

# COMPLIANCE AUDIT

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## Liverpool Township Non-Uniformed Pension Plan Perry County, Pennsylvania For the Period January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2019

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August 2020



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 Supervisors  
Liverpool Township  
Perry County  
Liverpool, PA 17045

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Liverpool Township Non-Uniformed Pension Plan for the period January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2019. We also evaluated compliance with some requirements subsequent to that period when possible. The audit was conducted pursuant to authority derived from the Municipal Pension Plan Funding Standard and Recovery Act (Act 205 of 1984, as amended, 53 P.S. § 895.402(j)), which requires the Auditor General, as deemed necessary, to audit every municipality which receives general municipal pension system state aid and every municipal pension plan and fund in which general municipal pension system state aid is deposited. The audit was not conducted, nor was it required to be, in accordance with Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. We planned and performed the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings 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. 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, 2014 to December 31, 2019, 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, 2014 to December 31, 2019, are presented on the Summary of Deposited State Aid and Employer Contributions.
- We determined that there were no employee contributions required by the plan's governing document and applicable laws and regulations for the years covered by our audit period.
- We determined that there were no benefit calculations prepared for the years covered by our audit period.
- We determined whether the January 1, 2017, and January 1, 2019 actuarial valuation reports were prepared and submitted by March 31, 2018, and 2020, 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.

The Liverpool Township Non-Uniformed 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 Liverpool Township Non-Uniformed Pension Plan is administered in compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances and policies. As previously described, we tested transactions, interviewed selected officials and performed procedures to the extent necessary 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 Liverpool Township Non-Uniformed 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 No. 1 - Failure To Maintain An Adequate Record-Keeping System To Effectively Monitor Activity Of The Pension Plan

Finding No. 2 - Failure To Implement Mandatory Act 44 Procedures For The Procurement Of Professional Services

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

August 25, 2020



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.

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 Liverpool Township Non-Uniformed Pension Plan is also governed by implementing regulations 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 Liverpool Township Non-Uniformed Pension Plan is a single-employer cash balance pension plan locally controlled by the provisions of Ordinance No. 16, and a separately executed plan agreement with the Pennsylvania Municipal Retirement System (PMRS) adopted pursuant to Act 15. The plan was established January 1, 1996. Active members are not required to contribute to the plan. The municipality is required to contribute 10 percent of each member's yearly compensation. As of December 31, 2019, the plan had three active members.

LIVERPOOL TOWNSHIP NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Finding No. 1 – Failure To Maintain An Adequate Record-Keeping System To Effectively Monitor Activity Of The Pension Plan**

Condition: The township’s record-keeping system did not provide effective control over the transactional activity of the non-uniformed pension plan during 2019. Municipal officials were unable to furnish annual financial statements or custodial account transaction statements for the non-uniformed pension plan. These annual financial and account statements have historically been provided by the plan’s custodian, PMRS. However, as of the date of this report, annual financial and accounting statements summarizing the pension account activity have not been provided for the year 2019.

Criteria: An adequate system of accounting and record keeping is a prerequisite for sound administration of pension plans. In addition, assets held in a custodial account for the purpose of plan management are to be governed by the terms and provisions of the account contract, provided that the terms and provisions of the contract are within the parameters of all prevailing pension legislation. Although the municipality may contract with a trustee to administer the financial management of the plan, the fiduciary responsibility for the plan remains with the municipality.

Cause: Municipal officials indicated that the plan’s custodian, PMRS, failed to provide copies of the custodial account transaction statements summarizing activity of the pension plan account for the year 2019. In addition, municipal officials did not maintain a separate detailed accounting of pension plan transactions, which, among other things, helps assure the production of proper financial statements to effectively monitor the annual activity of the pension plan.

Effect: Although we were able to obtain alternate documentation from the municipality to evidence the propriety of the individual transactions tested during performance of the audit for the year 2019, the failure to maintain annual financial and/or account transaction statements prohibits municipal officials from effectively monitoring the plan’s financial operations. Additionally, inadequate monitoring of the pension plan account could lead to undetected errors or improprieties in account transactions as well as deficiencies in authorizing and implementing pension plan policies and procedures.

Recommendation: We recommend that municipal officials contact the plan custodian and obtain annual financial statements of the custodial account of the non-uniformed pension plan for the year 2019 to ensure the accuracy and propriety of the transaction activity. In addition, we recommend that municipal officials establish and maintain a financial record-keeping system that allows the municipality to effectively monitor the plan’s financial operations, even in the absence of statements from the plan custodian. Municipal officials should refer to the Auditor General’s Bulletin No. 2-88 entitled “Preparation, Maintenance and Auditability of Financial Records,” for further guidance in establishing adequate accounting and record-keeping procedures.

