

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT DIVISION CANDIDATES—BIOGRAPHIES *(in alphabetical order)*

Please review the candidate biographies and their responses to key questions about Colorado PERA so you can make an informed decision (candidates were limited to 100-150 words for their responses). The candidates' responses have not been edited by PERA. The deadline to vote is May 31, 2023.

### **TRISTAN N. GEARHART** | COLORADO SPRINGS UTILITIES

*Tristan N. Gearhart is the Chief Planning and Financial Officer for Colorado Springs Utilities.*

#### **Education/Special Courses/Certifications**

Bachelor of Arts, Business Administration, University of Colorado Colorado Springs, emphasis in Accounting

Colorado Certified Public Accountant

#### **Employment History**

Colorado Springs Utilities, Colorado Springs, Colorado, 2009–Present

Chief Planning and Financial Officer

Fuels and Purchase Power Manager

Interim General Manager of Financial Services

Manager of Accounting

Principal Financial Analyst

Lead Analyst

Honeywell Technology Solutions, Inc., Colorado Springs, Colorado, 2006–2009

Financial Analyst II

DLMG Accountants, Colorado Springs, Colorado, 2002–2006

Staff Accountant

#### **Organizational Affiliations/Achievements**

Colorado Springs Utilities Foundation Board of Directors, currently serving as Treasurer of this charitable organization

### **TRINA RUHLAND** | BOULDER COUNTY

*Trina Ruhland is a Deputy County Attorney with Boulder County.*

#### **Education/Special Courses/Certifications**

B.A., Mathematics, University of Chicago, 2007

J.D., University of Colorado, *Order of the Coif*, 2010

Licensed Attorney, Colorado, 2010–Present

Investments for Institutional Investor, Callan College, 2023

PERA New Trustee Orientation, 2022

#### **Employment History**

Boulder County Attorney's Office

Deputy County Attorney, 2019–Present

Senior Assistant County Attorney, 2016–2018

University of Colorado Law

Adjunct Professor, 2020–Present

Wheeler Trigg O'Donnell LLP

Associate Attorney, 2011–2016

Colorado Supreme Court

Law Clerk, Honorable Allison H. Eid, 2010–2011

Colorado Attorney General's Office

Law Clerk, summer 2008

#### **Organizational Affiliations/Achievements**

Licensed Attorney, Colorado, 2010–Present

Trustee, PERA, July 1, 2022–Present

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT DIVISION CANDIDATES—RESPONSES TO KEY QUESTIONS

Colorado PERA's primary purpose is to provide benefits and programs as specified by state law, and the Board of Trustees oversees the administration of these benefits and programs. State law also gives the Board the responsibility for the investment of PERA's funds and to establish policy guidelines for the operations of PERA. Under this framework, the PERA Board of Trustees oversees the administration of the more than \$50 billion retirement fund for Colorado's public employees. Although the Board can and does make recommendations related to the employee and employer contribution levels and retirement benefit formulas, both are ultimately determined by the Colorado General Assembly and established by state law.

## TRISTAN N. GEARHART

### INTEREST IN SERVING AS A PERA TRUSTEE

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*Please briefly describe why you are interested in being elected to the PERA Board of Trustees.*

I have been a participant in the Local Government Division of PERA for 14 years working for an organization that is one of the largest participants in the division. I feel my knowledge, skills, and educational training put me in a place where I can advocate for the best interest and sustainability of the plan for all of the division's members.

### CHALLENGES/OPPORTUNITIES FACING PERA

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*Please describe what you consider as areas of challenge/opportunity facing PERA and the Board's role in addressing these issues.*

Being able to balance contributions from members and payments to retirees a higher inflationary environment with the potential for recessionary effects provides unique challenge for PERA to mitigate and perform through.

### THE ROLE OF A TRUSTEE

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*What do you see as the role of a Trustee on the PERA Board?*

As a trustee I would have a fiduciary responsibility to work for outcomes and results from the PERA fund that maintain and strengthen its financial position for the continued benefit of all members.

## TRINA RUHLAND

### INTEREST IN SERVING AS A PERA TRUSTEE

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*Please briefly describe why you are interested in being elected to the PERA Board of Trustees.*

During my current tenure as PERA trustee, I have been honored to serve the members of PERA and oversee the organization tasked with protecting our PERA retirement benefits. As a practicing attorney with a background in mathematics and data analysis as well as a strong personal interest in retirement planning and investment, I have a passion for the work of PERA and am committed to investing the time, energy, work, and attention to the oversight of PERA so that each member may be assured that their PERA retirement is being managed with the highest level of care.

### CHALLENGES/OPPORTUNITIES FACING PERA

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*Please describe what you consider as areas of challenge/opportunity facing PERA and the Board's role in addressing these issues.*

Members expect—and need to know—that their retirement future with PERA is secure, even through down markets and unpredictable and unprecedented times. This means not only must PERA maintain the highest level of service in investing, but it must be a leader in cybersecurity and responsible governance in order to protect members' retirements by ensuring the financial stability of the PERA fund. The responsible governance of PERA directly impacts the financial well-being of the fund and the financial stability of our members' PERA retirement.

My legal background with governance advising uniquely positions me to oversee the responsible governance of PERA; I will ensure the proper information is brought before the board, continue to question and evaluate assumptions, and explore options carefully and intentionally when appropriate.

### THE ROLE OF A TRUSTEE

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*What do you see as the role of a Trustee on the PERA Board?*

The role of a trustee is ensuring responsible governance. As a trustee I am committed to making well-informed and transparent decisions, both of which are essential to responsible governance. I am committed to understanding the diverse and changing needs of PERA's membership and making sure the communications and information from PERA meet those needs.