

# COMPLIANCE AUDIT

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## City of Farrell Firemen's Pension Plan Mercer County, Pennsylvania For the Period January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2015

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August 2016



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 City Council  
City of Farrell  
Mercer County  
Farrell, PA 16121

We have conducted a compliance audit of the City of Farrell Firemen's Pension Plan for the period January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2015. 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 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 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 retired individuals and comparing these amounts to supporting documentation evidencing amounts determined and actually paid to recipients.
- We determined whether the January 1, 2011, January 1, 2013, and January 1, 2015 actuarial valuation reports were prepared and submitted to the 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 the terms of the contractual agreement with the Pennsylvania Municipal Retirement System were in accordance with the plan's governing document, if separately stated, and applicable laws and regulations by comparing the terms of the contractual agreement with the plan's governing document, if separately stated, and applicable laws and regulations.
- 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.

The City of Farrell Firemen's Pension Plan participates in the Pennsylvania Municipal Retirement System (PMRS), which is an agent multiple-employer public employee retirement system that acts as a common investment and administrative agent for participating municipal pension plans. PMRS issues a separate Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, copies of which are available from the PMRS accounting office. PMRS's financial statements were not audited by us and, accordingly, we express no opinion or other form of assurance on them.

City officials are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the City of Farrell 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 city's internal controls

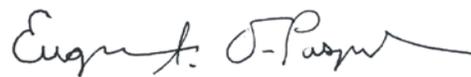
as they relate to the city's compliance with those requirements and that we considered to be significant within the context of our audit objective, and assessed whether those significant controls were properly designed and implemented. Additionally and as previously described, we tested transactions, 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 City of Farrell Firemen's 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. However, we are extremely concerned about the funded status of the plan contained in the schedule of funding progress included in this report which indicates **the plan's funded ratio is 55.9% as of January 1, 2015**, which is the most recent data available. We encourage city officials to monitor the funding of the firemen's pension plan to ensure its long-term financial stability.

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

August 24, 2016



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 City of Farrell 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 including, but not limited to, the following:

- Act 15 - Pennsylvania Municipal Retirement Law, Act of February 1, 1974 (P.L. 34, No. 15), as amended, 53 P.S. § 881.101 et seq.
- 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.

The City of Farrell Firemen's Pension Plan is a single-employer defined benefit pension plan locally controlled by the provisions of Ordinance No. 0-11-2015, effective July 1, 2015, adopted pursuant to Act 15. Prior to the adoption of Ordinance No. 0-11-2015, the pension plan was locally controlled by the provisions of Ordinance No. 0-1-2010, adopted pursuant to Act 15. The plan was established October 13, 1964. Active members are required to contribute 5 percent of pay, plus \$1 per month until age 65, to the plan. As of December 31, 2015, the plan had 1 active member, no terminated members eligible for vested benefits in the future, and 11 retirees receiving benefits funded through annuities purchased with plan assets.

## **BACKGROUND – (Continued)**

As of December 31, 2015, selected plan benefit provisions are as follows:

### Eligibility Requirements:

Normal Retirement	Available upon attainment of age 50 with 10 years of service if hired prior to January 24, 2001; age 50 with 12 years of service if hired on or after January 24, 2001.
Early Retirement	Age 45 with 20 years of service if hired prior to January 24, 2011; none available if hired on or after January 24, 2001.
Vesting	A member is 100% vested after 10 years of service if hired prior to January 24, 2001; 100% vested after 12 years of service if hired on or after January 24, 2001.

### Retirement Benefit:

Benefit equals 2.0% times credited service times Final Average Salary (FAS), but in no event is the basic benefit greater than 50% of FAS. FAS based upon the greater of final one (1) year of credited service or highest 5 consecutive years of credited service. In addition to the basic benefit allowance, a service increment for each year of service in excess of 25 years multiplied by 2.5% of the basic retirement benefit, not to exceed \$100 per month.

### Survivor Benefit:

If eligible to retire or if retired at the time of death, spouse receives 100% of member's benefit.

