

## Illinois Police Officers' Pension Investment Fund Investment Officer Steve Yoon Selected for 2026 Class of NextGen Leaders

Steve Yoon, an investment officer with the \$16 billion Illinois Police Officers' Pension Investment Fund (IPOPIF) since 2021, was recently selected as a member of the [2026 Class of NextGen](#) investment allocators by Chief Investment Officer (CIO) magazine. According to the publication, Steve is among a dozen leaders in their organizations, who are "rising stars," adding, "They are known for their virtuous mixture of financial knowledge, interpersonal skills, and forward thinking."

*"Ultimately, I am proudest of the fact that we have delivered a more efficient, scalable, and resilient investment model that will serve Illinois police officers and their families for decades to come."*

Steve Yoon, Investment Officer, IPOPIF



When asked about Steve's contributions to IPOPIF by the NextGen selection committee, Chief Investment Officer Kent Custer said, "Steve took on an enormous challenge and opportunity when he joined IPOPIF in 2021 as employee number three to build a new pension investment fund from the ground up. Steve played a valuable leadership role in developing and conducting the initial selection of custodians, transition managers, and index managers. He was then instrumental in the asset transfer and assimilation of more than 300 participating police pension funds. His knowledge, experience, problem-solving, and communication skills were key factors fostering the trust and confidence of our partners."

Yoon was queried by the editors about the investing decisions he's made for IPOPIF, of which he is most proud. "My journey with the Illinois Police Officers' Pension Investment Fund has been a unique, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to serve as the architect for a major public pension investment fund," he noted.

"I am most proud of transforming an unformed legislative mandate into a high-functioning institution. This involved building our infrastructure from the ground up and successfully transitioning the consolidated assets into a best-in-class, long-term institutional portfolio. Everything we have done at IPOPIF has been deeply impactful because it directly secures the

retirement futures of thousands of first responders and their beneficiaries from across the state of Illinois," Yoon added.

Please join us in congratulating Steve on this well-deserved honor.

## **Investment Updates**

### **Manager Searches**

After a presentation at the April 17, 2026, meeting by Deputy Chief Investment Officer Greg Turk, the IPOPIF Board of Trustees approved a search for a private non-core real estate investment manager. The search targets one or two managers for a total commitment of \$450 million or approximately 3% of the IPOPIF portfolio.

Funding and allocation for private real estate is expected to come from the interim exposure to the REIT index fund managed by State Street Investment Management. The final Board recommendation and selection is scheduled for the October 16, 2026, board meeting.

Other manager search updates discussed during the April meeting included:

- Interviews for a private infrastructure manager are set for the June 5, 2026, board meeting, with selection set for the July 31, 2026, board meeting.
- Lexington private equity documentation is on track, and the investment team anticipates investment initiation in June 2026.

### **Strategic Plan**

Also, during the April Board meeting, CIO Custer presented his annual review of the strategic plan to the Board of Trustees. He discussed the process for reviewing investment objectives and the alignment of investment strategic planning with the investment policy and consultants.

IPOPIF's general investment consultant, Cerity Partners (formerly Verus), discussed how they plan to use the Enterprise Risk Tolerance Assessment process to gather feedback from the Board of Trustees to help guide the investment strategy for the IPOPIF.

### **Investment Performance**

The portfolio gained 5.6% in the first two months of 2026, but gave it back in March (-5.5%) as the Iran war and higher energy prices dampened economic enthusiasm. Emerging market equity was volatile but still led for the quarter and the fiscal year. Stocks came roaring back in April as the markets digested geopolitical events and shifted from defense to offense. EME ex-China (+21.9%) led the pack, followed by US Small Cap (+14.5%). WCM (+13.9%) recovered, consistent with growth profile. Rising interest rates are weighing modestly on fixed income returns.

Through [April](#), the Investment Portfolio is up 6.8% for 2026 year to date. and 24.0% for the trailing twelve months. Recovery dynamics continued in May, adding approximately 3% through May 27, 2026.

## **Administration and Operations Updates**

### **Fiduciary Legal Counsel Rehired**

IPOPIF issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) seeking a qualified law firm to serve as its fiduciary legal counsel. Current fiduciary legal counsel was retained in February 2021, and by policy, external contracted service providers must be submitted for bid every five years through the RFP process.

IPOPIF received a single proposal for the fiduciary legal counsel services from Jacobs, Burns, Orlove & Hernandez, LLP, IPOPIF's current fiduciary counsel. IPOPIF staff and General Legal Counsel have reviewed the submission and have determined that the response meets the criteria required in the RFP and qualifies for the scope of services requested under the Fiduciary Legal Counsel RFP.

