

# COMPLIANCE AUDIT

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## Ambridge Borough Non-Uniformed Pension Plan Beaver County, Pennsylvania For the Period January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2016

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October 2017



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of the Auditor General

Eugene A. DePasquale • Auditor General



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**EUGENE A. DePASQUALE  
AUDITOR GENERAL**

The Honorable Mayor and Borough Council  
Ambridge Borough  
Beaver County  
Ambridge, PA 15003

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Ambridge Borough Non-Uniformed Pension Plan for the period January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2016. We also evaluated compliance with some requirements subsequent to that period when possible. The audit was conducted pursuant to authority derived from Section 402(j) of Act 205 and in accordance with the standards applicable to performance audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our conclusions based on our audit objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our conclusions based on our audit objective.

The objective of the audit was to determine if the pension plan was administered in compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances and policies.

Our audit was limited to the areas related to the objective identified above. To determine whether the pension plan was administered in compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances and policies, our methodology included the following:

- We determined whether state aid was properly determined and deposited in accordance with Act 205 requirements by verifying the annual deposit date of state aid and determining whether deposits were made within 30 days of receipt for all years within the period under audit.
- We determined whether annual employer contributions were calculated and deposited in accordance with the plan's governing document and applicable laws and regulations by examining the municipality's calculation of the plan's annual financial requirements and minimum municipal obligation (MMO) and comparing these calculated amounts to amounts actually budgeted and deposited into the pension plan as evidenced by supporting documentation.

- We determined whether annual employee contributions were calculated, deducted, and deposited into the pension plan in accordance with the plan's governing document and applicable laws and regulations by testing total members' contributions on an annual basis using the rates obtained from the plan's governing document in effect for all years within the period under audit and examining documents evidencing the deposit of these employee contributions into the pension plan.
- We determined that there were no benefit calculations prepared for the years covered by our audit period.
- We determined whether the January 1, 2013 and January 1, 2015 actuarial valuation reports were prepared and submitted to the former Public Employee Retirement Commission (PERC) by March 31, 2014 and 2016, respectively, in accordance with Act 205 and whether selected information provided on these reports is accurate, complete, and in accordance with plan provisions to ensure compliance for participation in the state aid program by comparing selected information to supporting source documentation.
- We determined whether the terms and methodologies of the issuance of pension obligation bonds by the municipality, and any restrictions were in compliance with plan provisions and Act 205 through inquiry of plan officials and examination of supporting documentation.

Ambridge Borough contracted with an independent certified public accounting firm for annual audits of its basic financial statements which are available at the borough's offices. Those financial statements were not audited by us and, accordingly, we express no opinion or other form of assurance on them.

Borough officials are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the Ambridge Borough Non-Uniformed Pension Plan is administered in compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances and policies. In conducting our audit, we obtained an understanding of the borough's internal controls as they relate to the borough's compliance with those requirements and that we considered to be significant within the context of our audit objective, and assessed whether those significant controls were properly designed and implemented. Additionally and as previously described, we tested transactions, assessed official actions, performed analytical procedures, and interviewed selected officials to provide reasonable assurance of detecting instances of noncompliance with legal and regulatory requirements or noncompliance with provisions of contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances and policies that are significant within the context of the audit objective.

The results of our procedures indicated that, in all significant respects, the Ambridge Borough Non-Uniformed Pension Plan was administered in compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances and policies.

The accompanying supplementary information is presented for purposes of additional analysis. We did not audit the information or conclude on it and, accordingly, express no form of assurance on it.

The contents of this report were discussed with officials of Ambridge Borough and, where appropriate, their responses have been included in the report. We would like to thank borough officials for the cooperation extended to us during the conduct of the audit.

October 23, 2017

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eugene A. DePasquale". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE  
Auditor General

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## BACKGROUND

On December 18, 1984, the Pennsylvania Legislature adopted the Municipal Pension Plan Funding Standard and Recovery Act (P.L. 1005, No. 205, as amended, 53 P.S. § 895.101 et seq.). The Act established mandatory actuarial reporting and funding requirements and a uniform basis for the distribution of state aid to Pennsylvania's public pension plans. Section 402(j) of Act 205 specifically requires the Auditor General, as deemed necessary, to make an audit of every municipality which receives general municipal pension system state aid and of every municipal pension plan and fund in which general municipal pension system state aid is deposited.

Annual state aid allocations are provided from a 2 percent foreign (out-of-state) casualty insurance premium tax, a portion of the foreign (out-of-state) fire insurance tax designated for paid firefighters and any investment income earned on the collection of these taxes. Generally, municipal pension plans established prior to December 18, 1984, are eligible for state aid. For municipal pension plans established after that date, the sponsoring municipality must fund the plan for three plan years before it becomes eligible for state aid. In accordance with Act 205, a municipality's annual state aid allocation cannot exceed its actual pension costs.

In addition to Act 205, the Ambridge Borough Non-Uniformed Pension Plan is also governed by implementing regulations adopted by the former Public Employee Retirement Commission published at Title 16, Part IV of the Pennsylvania Code and applicable provisions of various other state statutes.

