

COMPLIANCE AUDIT

Bensalem Township Police Pension Plan Bucks County, Pennsylvania For the Period January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2022

November 2023



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General

Timothy L. DeFoor • Auditor General



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**TIMOTHY L. DEFOOR
AUDITOR GENERAL**

The Honorable Mayor and Township Council
Bensalem Township
Bucks County
Bensalem, PA 19020

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Bensalem Township Police Pension Plan for the period January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2022. We also evaluated compliance with some requirements subsequent to that period when possible. The audit was conducted pursuant to authority derived from the Municipal Pension Plan Funding Standard and Recovery Act (Act 205 of 1984, as amended, 53 P.S. § 895.402(j)), which requires the Auditor General, as deemed necessary, to audit every municipality which receives general municipal pension system state aid and every municipal pension plan and fund in which general municipal pension system state aid is deposited. The audit was not conducted, nor was it required to be, in accordance with Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. We planned and performed 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 whether retirement benefits calculated for plan members who retired or elected to vest during the current audit period represent payments to all (and only) those entitled to receive them and were properly determined and disbursed in accordance with the plan's governing document, applicable laws, and regulations by recalculating the amount of the monthly pension benefits due to the retired individuals and comparing these amounts to supporting documentation evidencing amounts determined and actually paid or payable to the recipients.
- We determined whether the January 1, 2017, January 1, 2019, and January 1, 2021 actuarial valuation reports were prepared and submitted by March 31, 2018, 2020, and 2022, 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 provisions of the Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP) were in accordance with the provisions of Act 205 by examining provisions stated in the plan's governing documents.

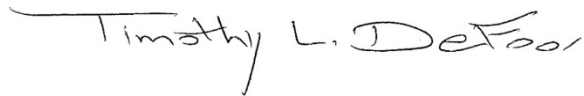
Bensalem Township contracted with an independent certified public accounting firm for annual audits of its basic financial statements which are available at the township's offices. Those financial statements were not audited by us and, accordingly, we express no opinion or other form of assurance on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

Township officials are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the Bensalem Township Police Pension Plan is administered in compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances and policies. As previously described, we tested transactions, interviewed selected officials, and performed procedures to the extent necessary 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 Bensalem Township Police 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 Bensalem Township and, where appropriate, their responses have been included in the report. We would like to thank township officials for the cooperation extended to us during the conduct of the audit.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy L. DeFoor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the left of the first letter.

Timothy L. DeFoor
Auditor General
October 25, 2023

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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.

Annual state aid allocations are provided from a two 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 Bensalem Township Police Pension Plan is also governed by implementing regulations published at Title 16, Part IV of the Pennsylvania Code and applicable provisions of various other state statutes including, but not limited to, the following:

Act 600 - Police Pension Fund Act, Act of May 29, 1956 (P.L. 1804, No. 600), as amended, 53 P.S. § 767 et seq.

The Bensalem Township Police Pension Plan is a single-employer defined benefit pension plan locally controlled by the provisions of Ordinance No. 2022-02, as amended. The plan is also affected by the provisions of collective bargaining agreements between the township and its police officers. The plan was established January 1, 1971. Active members were required to contribute 3.5 percent of wages to the plan for the years 2019, 2020, and 2021, and 4.25 percent for the year 2022. As of December 31, 2022, the plan had 97 active members, 7 terminated members eligible for vested benefits in the future, and 103 retirees receiving pension benefits from the plan.

BENSALEM TOWNSHIP POLICE PENSION PLAN
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDING

Status of Prior Audit Recommendation

· Pension Benefit Not Authorized By Act 600

The audit report for the period January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2014 contained a finding that the plan's governing document provided for the inclusion of lump-sum payments to the Deputy Director of Public Safety for unused vacation days that were not earned during the final 36 month averaging period for pension benefit calculations. The township has eliminated the inclusion of lump-sum payments for unused vacation days for the Deputy Director of Public Safety position that were not earned during the final 36 months of employment in pension benefit calculations. However, excess benefits are still being paid to an existing retiree. Since the township received state aid based on unit value during the audit period, it did not receive state aid attributable to the excess benefits provided. The department will continue to monitor the impact of the excess benefits being paid to the existing retiree on the plan's future state aid allocations.

BENSALEM TOWNSHIP POLICE 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, 2017, is as follows:

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Actuarial Valuation Date	Actuarial Value of Assets (a)	Actuarial Accrued Liability (AAL) - Entry Age (b)	Unfunded (Assets in Excess of) Actuarial Accrued Liability (b) - (a)	Funded Ratio (a)/(b)
01-01-17	\$ 59,326,586	\$ 74,319,969	\$ 14,993,383	79.8%
01-01-19	64,755,829	81,840,421	17,084,592	79.1%
01-01-21	76,877,771	95,615,775	18,738,004	80.4%

Note: The market values of the plan’s assets at 01-01-17 and 01-01-19 have been adjusted to reflect the smoothing of gains and/or losses subject to a ceiling of 120 percent of the market value of assets. 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.

BENSALEM TOWNSHIP POLICE 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.

BENSALEM TOWNSHIP PENSION PLAN
 SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
 (UNAUDITED)

SCHEDULE OF CONTRIBUTIONS

<u>Year Ended December 31</u>	<u>Actuarially Determined Contribution</u>	<u>Actual Contributions</u>	<u>Contribution Deficiency (Excess)</u>	<u>Covered- Employee Payroll</u>	<u>Contributions as a Percentage of Covered- Employee Payroll</u>
2014	\$ 2,175,418	\$ 2,175,418	\$ -	\$11,185,130	19.45%
2015	2,182,437	2,182,437	-	11,243,376	19.41%
2016	2,635,127	2,635,127	-	11,409,516	23.10%
2017	2,640,439	2,640,439	-	11,449,882	23.06%
2018	3,382,441	3,382,441	-	12,196,264	27.73%
2019	3,345,308	3,345,308	-	12,864,746	26.00%
2020	3,685,171	4,285,172	(600,001)	13,206,080	32.45%
2021	3,539,478	4,139,478	(600,000)	12,000,000	34.50%
2022	4,337,099	4,337,099	-	13,650,390	31.77%

BENSALEM TOWNSHIP 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, 2021
Actuarial cost method	Entry age normal
Amortization method	Level dollar
Remaining amortization period	11 years
Asset valuation method	Market value
Actuarial assumptions:	
Investment rate of return	7.0%
Projected salary increases	5.0%
Cost-of-living adjustments	An increase in the monthly benefit equal to the percentage change in the Consumer Price Index for the Philadelphia Region. The total increases may not exceed 30% of the original benefit.

BENSALEM TOWNSHIP POLICE PENSION PLAN
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Joshua D. Shapiro
Governor
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The Honorable Joseph DiGirolamo
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Mr. Joseph Knowles
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