A motion was made and seconded to approve Jacobs, Burns, Orlove & Hernandez, LLP for a five-year service contract beginning July 1, 2026, in accordance with the terms, conditions, and fees provided in the RFP response and designated Executive Director Richard White to represent the Fund in the execution of the service contract.

### **Controller Search Initiated**

Executive Director White presented a job description and salary range for the controller position for IPOPIF to the Board of Trustees at the April meeting, which was approved.

Controller is a new position that is intended to replace IPOPIF's Chief Financial Officer (CFO) position. The overall purpose of this intended change is to better align the roles, responsibilities, and skills and abilities with the current needs of the Fund. The previous CFO had a very necessary and key role for the fund at the time, as IPOPIF was developing the financial system and finance team. After the departure of the CFO and via exit interviews, it was understood that the CFO role may have more responsibilities and skills than are necessary, and may underutilize a person in this role.

The controller role is designed to better align roles and responsibilities with the needs of IPOPIF, including handling day-to-day and operational accounting activities, whereas the CFO would be more focused on strategic planning and managerial functions. Those interested in applying for the position will find additional information [here](#).

### **Actuarial Experience Study**

Jason Franken, FAS, EA, MAAA, with Foster & Foster, reviewed the actuarial valuation report with the Board of Trustees during the April meeting. The actuarial experience study he presented covered compiled plan experience from 2021 through 2024 and will be used for actuarial valuation reports beginning with the fiscal year 2026 valuations.

An actuarial experience study analyzes the assumptions used for the preparation of the actuarial valuation reports, which are prepared by the Fund's actuary for Article 3 police pension funds. The assumptions currently used by the Fund were adopted by the Board of Trustees in September 2022 after the original actuarial experience study prepared by Foster & Foster. It is standard practice to review and update these actuarial assumptions regularly, usually every 3 to 5 years.

A summary of the recommended assumption changes resulting from the study:

#### Economic Assumptions

- Investment Return: No change to the 6.80% rate of return assumption.
- Inflation: Keep the current 2.50%.
- Salary Increases: Minor adjustments, generally higher than previously assumed, to blend in recent experience.
- Payroll Growth: No change to the 3.00% assumption.

#### Demographic Assumptions

- Retirement Rates: Minor adjustments, generally higher than previously assumed before age 65 and lower than previously assumed after age 65, to blend in recent experience.
- Withdrawal/Termination Rates: Higher rates for service before completing 15 years of service.
- Disability Incidence Rates: Adjust the current disability rates by a factor of 1.046 and increase the service-related disabilities probability from 60% to 70%.
- Mortality Rates: Continue to use the Pub-2010 Public Safety mortality tables, with the same adjustments for the credibility of the fund's actual experience.
- Other Demographic Assumptions: The current assumptions for marital status, spousal age difference, the proportion of deaths that are duty-related, and administrative expenses were analyzed, and the recommendation was to change the administrative expenses load to 2.5% of the total normal cost.

The Trustees plan to vote on accepting the findings of the actuarial experience study at the July 31, 2026, meeting. Actuarial valuation reports for Article 3 funds may be viewed [here](#).

#### **Agreed Upon Procedures Review**

A presentation on the Agreed Upon Procedures Review of all member Article 3 funds was led by Matt Rodell, IPOPIF's senior accountant auditor during the April board meeting. A work plan for Agreed Upon Procedures was developed by fund staff with the input from the CPA firms completing the audits and the Illinois Department of Insurance. The work plan includes reviews of 16 procedures.

Mr. Rodell's report showed that overall, the Article 3 local police pension plans are doing a good job and are generally in compliance. Major findings include:

- 13% Trustee training certificates and training records for Trustees are incomplete.
- 6% of the Funds are making investments into “new” accounts post-consolidation.
- 21% of the benefit payments to retirees and beneficiaries have errors.
- 30% of active members' payroll deductions have errors.
- 70% are compliant with the financing requirements in accordance with the statute.

### **Strategic Plan**

Executive Director Richard White briefed the Board on each governance policy and answered all questions. A motion was then made and seconded to approve the Accounts Payable Policy, Audit and Budget Committee Policy, Budget Administration Policy, Cash Management Policy, Cash Reserve Policy, Compensation Policy, Municipal Reimbursement Policy, and Purchasing and Professional Services Contracting Policy as reviewed on April 17, 2026.

### **Search for an Executive Director Initiated**

The Executive Director Search Special Committee of Trustees Mark Poulos, Lee Catavu, and Debra Nawrocki, have initiated a search for an executive director to replace Richard White, who is retiring at the end of the year after more than five years of dedicated service. They have retained Lauterbach & Amen, IPOPIF's Human Resources Consultant, to work with the committee to identify the experience, expertise, and attributes the Board is looking for in its second executive director.

Those interested in learning more about the position may do so [here](#). The Board of Trustees will make the final decision, most likely in the fall.

