In 2003, Rock Falls’s police, fire and municipal pension funds already faced a shortfall of $1.6 million. That meant every Rock Falls household, on average, was on the hook for $404 in future taxes just to eliminate that shortfall.

Rock Falls began contributing more money – taxpayer dollars – to pensions in an attempt to make the plans healthier. Over the next 16 years, city contributions increasingly crowded out spending for public safety, roads and other core services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City (taxpayer) contributions to pensions</td>
<td>$0.27 million</td>
<td>$1.13 million</td>
<td>Up 4.2X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of city general budget for pensions</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>Up 2.0X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite the ramp-up in city payments over those 16 years, Rock Falls’s pension debts didn’t decrease. Instead, they jumped by 8.5 times!

By 2019, the shortfall in Rock Falls’s police, fire and municipal pension funds totaled $13.5 million. That means each Rock Falls household, on average, is now on the hook for $3,621 in debt.

Everyone loses under Rock Falls’s pension crisis:

**Taxpayers are tapped out**
Rock Falls residents are paying more and more into a broken system. City taxpayers in 2019 contributed 4.2 times more to pensions than in 2003, yet city debts are 8.5 times larger.

**Pension costs are devouring the city’s budget**
Rock Falls pension contributions have grown to consume 17.0% of the city’s budget, up from 8.6% in 2003. That’s crowded out spending on public safety, roads and other core services.

**Rock Falls worker retirement security is collapsing**
The health of Rock Falls’s local pension plans have worsened despite those increased taxpayer contributions. In 2003, the plans had 90.3% of the money they needed. By 2019, that had dropped to just 63.2%.

**Rock Falls’s crisis will only get worse**
Rock Falls has fewer active government workers available to help pay for a growing number of retirees. In 2003, there were 1.80 active workers for every pensioner. By 2019, there were 0.95 active workers per pensioner.
Wirepoints quantified the negative impact of local pensions by examining the finances of Illinois’ 175 largest cities from 2003 to 2019. The analysis was based on ten equally-weighted metrics. Cities were given an A through F grade based on a 100-point scale (10 points per metric).*

Rock Falls received a “D” grade in 2019. The city’s total score dropped from 82 in 2003 to 65 in 2019, a decline of 17 points.

Rock Falls was one of 64 cities to receive a “D” grade in 2019.

**Rock Falls Key Facts**

**City demographics**
- **Median household income**: $34,442 (2000), $49,191 (2019)

**City budget**
- **General revenues**: $3,139,167 (2003), $6,645,418 (2019)
- **Total property taxes**: $554,751 (2003), $1,989,905 (2019)

**Pension health (police, fire & IMRF)**
- **Total accrued liabilities**: $16,317,166 (2003), $36,689,069 (2019)
- **Total pension assets**: $14,731,158 (2003), $23,188,361 (2019)
- **Funded ratio**: 90.3% (2003), 63.2% (2019)
- **Total pension shortfall**: $1,586,007 (2003), $13,500,708 (2019)
- **Per household**: $404 (2003), $3,621 (2019)
- **Active public safety workers**: 36 (2003), 36 (2019)
- **Public safety pension beneficiaries**: 20 (2003), 38 (2019)
- **City contributions**: $215,526 (2003), $323,458 (2019)
- **Percentage surplus/shortfall in actuarially-required city contribution (Police & Fire only)**: -42.8% (2003), -2.7% (2019)
- **Asset-to-payout ratio (Police & Fire only)**: 27.6 (2003), 11.9 (2019)
- **Worker-to-beneficiary ratio (Police & Fire only)**: 1.80 (2003), 0.95 (2019)

**Rock Falls Score**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Police pension funded ratio</td>
<td>74.5%</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Firefighter pension funded ratio</td>
<td>90.7%</td>
<td>64.0%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Municipal (IMRF) pension funded ratio</td>
<td>111.4%</td>
<td>90.2%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. City pension debts per household as a percentage of median household income</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. City contributions per household as a percentage of median household income</td>
<td>0.20%</td>
<td>0.62%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. City contributions as a percentage of total budget</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ratio of city contributions to employee contributions</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Percentage surplus/shortfall in actuarially-required city contribution (Police &amp; Fire only)</td>
<td>-42.8%</td>
<td>-2.7%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Asset-to-payout ratio (Police &amp; Fire only)</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Worker-to-beneficiary ratio (Police &amp; Fire only)</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total score** 82 65  
**Grade** B D

*Wirepoints analyzed 175 of Illinois’ largest cities, excluding Chicago, that have a local police, firefighter and municipal (IMRF) pension fund.

Communities in crisis: More than half of Illinois cities get “F” grades for local pensions