

COMPLIANCE AUDIT

Schuylkill Haven Borough Police Pension Plan Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania For the Period January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2016

March 2018



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General

Eugene A. DePasquale • Auditor General



**Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0018
Facebook: Pennsylvania Auditor General
Twitter: @PAAuditorGen
www.PaAuditor.gov**

**EUGENE A. DePASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL**

The Honorable Mayor and Borough Council
Schuylkill Haven Borough
Schuylkill County
Schuylkill Haven, PA 17972-1007

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Schuylkill Haven Borough Police 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 finding and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our finding and conclusions based on our audit objective.

The objectives of the audit were:

1. To determine if municipal officials took appropriate corrective action to address the finding contained in our prior audit report; and
2. 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 objectives identified above. To determine if municipal officials took appropriate corrective action to address the finding contained in our prior audit report, we inquired of plan officials and evaluated supporting documentation provided by officials evidencing that the suggested corrective action has been appropriately taken. 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 that there were no employee contributions required for the years covered by our audit period due to the fact that employee contributions were appropriately waived by the municipality.
- We determined that there were no benefit calculations prepared for the years covered by our audit period.
- We determined whether the January 1, 2011, 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, 2012, 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 all annual special ad hoc postretirement reimbursements received by the municipality were authorized and appropriately deposited in accordance with Act 147 by tracing information to supporting documentation maintained by plan officials.

Borough officials are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the Schuylkill Haven Borough Police 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 objectives.

The results of our procedures indicated that, in all significant respects, the Schuylkill Haven Borough Police Pension Plan was administered in compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances and policies, except as noted in the following findings further discussed later in this report:

Finding – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Pension Benefits Not Authorized By Act 600

The finding contained in this audit report repeats a condition that was cited in our previous audit report that has not been corrected by borough officials. We are concerned by the borough's continued failure to correct this previously reported audit finding and strongly encourage timely implementation of the recommendations noted in this audit report.

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 Schuylkill Haven 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.

March 5, 2018



EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE
Auditor General

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Background.....	1
Status of Prior Finding.....	3
Finding and Recommendation:	
Finding – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Pension Benefits Not Authorized By Act 600.....	4
Supplementary Information	6
Report Distribution List	12

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 Schuylkill Haven Borough Police 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 including, but not limited to, the following:

- Act 147 - Special Ad Hoc Municipal Police and Firefighter Postretirement Adjustment Act, Act of December 14, 1988 (P.L. 1192, No. 147), as amended, 53 P.S. § 896.101 et seq.
- Act 600 - Police Pension Fund Act, Act of May 29, 1956 (P.L. 1804, No. 600), as amended, 53 P.S. § 761 et seq.

The Schuylkill Haven Borough Police Pension Plan is a single-employer defined benefit pension plan locally controlled by the provisions of Ordinance No. 482, as amended, adopted pursuant to Act 600. The plan is also affected by the provisions of collective bargaining agreements between the borough and its police officers. The plan was established August 3, 1962. Active members are required to contribute 5 percent of compensation to the plan; however, member contributions were eliminated during the audit period. As of December 31, 2016, the plan had 8 active members, no terminated members eligible for vested benefits in the future, and 11 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 50 and 25 years of service
Early Retirement	None
Vesting	Member is 100% vested after 12 years of service

Retirement Benefit:

Benefit equals 50% of final 36 months average salary.

Survivor Benefit:

Before Retirement Eligibility	Refund of member contributions plus interest.
After Retirement Eligibility	A monthly benefit equal to 50% of the pension the member was receiving or was entitled to receive on the day of the member's death.

Service Related Disability Benefit:

Benefit equals 50% of the member's salary at the time the disability was incurred, offset by Social Security disability benefits received for the same injury.

SCHUYLKILL HAVEN BOROUGH POLICE PENSION PLAN
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDING

Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation

Schuylkill Haven Borough has not complied with the prior audit recommendation concerning the following as further discussed in the Finding and Recommendation section of this report:

- Pension Benefits Not Authorized By Act 600

SCHUYLKILL HAVEN BOROUGH POLICE PENSION PLAN
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Pension Benefits Not Authorized By Act 600

Condition: As disclosed in prior audit reports, plan officials provided pension benefits in excess of those authorized by Act 600. Plan officials included accumulated unused sick leave that was not earned during the pension computation period in the determination of the final average salary used to calculate monthly pension benefits for a police officer who retired January 27, 2007 and for a police officer who retired March 4, 2013.

Criteria: Section 5(c) of Act 600 states, in part:

Monthly pension or retirement benefits other than length of service increments shall be computed at one-half the monthly average salary of such member during not more than the last sixty nor less than the last thirty-six months of employment.

Although Act 600 does not define “salary,” the department has concluded, based on a line of court opinions, that the term does not encompass lump-sum payments for leave that was not earned during the pension computation period.

Cause: Plan officials have again failed to adopt adequate internal control procedures to ensure compliance with the prior audit recommendation.

Effect: The plan is paying benefits to 2 retirees in excess of those authorized by Act 600. The retirees are receiving total excess benefits of \$270 per month, which have totaled approximately \$24,900 from the dates of their respective retirements through the date of this audit report.