### **Trustee Elections**

As noted in the last newsletter, at the March 20, 2026, meeting, the Board of Trustees authorized the opening of the trustee election process. Each elected trustee serves a four-year term of office, with the election on a two-year staggered election cycle. The elected trustees will be seated in January 2027 and serve through December 2030.

The nomination period for all trustee seats commenced on April 6, 2026, and closed on May 8, 2026. The Nomination Challenge period was May 13-14, 2026, followed by the Nomination Challenge Determination Period running from May 20-21, 2026. A decision on challenges was made on May 28, 2026.

The trustee seats and candidates currently are:

- Municipal Member Trustee, Seat #1:
  - Trustee: Trustee Philip Suess (Incumbent)
- Active Member Trustees, Seats #4 and #5
  - Trustee Lee Catavu (Incumbent)
  - Scott Ligon, Lieutenant, Springfield Police Department

- Beneficiary Member Trustee, Seat #7:
  - Trustee Daniel Hopkins (Incumbent)
  - Matthew E. Williams, Rockford, Retired

Trustee Seat #9 is the seat appointed by the Governor as recommended by the Illinois Municipal League and with the advice and consent of the Senate. The appointment is for a two-year term of office and will run from January 2027 through December 2028.

On June 5, 2026, the Board of Trustees will review findings and issue a determination of nomination challenge decision by general legal counsel and approval of candidate(s) and appropriate action to begin the election ballot process, if necessary. Other key dates are:

- July 31, 2026: Deadline for participating police pension funds to provide elector information to IPOPIF.
- August 3, 2026: Elector information is provided to the election services vendor.
- August 17, 2026: Official ballot packets are mailed to qualified electors.
- August 17 – September 11, 2026: Election period with ballots returned directly to the election services vendor.
- September 11, 2026: Ballots must be received by 5:00 PM (Central Time).
- September 14, 2026: Election vendor conducts the final tabulation of election ballots and delivers electronic results of the election tabulation to IPOPIF. IPOPIF will publish the election results on the IPOPIF website by 5 pm CDT
- September 16-17, 2026: Election challenge period for candidates.
- September 18, 2026: Election committee meeting.
- September 23-24, 2026: Election result challenge determination period
- October 1, 2026: Election result challenge decision date
- October 16, 2026: Board of Trustees review findings of election challenge decision by general legal counsel and certification of election results.
- December 11, 2026: Results of trustee election entered into the minutes of the meeting. The elected Board of Trustees will have an Oath of Office administered and will be seated for the term of office beginning on January 1, 2027.
- January 22, 2027: Annual meeting of the Board of Trustees

## **On the Road**

Executive Director White made a presentation to the Illinois Public Pension Fund Association (IPPPFA) Illinois Pension Conference on April 29, 2026, in Galena, IL, and also presented at the Illinois Professional Firefighters Association (IPFA) Spring Pension Seminar on May 1, 2026. Addison, IL.

He will attend the Cerity Partners Client Summit, July 20-21, in Seattle.

Shawn Curry, manager of external affairs, continues to make visits to Article 3 pension fund meetings throughout the state. Local plans interested in a meeting may contact him at [scurry@ipopif.org](mailto:scurry@ipopif.org).

## **IPOPIF Blotter**

If you have photos you'd like to see posted on the IPOPIF [Blue Line Mugshot](#) page, we are always on the lookout for photos from members of the 352 Article 3 pension plans that are a part of IPOPIF to add. Please send photos in JPEG format to [info@ipopif.org](mailto:info@ipopif.org).

## **Roll Call**

Monthly investment reports from October 2022 through April 2026 for each of the Article 3 funds are posted to the IPOPIF website [here](#). IPOPIF monthly investment reports are available [here](#).

As the consolidated asset pool that exists for the exclusive purpose of protecting and investing the assets of the pension funds covering police officers serving and protecting all downstate and suburban Illinois municipalities, we want our participants and their beneficiaries to know that they should always feel free to reach out to us at [info@ipopif.org](mailto:info@ipopif.org).

As noted in previous newsletters and above, key investment information is posted to the IPOPIF website and is reviewed and discussed at the IPOPIF Board meetings. The Board of Trustees will hold its regular meeting on Friday, April 17, 2026, at 9 am at the Twin Towers Plaza, 456 Folton St, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor in Peoria.

Interested individuals may attend the meeting in person or via Zoom. The link to the Zoom call is included in the [meeting agendas](#), which are also posted on our website. The 2026 Board of Trustees and Board of Trustees Committee meeting dates and times are posted [here](#).

## **Links to Key Resources**

- [Monthly statement overview](#)
- [Monthly financial reports](#)
- [Monthly and quarterly investment reports](#)
- [Meeting Calendar](#)