



**HOWE TOWNSHIP NONUNIFORMED  
PENSION PLAN**

**FOREST COUNTY**

**COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT**

**FOR THE PERIOD**

**JANUARY 1, 2009, TO DECEMBER 31, 2011**

**RELEASED MARCH 2013**

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA**

**EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE - AUDITOR GENERAL**

**DEPARTMENT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL**







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ABBREVIATION

PMRS - Pennsylvania Municipal Retirement System



## 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.

Pension plan aid is provided from a 2 percent foreign casualty insurance premium tax, a portion of the foreign 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 Howe Township Nonuniformed 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.

The Howe Township Nonuniformed Pension Plan is a single-employer cash balance pension plan locally controlled by the provisions of Ordinance No. 99-7, adopted pursuant to Act 15. Active members are not required to contribute to the plan. The municipality is required to contribute 6 percent of each member's compensation.







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**EUGENE A. DePASQUALE**  
**AUDITOR GENERAL**

Board of Township Supervisors  
Howe Township  
Forest County  
Sheffield, PA 16347

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Howe Township Nonuniformed Pension Plan for the period January 1, 2009, to December 31, 2011. 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 objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our finding and 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. Our methodology addressed determinations about the following:

- Whether state aid was properly determined and deposited in accordance with Act 205 requirements.
- Whether employer contributions are determined and deposited in accordance with the plan's governing document and applicable laws and regulations.
- Whether employee contributions are required and, if so, are determined, deducted and deposited into the pension plan and are in accordance with the plan provisions and applicable laws and regulations.
- Whether benefit payments, if any, represent payments to all (and only) those entitled to receive them and are properly determined in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

- Whether obligations for plan benefits are accurately determined in accordance with plan provisions and based on complete and accurate participant data; and whether actuarial valuation reports are prepared and submitted to the Public Employee Retirement Commission (PERC) in accordance with state law and 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.
- Whether the terms of the contractual agreement with the Pennsylvania Municipal Retirement System are in accordance with the plan's governing document, if separately stated, and applicable laws and regulations.

The Howe Township Nonuniformed 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.

Township officials are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the Howe Township Nonuniformed 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, 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 tests indicated that, in all significant respects, the Howe Township Nonuniformed 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 finding further discussed later in this report:

Finding – Receipt Of State Aid In Excess Of Entitlement

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 Howe Township and, where appropriate, their responses have been included in the report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eugene A. DePasquale", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

December 27, 2012

EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE  
Auditor General



HOWE TOWNSHIP NONUNIFORMED PENSION PLAN  
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – Receipt Of State Aid In Excess Of Entitlement

Condition: The township received state aid in excess of the nonuniformed pension plan’s annual pension costs for the year 2009, as illustrated below:

Municipal pension costs	\$ 5,241
Forfeiture available	<u>(123)</u>
Adjusted municipal pension costs	<u>\$ 5,118</u>
State aid allocation	\$ 5,304
Adjusted municipal pension costs	<u>(5,118)</u>
Excess state aid	<u>\$ 186</u>

Criteria: Section 402(f)(2) of Act 205 states:

No municipality shall be entitled to receive an allocation of general municipal pension system State aid in an amount which exceeds the aggregate actual financial requirements of any municipal pension plans for police officers, paid firefighters or employees other than police officers or paid firefighters maintained by the municipality, less the amount of any aggregate annual member or employee contributions during the next succeeding plan year, as reported in the most recent complete actuarial report filed with the commission.

In addition, Section 14 of the pension plan agreement states:

In the event a member’s service with the township is terminated for any reason whatsoever before the funds set aside for such member are vested or if the member elects not to receive a benefit, then the amount of such funds which have not been contributed by the member and which are not vested shall be credited against the next contribution due from the township for the remaining or future members of this plan.

Cause: Plan officials failed to establish adequate internal control procedures to reconcile the township’s state aid allocation and employee forfeitures available with the plan’s annual pension costs and reimburse the excess state aid received to the Commonwealth.

HOWE TOWNSHIP NONUNIFORMED PENSION PLAN  
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – (Continued)

Effect: It is this department's opinion that because the entire proceeds of the insurance premium tax on foreign casualty insurance companies are distributed annually to each eligible recipient municipality, it is inappropriate to use state aid in one year to offset pension costs in other years. Consequently, the overpayment of state aid in the year 2009, in the total amount of \$186, must be returned to the Commonwealth for redistribution.

Recommendation: We recommend that the municipality return the \$186 of excess state aid received in the year 2009 to the Commonwealth. A check in this amount, with interest compounded annually from date of receipt to date of repayment, at a rate earned by the plan, should be made payable to: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and mailed to: Department of the Auditor General, Municipal Pension & Fire Relief Programs Unit, 11 Stanwix Street, Suite 1450, Pittsburgh, PA 15222. A copy of the interest calculation must be submitted along with evidence of payment.

Furthermore, we recommend that, in the future, plan officials reconcile the township's annual state aid allocation and any available employee forfeitures with the plan's annual pension costs and reimburse any excess state aid received to the Commonwealth.

Management's Response: Municipal officials agreed with the finding without exception.

HOWE TOWNSHIP NONUNIFORMED PENSION PLAN  
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION  
(UNAUDITED)

SCHEDULE OF STATE AID  
AND EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTIONS

Year Ended December 31	State Aid Deposited	Employer Contributions
2006	\$ 4,644	\$ 277
2007	4,759	456
2008	5,004	425
2009	5,136	123
2010	5,141	271
2011	5,332	212





HOWE TOWNSHIP NONUNIFORMED PENSION PLAN  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom Corbett  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Howe Township Nonuniformed Pension Plan  
Forest County  
7947 Route 666  
Sheffield, PA 16347

Mr. Robert Summers	Chairman, Board of Township Supervisors
Ms. Marjorie Villarreal	Secretary
Ms. Kristine M. Cline	Pennsylvania Municipal Retirement System

This report is a matter of public record. Copies of this report may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General, Office of Communications, Room 318 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120. If you have any questions regarding this report or any other matter, you may contact the Department of the Auditor General by accessing our website at [www.auditorgen.state.pa.us](http://www.auditorgen.state.pa.us).