Providing unauthorized pension benefits increases the plan’s pension costs and reduces the amount of funds available for investment purposes or for the payment of authorized benefits or administrative expenses. Since the borough received state aid based on unit value during the current audit period, it did not receive allocations attributable to the excess pension benefits provided. However, the increased costs to the pension plan as a result of the excess pension benefits could result in the receipt of excess state aid in the future and increase the municipal contributions necessary to fund the plan in accordance with Act 205 funding standards.

Recommendation: To the extent that the borough is not in compliance with Act 600 and/or is contractually obligated to pay benefits to existing retirees in excess of those authorized by Act 600, the excess benefits must be reflected in the Act 205 actuarial valuation reports for the plan and funded in accordance with Act 205 funding standards. Furthermore, the portion of the pension benefits attributable to the improper inclusion of lump-sum payments for accumulated unused

SCHUYLKILL HAVEN BOROUGH POLICE PENSION PLAN
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – (Continued)

leave earned outside the pension computation period will be deemed ineligible for funding with state aid. In such case, the plan's actuary may be required to determine the impact of the unauthorized benefits on the borough's state aid allocations and submit this information to the Department.

Management's Response: Current municipal officials agreed with the finding without exception and will contact their solicitor accordingly.

Auditor's Conclusion: This finding repeats a condition that was cited in our previous 3 audit reports that has not been corrected by borough officials. A written response was requested regarding the borough's intended action relative to this issue; however, no response was received. We are concerned by the borough's continued failure to correct this previously reported audit finding and encourage compliance at the earliest opportunity to do so.

SCHUYLKILL HAVEN BOROUGH POLICE PENSION PLAN
 SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
 (UNAUDITED)

The supplementary information contained on Pages 6 and 7 reflects the implementation of GASB Statement No. 67, *Financial Reporting for Pension Plans*. The objective of this statement is to improve financial reporting by state and local governmental pension plans.

SCHEDULE OF CHANGES IN THE NET PENSION
 LIABILITY AND RELATED RATIOS
 FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2015

	<u>2015</u>
Total Pension Liability	
Service cost	\$ 74,278
Interest	289,891
Benefit payments, including refunds of member contributions	(280,848)
Net Change in Total Pension Liability	83,321
Total Pension Liability – Beginning	4,207,446
Total Pension Liability - Ending (a)	\$ 4,290,767
 Plan Fiduciary Net Position	
Contributions – employer	\$ 223,586
Net investment income	(225,999)
Benefit payments, including refunds of member contributions	(280,848)
Administrative expense	(4,130)
Net Change in Plan Fiduciary Net Position	(287,391)
Plan Fiduciary Net Position – Beginning	3,172,042
Plan Fiduciary Net Position - Ending (b)	\$ 2,884,851
 Net Pension Liability - Ending (a-b)	\$ 1,406,116
 Plan Fiduciary Net Position as a Percentage of the Total Pension Liability	67.23%
 Estimated Covered Employee Payroll	\$ 575,595
 Net Pension Liability as a Percentage of Covered Employee Payroll	244.29%

SCHUYLKILL HAVEN BOROUGH POLICE PENSION PLAN
 SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
 (UNAUDITED)

Sensitivity of the Net Pension Liability to Changes in the Discount Rate

The following presents the net pension liability of the borough as of December 31, 2015, calculated using the discount rate of 7.0 percent, as well as what the borough's net pension liability would be if it were calculated using a discount rate that is 1 percentage-point lower or 1 percentage-point higher than the current rate:

	1% Decrease (6%)	Current Discount Rate (7%)	1% Increase (8%)
Net Pension Liability	\$ 1,905,579	\$ 1,406,116	\$ 984,677

SCHUYLKILL HAVEN BOROUGH 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, 2011 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)
01-01-11	\$ 2,373,720	\$ 3,440,353	\$ 1,066,633	69.0%
01-01-13	2,657,804	3,970,180	1,312,376	66.9%
01-01-15	3,172,042	4,207,446	1,035,404	75.4%

SCHUYLKILL HAVEN BOROUGH 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.

SCHUYLKILL HAVEN BOROUGH POLICE PENSION PLAN
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
(UNAUDITED)

SCHEDULE OF CONTRIBUTIONS FROM EMPLOYER
AND OTHER CONTRIBUTING ENTITIES

Year Ended December 31	Annual Required Contribution	Percentage Contributed
2011	\$ 324,962	100.0%
2012	293,300	100.0%
2013	302,308	100.0%
2014	251,587	100.0%
2015	223,586	100.0%
2016	243,210	100.0%

SCHUYLKILL HAVEN BOROUGH POLICE 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
Remaining amortization period	12 years
Asset valuation method	Fair value
Actuarial assumptions:	
Investment rate of return	7.0%
Projected salary increases	4.0%

SCHUYLKILL HAVEN BOROUGH POLICE PENSION PLAN
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom W. Wolf
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

The Honorable Michael Devlin
Mayor

Mr. Kurt Montz
Council President

Mr. Jerry Bowman
Vice-President

Mr. Roger Spotts
Councilman

Mr. Paul Bedway
Councilman

Mr. Thomas Gordon
Councilman

Mr. John Williams
Councilman

Mr. Jacob McGovern
Councilman

Ms. Diane Roeder
Councilwoman

Ms. Gloria Ebling
Chief Administrative Officer

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at www.PaAuditor.gov. Media questions about the report can be directed to the Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General, Office of Communications, 229 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120; via email to: news@PaAuditor.gov.