and immediately identify the major categories of information needed from them to enroll;
- Highlighting of the Plan's asset allocation funds by featuring them more prominently on the form, and using the same "movie-reel" pie chart visual representation used in the revised enrollment booklet;
- Grouping the remaining investment options by asset class to promote easy identification of how the options differ from one another;
- Re-arranging the remaining investment choices in order of risk level, to make it easier for participants to make risk assessments; and
- Consolidating disclosure information at the end of the form to reduce "clutter" and help avoid confusion with key topic headings.

Although revising a form to this degree may seem at first glance like a relatively routine operation, in fact it is a major undertaking. From the perspective of the third-party-administrator (Great-West Retirement Services), part of what governs how information is arranged in a form includes how the information from the document is processed by operational staff once it is received, as well as compliance with certain regulatory disclosure requirements. In this case, staff drafted what it considered to be an “ideal” form based on user-friendliness considerations, but the document needed to then be reviewed by various teams within Great-West (legal, operations, etc.) and adapted as necessary to meet operational and compliance needs.

Having said that, the final version of this document differs remarkably little from its original conception. Although many individuals at Great-West participated and share credit for that result, staff wished to give particular credit to Communications Manager Aaron Knode, who was the point person in negotiating the form between all concerned parties and shepherded the document to its final completion.

In addition, the Board should be aware that staff emphasized use of a deliberative process in developing the form. Multiple versions of a revised form were independently drafted and then refined, and the documents were then presented to and reviewed by a test group for further feedback before making their way through the compliance/operations gauntlet.

Depending on eligible categories, this document is likely to be nominated in some fashion for awards issued by the National Association of Government Defined Contribution Administrators (NAGDCA), Pensions & Investments magazine, and MarCom (an international competition that recognizes outstanding achievement by marketing and communication professionals). The City’s new enrollment guide won awards from each of these entities in 2008.

A number of other forms and communication materials remains to be re-evaluated. Staff’s emphasis will continue to be on utilizing a methodical development process to produce high-quality, user-friendly communications.

Submitted by: _____
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