### Disability Benefit:

Service Related	A benefit of 50% of the member's final salary is provided to a member who is unable to perform gainful employment regardless of age or service, offset by available Worker's Compensation benefits.
Non-service Related	Available only to members hired before January 24, 2001, with at least 25 years of service and unable to perform gainful employment. Benefit is 50% of monthly salary, reduced by 5% of monthly salary for each year before normal retirement, and increased by 5% of monthly salary for each year of service in excess of 25 years, with a maximum benefit of 45% of monthly salary.

CITY OF FARRELL FIREMEN'S PENSION PLAN  
 SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION  
 (UNAUDITED)

The supplementary information contained on Pages 3 and 4 reflect 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, 2014

Total Pension Liability	
Service cost	\$ 23,301
Interest	110,319
Difference between expected and actual experience	40,121
Benefit payments, including refunds of member contributions	(149,045)
Net Change in Total Pension Liability	24,696
Total Pension Liability - Beginning	2,056,022
Total Pension Liability - Ending (a)	<u>\$ 2,080,718</u>
Plan Fiduciary Net Position	
Contributions - employer	\$ 158,188
Contribution - member	5,035
PMRS investment income	50,597
Market value investment income	102,414
Benefit payments, including refunds of member contributions	(149,045)
PMRS administrative expense	(260)
Additional administrative expense	(1,940)
Net Change in Plan Fiduciary Net Position	164,989
Plan Fiduciary Net Position - Beginning	950,936
Plan Fiduciary Net Position - Ending (b)	<u>\$ 1,115,925</u>
Net Pension Liability - Ending (a-b)	<u>\$ 964,793</u>
Plan Fiduciary Net Position as a Percentage of the Total Pension Liability	53.6%
Estimated Covered Employee Payroll	\$ 97,446
Net Pension Liability as a Percentage of Covered Employee Payroll	990.1%

CITY OF FARRELL FIREMEN'S 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 city, calculated using the discount rate of 5.5%, as well as what the city'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 (4.5%)	Current Discount Rate (5.5%)	1% Increase (6.5%)
Net Pension Liability	\$ 1,182,943	\$ 964,793	\$ 781,626

CITY OF FARRELL FIREMEN'S 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	\$ 1,018,488	\$ 2,100,541	\$ 1,082,053	48.5%
01-01-13	987,975	2,084,256	1,096,281	47.4%
01-01-15	1,163,753	2,080,718	916,965	55.9%

CITY OF FARRELL FIREMEN'S 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.

CITY OF FARRELL FIREMEN'S PENSION PLAN  
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION  
(UNAUDITED)

SCHEDULE OF CONTRIBUTIONS FROM EMPLOYER  
AND OTHER CONTRIBUTING ENTITIES

Year Ended December 31	Annual Required Contribution	Percentage Contributed
2010	\$ 63,626	100.0%
2011	71,394	100.0%
2012	71,838	100.0%
2013	157,493	100.0%
2014	158,188	100.0%
2015	133,345	100.2%

CITY OF FARRELL FIREMEN'S 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	12 years
Asset valuation method	Fair value
Actuarial assumptions:	
Investment rate of return	5.5%, net of expenses
Projected salary increases *	Age-related scale for merit/ seniority (e.g. age 30 - 6.4%; age 40 - 5.0%; age 50 - 4.1%; age 60 - 3.7% ... 2.0% is added for each of the first 3 years of service)
Cost-of-living adjustments	3.0%, where applicable

\* Includes inflation at 3.0%

CITY OF FARRELL FIREMEN'S PENSION PLAN  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This letter was initially distributed to the following:

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

**The Honorable Olive M. McKeithan**  
Mayor

**Mr. Robert Burich**  
Deputy Mayor

**Mr. Michael Ceci**  
City Manager

**Ms. Melissa Cannone**  
City Treasurer

**Ms. Kim Doss**  
Councilperson

**Ms. Stephanie Sheffield**  
Councilperson

**Ms. Annette Morrison**  
Councilperson

**Mr. Stephen Bennefield**  
Councilperson

**Mr. Dan Dragicovic**  
Councilperson

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