

COMPLIANCE AUDIT

Plains Township Firemen's Pension Plan Luzerne County, Pennsylvania For the Period January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2013

April 2015



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General
Eugene A. DePasquale • Auditor General



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EUGENE A. DePASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL

Board of Township Commissioners
Plains Township
Luzerne County
Plains, PA 18705

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Plains Township Firemen's Pension Plan for the period January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2013. 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. State aid allocations that were deposited into the pension plan for the years ended December 31, 2008 to December 31, 2013, are presented on the Summary of Deposited State Aid and Employer Contributions.

- 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. Employer contributions that were deposited into the pension plan for the years ended December 31, 2008 to December 31, 2013, are presented on the Summary of Deposited State Aid and Employer Contributions.
- 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 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 also tested individual employee contributions made during the audit period for all 17 active employees employed during 2011 and all 15 active employees employed during 2012 and 2013, amounting to \$32,699, \$43,133, and \$47,535, for the years 2011, 2012, and 2013, respectively.
- We determined whether retirement benefits calculated for all 4 of the plan members who retired 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 benefit due to retired individuals and comparing these amounts to supporting documentation evidencing amounts determined and actually paid to recipients.
- We determined whether the January 1, 2011 and January 1, 2013 actuarial valuation reports were prepared and submitted to the Public Employee Retirement Commission (PERC) by March 31, 2012 and 2014, 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.


Plains 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 Plains Township Firemen's 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 township's internal controls as they relate to the township'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 Plains Township Firemen's Pension Plan was administered in compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances and policies.

The contents of this report were discussed with officials of Plains 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.

March 27, 2015


EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE
Auditor General

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Background	1
Summary of Deposited State Aid and Employer Contributions	2
Report Distribution List	3

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 Plains Township Firemen's Pension Plan is also governed by implementing regulations adopted by the Public Employee Retirement Commission published at Title 16, Part IV of the Pennsylvania Code and applicable provisions of various other state statutes.

The Plains Township Firemen's Pension Plan is a single-employer defined contribution pension plan locally controlled by the provisions of Resolution No. 26 of 2008, as amended. The plan is also affected by the provisions of collective bargaining agreements between the township and its firefighters. The plan was established January 1, 1980. Active members were required to contribute 4 percent of compensation to the plan in the year 2011 and 5 percent of compensation to the plan in the years 2012 and 2013. The municipality was required to contribute 14 percent of each member's compensation in the year 2011 and 15 percent of each member's compensation in the years 2012 and 2013. As of December 31, 2013, the plan had 15 active members.

PLAINS TOWNSHIP FIREMEN'S PENSION PLAN
SUMMARY OF DEPOSITED STATE AID AND EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTIONS

Year Ended December 31	State Aid	Employer Contributions
2008	\$ 20,617	\$ 56,992
2009	None	93,218
2010	None	98,553
2011	104,323	None
2012	92,979	35,715
2013	116,531	26,087

PLAINS TOWNSHIP FIREMEN'S PENSION PLAN
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom W. Wolf
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

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126 North Main Street
Plains, PA 18705

Mr. Robert Sax President, Board of Township Commissioners

Ms. Patricia Sluhocki Secretary

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, 231 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120; via email to: news@PaAuditor.gov.