The Ambridge Borough Non-Uniformed Pension Plan is a single-employer defined benefit pension plan locally controlled by the provisions of Ordinance No. 1290, effective January 1, 2016. Prior to January 1, 2016, the plan was controlled by the provisions of Ordinance No. 1204, as amended. The plan is also affected by the provisions of collective bargaining agreements between the borough and its non-uniformed employees. The plan was established June 1, 1970. Active members hired prior to January 1, 2012 were required to contribute 1 percent of compensation to the plan and active members hired on or after January 1, 2012 were required to contribute 3 percent of compensation to the plan. For calendar year beginning January 1, 2016, all active members are required to contribute 3 percent of compensation to the plan. As of December 31, 2016, the plan had 4 active members, 4 terminated members eligible for vested benefits in the future, and 8 retirees receiving pension benefits from the plan.

## **BACKGROUND – (Continued)**

As of December 31, 2016, selected plan benefit provisions are as follows:

### Eligibility Requirements:

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Normal Retirement | Age 62 and 20 years of service.  |
| Early Retirement  | Age 62 and completion of 5 years of service.   |
| Vesting           | 25% after the completion of 10 years of credited service, 50% for 11 to 13 years; 75% for 14 to 19 years and 100% after 20 years of service. |

### Retirement Benefit:

A monthly benefit equal to 1.5% of Average Monthly Compensation (pay averaged over the final 60 months of employment) multiplied by years of credited service.

### Survivor Benefit:

The retiree's beneficiary will receive the remainder, if any, of the 120 guaranteed monthly payments less those paid to the retiree.

### Service and Non-Service Related Disability Benefit:

After 10 years of credited service, a monthly benefit equal to 50% of the participant's accrued benefit is payable for the duration of disability prior to normal retirement date at which time it will be considered a normal retirement benefit.

AMBRIDGE BOROUGH NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN  
 SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION  
 (UNAUDITED)

SCHEDULE OF FUNDING PROGRESS

Historical trend information about the plan is presented herewith as supplementary information. It is intended to help users assess the plan’s funding status on a going-concern basis, assess progress made in accumulating assets to pay benefits when due, and make comparisons with other state and local government retirement systems.

The actuarial information is required by Act 205 biennially. The historical information, beginning as of January 1, 2011, is as follows:

|                                | (1)                                    | (2)  | (3)  | (4)                        |
|--------------------------------|--|--|--|----------------------------|
| Actuarial<br>Valuation<br>Date | Actuarial<br>Value of<br>Assets<br>(a) | Actuarial<br>Accrued<br>Liability<br>(AAL) -<br>Entry Age<br>(b) | Unfunded<br>(Assets in<br>Excess of)<br>Actuarial<br>Accrued<br>Liability<br>(b) - (a) | Funded<br>Ratio<br>(a)/(b) |
| 01-01-11                       | \$ 681,038                             | \$ 1,088,175   | \$ 407,137   | 62.6%                      |
| 01-01-13                       | 651,933                                | 1,025,810  | 373,877  | 63.6%                      |
| 01-01-15                       | 713,183                                | 1,005,405  | 292,222  | 70.9%                      |

Note: The market values of the plan’s assets at 01-01-11, 01-01-13, and 01-01-15 have been adjusted to reflect the smoothing of gains and/or losses over a 4-year averaging period. This method will lower contributions in years of less than expected returns and increase contributions in years of greater than expected returns. The net effect over long periods of time is to have less variance in contribution levels from year to year.



AMBRIDGE BOROUGH NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN  
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION  
(UNAUDITED)

The comparability of trend information is affected by changes in actuarial assumptions, benefit provisions, actuarial funding methods, accounting policies, and other changes. Those changes usually affect trends in contribution requirements and in ratios that use the actuarial accrued liability as a factor.

Analysis of the dollar amount of the actuarial value of assets, actuarial accrued liability, and unfunded (assets in excess of) actuarial accrued liability in isolation can be misleading. Expressing the actuarial value of assets as a percentage of the actuarial accrued liability (Column 4) provides one indication of the plan's funding status on a going-concern basis. Analysis of this percentage, over time, indicates whether the system is becoming financially stronger or weaker. Generally, the greater this percentage, the stronger the plan.

AMBRIDGE BOROUGH NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN  
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION  
(UNAUDITED)

SCHEDULE OF CONTRIBUTIONS FROM EMPLOYER  
AND OTHER CONTRIBUTING ENTITIES

| Year Ended December 31 | Annual Required Contribution | Percentage Contributed |
|------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 2011                   | \$ 46,955                    | 100.0%                 |
| 2012                   | 44,695                       | 100.0%                 |
| 2013                   | 58,361                       | 100.0%                 |
| 2014                   | 61,498                       | 100.0%                 |
| 2015                   | 51,032                       | 100.0%                 |
| 2016                   | 52,517                       | 100.0%                 |

AMBRIDGE BOROUGH NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN  
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION  
NOTES TO SUPPLEMENTARY SCHEDULES  
(UNAUDITED)

The information presented in the supplementary schedules was determined as part of the actuarial valuation at the date indicated. Additional information as of the latest actuarial valuation date follows:

|                               |                              |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Actuarial valuation date      | January 1, 2015              |
| Actuarial cost method         | Entry age normal             |
| Amortization method           | Level dollar, closed         |
| Remaining amortization period | 9 years                      |
| Asset valuation method        | Fair value, 4-year smoothing |
| Actuarial assumptions:        |                              |
| Investment rate of return     | 7.5%                         |
| Projected salary increases    | 4.5%                         |

AMBRIDGE BOROUGH NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

**The Honorable Tom W. Wolf**  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

**The Honorable Richie D'Ambrosio**  
Mayor

**Mr. Michael A. Mikulich**  
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**Mr. Joseph M. Kauer**  
Borough Manager

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