

# COMPLIANCE AUDIT

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## Watsonstown Borough Police Pension Plan Northumberland County, Pennsylvania For the Period January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2014

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September 2015



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  
Watsonstown Borough  
Northumberland County  
Watsonstown, PA 17777

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Watsonstown Borough Police Pension Plan for the period January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2014. 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 our audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our conclusions based on our audit objectives.

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 whether retirement benefits calculated for the plan member 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 the retired individual and comparing this amount to supporting documentation evidencing the amount determined and actually paid to the recipient.
- × 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 March 31, 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.
- × We determined whether the terms of the plan's unallocated insurance contract, including ownership and any restrictions, were in compliance with plan provisions, investment policies, and state regulations by comparing the terms of the contract with the plan's provisions, investment policies, and state regulations.

Watsonstown Borough contracted with an independent certified public accounting firm for annual audits of its financial statements prepared in conformity with the accounting practices prescribed or permitted by the Department of Community and Economic Development of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 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 Watsonstown 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

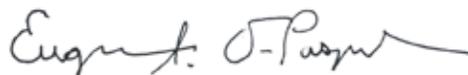
with those requirements and that we considered to be significant within the context of our audit objectives, and assessed whether those significant controls were properly designed and implemented. Additionally and as previously described, we tested transactions, assessed official actions, performed analytical 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 Watson town Borough 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 Watson town 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.

August 27, 2015



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 Watsonstown Borough Police 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 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. § 761 et seq.

The Watsonstown Borough Police Pension Plan is a single-employer defined benefit pension plan locally controlled by the provisions of Ordinance No. 2004-1, 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 March 1, 1972. 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, 2014, the plan had 3 active members, no terminated members eligible for vested benefits in the future, and 4 retirees receiving pension benefits from the plan.

## **BACKGROUND – (Continued)**

As of December 31, 2014, 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, plus a service increment of \$100 per month for each year of service in excess of 25 years, up to a maximum of \$100 per month.

### 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.

WATSONTOWN BOROUGH POLICE PENSION PLAN  
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDING

Compliance With Prior Audit Recommendation

Watsonstown Borough has complied with the prior audit recommendation concerning the following:

- Failure To Appoint A Chief Administrative Officer

Borough officials adopted Resolution No. 2013-03R to formally appoint a chief administrative officer.

WATSONTOWN 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, 2009, 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) |
| 01-01-09                       | \$ 1,370,687                           | \$ 1,424,500   | \$ 53,813  | 96.2%                      |
| 01-01-11                       | 1,579,239                              | 1,540,601  | (38,638)   | 102.5%                     |
| 01-01-13                       | 1,566,941                              | 1,668,944  | 102,003  | 93.9%                      |

Note: The market value of the plan's assets at 01-01-09, 01-01-11 and 01-01-13 have been adjusted to reflect the smoothing of gains and/or losses over a 5-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.

WATSONTOWN 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.

WATSONTOWN 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 |
|------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 2009                   | \$ 10,091                    | 100.0%                 |
| 2010                   | 46,935                       | 100.0%                 |
| 2011                   | 43,706                       | 100.0%                 |
| 2012                   | 36,647                       | 100.0%                 |
| 2013                   | 41,209                       | 100.0%                 |
| 2014                   | 61,359                       | 100.0%                 |

WATSONTOWN 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, 2013              |
| Actuarial cost method         | Entry age normal             |
| Amortization method           | Level dollar                 |
| Remaining amortization period | 11 years                     |
| Asset valuation method        | Fair value, 5-year smoothing |
| Actuarial assumptions:        |                              |
| Investment rate of return     | 7.25%                        |
| Projected salary increases    | 4.5%                         |
| Cost-of-living adjustments    | 3.0%                         |

WATSONTOWN BOROUGH POLICE PENSION PLAN  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom W. Wolf  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Watsonstown Borough Police Pension Plan  
Northumberland County  
318 Main Street  
Watsonstown, PA 17777

The Honorable David Hontz Mayor

Ms. Harriet Miller Council President

Ms. Brendi Brooke Secretary/Treasurer

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at [www.PaAuditor.gov](http://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](mailto:news@PaAuditor.gov).