

ISSUER COMMENT

28 May 2021

RATING

General Obligation (or GO Related) ¹

Aa3 No Outlook

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City of Brewer, ME

Annual Comment on Brewer

Issuer Profile

The City of Brewer is located in Penobscot County in south central Maine, approximately 60 miles northeast of Augusta. Penobscot County has a population of 151,774 and a low population density of 45 people per square mile. The county's median family income is \$67,476 (3rd quartile) and the March 2021 unemployment rate was 5.3% (2nd quartile) ². The largest industry sectors that drive the local economy are health services, retail trade, and state government.

We regard the coronavirus outbreak as a social risk under our environmental, social and governance framework, given the substantial implications for public health and safety and the economy. We do not see any material immediate credit risks for Brewer. However, the situation surrounding coronavirus is rapidly evolving and the longer term impact will depend on both the severity and duration of the crisis. If our view of the credit quality of Brewer changes, we will update our opinion at that time.

Credit Overview

The credit position for Brewer is good and its Aa3 rating is level with the US cities median of Aa3. Key credit factors include a healthy financial position, healthy wealth and income profile, modestly sized tax base, manageable pension liability and very heavy debt burden.

Finances: Brewer has a strong financial position, which is slightly favorable in comparison to the assigned rating of Aa3. Cash balance as a percent of operating revenues (21.3%) is materially below the US median but was stable between 2016 and 2020. Furthermore, fund balance as a percent of operating revenues (15.9%) is materially lower than other Moody's-rated cities nationwide.

Economy and Tax Base: The economy and tax base of Brewer are solid and are slightly weak when compared to its Aa3 rating. Total full value (\$762 million) is weaker than the US median. Full value per capita (\$83,867) is slightly below the US median and median family income is 92.1% of the US level.

Debt and Pensions: The pension liability of the city is low and is favorable with respect to the assigned rating of Aa3. The Moody's-adjusted net pension liability to operating revenues (0.52x) favorably is materially below the US median, and stayed the same from 2016 to 2020. The debt burden of Brewer is very heavy which is a weakness in relation to city's Aa3 rating position. Net direct debt to full value (4.2%) is significantly above the US median.

Management and Governance: Maine Cities have an institutional framework score ³ of "Aa", which is strong. The sector's major revenue source of property taxes are subject to

a cap, which can be overridden at the local level. The cap is based on statewide personal income growth and local property growth. The cap allows for moderate revenue-raising ability. Taxes raised for school purposes, including school debt service, are not subject to the cap. Unpredictable revenue fluctuations tend to be minor, or under 5% annually. Across the sector, fixed and mandated costs are generally less than 25% of expenditures. Fixed costs are driven mainly by debt service. Unpredictable expenditure fluctuations tend to be minor, under 5% annually.

Sector Trends - Maine Cities

Maine's economy continues to underperform, resulting in slow state revenue growth and therefore marginal increases in state aid to cities. As a result, cities will continue to increase property taxes, within the limits of the state-wide property tax cap, to fund expenditure growth. Positively, most cities have excess levy capacity under the cap that could mitigate future unexpected declines in state aid. Property values are stable, but new growth remains limited. Cities will only experience slight benefits from employment growth as this growth is primarily in low paying jobs.

This publication does not announce a credit rating action. For any credit ratings referenced in this publication, please see the ratings tab on the issuer/entity page on www.moody's.com for the most updated credit rating action information and rating history.

EXHIBIT 1

Key Indicators 4.5 Brewer

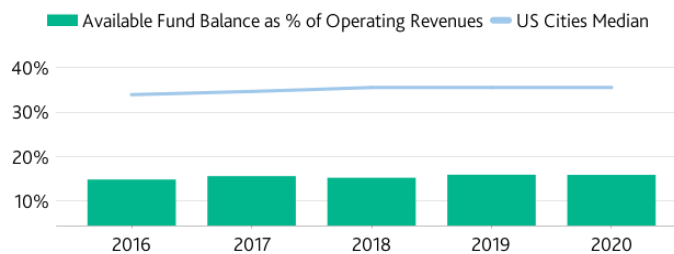
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	US Median	Credit Trend
Economy / Tax Base							
Total Full Value	\$721M	\$718M	\$721M	\$732M	\$762M	\$2,024M	Improved
Full Value Per Capita	\$77,698	\$78,423	\$79,031	\$80,605	\$83,867	\$97,657	Improved
Median Family Income (% of US Median)	108%	97%	100%	92%	92%	114%	Weakened
Finances							
Available Fund Balance as % of Operating Revenues	14.9%	15.6%	15.3%	15.9%	15.9%	35.5%	Stable
Net Cash Balance as % of Operating Revenues	20.9%	23.2%	22.6%	22.1%	21.3%	40.0%	Stable
Debt / Pensions							
Net Direct Debt / Full Value	5.2%	5.1%	5.1%	4.6%	4.2%	1.1%	Improved
Net Direct Debt / Operating Revenues	1.03x	0.99x	0.98x	0.90x	0.81x	0.82x	Stable
Moody's-adjusted Net Pension Liability (3-yr average) to Full Value	2.9%	2.6%	2.8%	2.7%	2.7%	1.9%	Stable
Moody's-adjusted Net Pension Liability (3-yr average) to Operating Revenues	0.57x	0.52x	0.54x	0.54x	0.52x	1.57x	Stable

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	US Median
Debt and Financial Data						
Population	9,284	9,167	9,123	9,090	9,090	N/A
Available Fund Balance (\$000s)	\$5,347	\$5,721	\$5,711	\$5,976	\$6,305	\$8,489
Net Cash Balance (\$000s)	\$7,510	\$8,488	\$8,449	\$8,287	\$8,460	\$9,759
Operating Revenues (\$000s)	\$35,960	\$36,610	\$37,407	\$37,477	\$39,630	\$36,135
Net Direct Debt (\$000s)	\$37,152	\$36,417	\$36,649	\$33,607	\$31,964	\$19,137
Moody's Adjusted Net Pension Liability (3-yr average) (\$000s)	\$20,585	\$19,013	\$20,338	\$20,083	\$20,468	\$38,399

Source: Moody's Investors Service

EXHIBIT 2

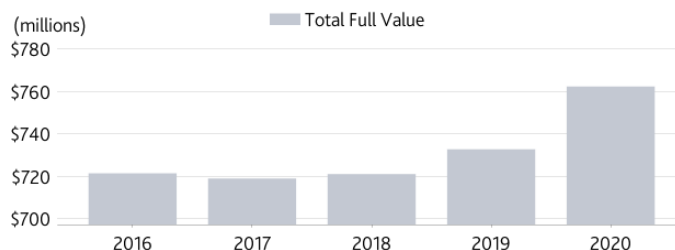
Available fund balance as a percent of operating revenues increased from 2016 to 2020



Source: Issuer financial statements; Moody's Investors Service

EXHIBIT 3

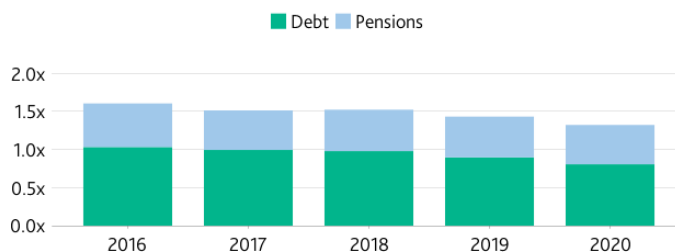
Full value of the property tax base increased from 2016 to 2020



Source: Issuer financial statements; Government data sources; Offering statements; Moody's Investors Service

EXHIBIT 4

Moody's-adjusted net pension liability to operating revenues decreased from 2016 to 2020



Source: Issuer financial statements; Government data sources; Offering statements; Moody's Investors Service

Endnotes

- 1 The rating referenced in this report is the issuer's General Obligation (GO) rating or its highest public rating that is GO-related. A GO bond is generally backed by the full faith and credit pledge and total taxing power of the issuer. GO-related securities include general obligation limited tax, annual appropriation, lease revenue, non-ad valorem, and moral obligation debt. The referenced ratings reflect the government's underlying credit quality without regard to state guarantees, enhancement programs or bond insurance.
- 2 The demographic data presented, including population, population density, per capita personal income and unemployment rate are derived from the most recently available US government databases. Population, population density and per capita personal income come from the American Community Survey while the unemployment rate comes from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The largest industry sectors are derived from the Bureau of Economic Analysis. Moody's allocated the per capita personal income data and unemployment data for all counties in the US census into quartiles. The quartiles are ordered from strongest-to-weakest from a credit perspective: the highest per capita personal income quartile is first quartile, and the lowest unemployment rate is first quartile.

- 3 The institutional framework score assesses a municipality's legal ability to match revenues with expenditures based on its constitutionally and legislatively conferred powers and responsibilities. See [US Local Government General Obligation Debt \(July 2020\)](#) methodology report for more details.
- 4 For definitions of the metrics in the Key Indicators Table, [US Local Government General Obligation Methodology and Scorecard User Guide \(July 2014\)](#). Metrics represented as N/A indicate the data were not available at the time of publication.
- 5 The medians come from our most recently published local government medians report, [Medians - Tax base expansion bolsters revenue, but pensions remain a hurdle \(May 2020\)](#), which is available on Moodys.com. The medians presented here are based on the key metrics outlined in Moody's GO methodology and the associated scorecard.

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