LIVERPOOL TOWNSHIP NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Finding No. 1 – (Continued)**

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

Auditor’s Conclusion: PMRS has indicated that they are in the process of preparing 2019 Year-End Financial Activity Reports and Annual Member Statements for all municipalities. PMRS has also indicated that they recently went through a substantial upgrade to the plan administration software and implemented a new accounting system. This transition in addition to disruptions in normal government operation due to COVID-19 has resulted in a three to four month delay in the 2019 year-end reporting process. Compliance with the finding recommendation will be evaluated during our next audit of the plan.

**Finding No. 2 – Failure To Implement Mandatory Act 44 Procedures For The Procurement Of Professional Services**

Condition: As disclosed as a verbal observation during the prior engagement, municipal officials failed to adopt the mandatory provisions of Act 205 regarding professional services contracts.

Criteria: Section 701-A of Act 205, as amended by Act 44 of 2009, defines a “Professional Services Contract”, as follows:

“Professional services contract.” A contract to which the municipal pension system is a party that is:

- (1) for the purchase or provision of professional services, including investment services, legal services, real estate services and other consulting services; and
- (2) not subject to a requirement that the lowest bid be accepted.

In addition, Section 702-A (a) of Act 205 states in part:

Each municipal pension system ... shall develop procedures to select the most qualified person to enter into a professional services contract. The procedures shall ensure that the availability of a professional services contract is advertised to potential participants in a timely and efficient manner. Procedures shall include applications and disclosure forms to be used to submit a proposal for review and to receive the award of a professional services contract.

Additionally, Section 702-A (c), (e), (f) and (h) state, in part:

**Review.** Procedures to select the most qualified person shall include a review of the person’s qualifications, experience and expertise and the compensation to be charged.



LIVERPOOL TOWNSHIP NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Finding No. 2 – (Continued)**

**Conflict of interest.** The municipal pension system shall adopt policies relating to potential conflicts of interest in the review of a proposal or the negotiation of a contract.

**Public information.** Following the award of a professional services contract, all applications and disclosure forms shall be public except for proprietary information or other information protected by law.

**Notice and summary.** The relevant factors that resulted in the award of the professional services contract must be summarized in a written statement to be included in or attached to the documents awarding the contract. Within ten days of the award of the professional services contract, the original application, a summary of the basis for the award and all required disclosure forms must be transmitted to all unsuccessful applications and posted on the municipal pension system's Internet website, if an Internet website is maintained, at least seven days prior to the execution of the professional services contract.

Cause: Plan officials failed to establish adequate internal controls procedures to ensure compliance with provisions of Act 205 as previously recommended.

Effect: The township's failure to comply in all respects with the previous recommendation and the provisions stipulated in Act 205 regarding the procurement of professional investment and advisory services for the township's pension plan could result in a general lack of overall transparency of the actions taken by plan officials relative to the awarding of the investment and advisory services contract for the township's pension plan.

Recommendation: We recommend that municipal officials obtain a comprehensive understanding of Act 205 provisions for the procurement of professional services and develop and implement formal written procedures to ensure compliance with these provisions while maintaining appropriate and sufficient supporting documentation evidencing every phase of the process in the awarding of future professional services contracts for the pension plan, including authorizations/approvals of township officials in the official minutes of formal board meetings and the required notifications and disclosure responsibilities to ensure the transparency of the actions taken by plan officials relative to the awarding of such professional services contracts.

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

Auditor's Conclusion: Compliance will be evaluated during our next audit of the plan.

LIVERPOOL TOWNSHIP NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN  
 SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION  
 (UNAUDITED)

SCHEDULE OF CONTRIBUTIONS

<u>Year Ended December 31</u>	<u>Statutorily Determined Contribution</u>	<u>Actual Contributions</u>	<u>Contribution Deficiency (Excess)</u>	<u>Covered- Employee Payroll *</u>	<u>Contributions as a Percentage of Covered- Employee Payroll</u>
2014	\$ 7,912	\$ 7,877	\$ 35	\$ 78,522	10.03%
2015	8,146	8,146	-	80,862	10.07%
2016	8,097	8,037	60	80,366	10.00%
2017	8,122	8,061	61	80,612	10.00%
2018	8,357	7,702	655**	82,972	9.28%
2019	8,553	8,553	-		

\* This schedule is presented pursuant to the implementation of GASB Statement No. 67, *Financial Reporting for Pension Plans* by reporting entities responsible for administering the pension plan to improve financial reporting by state and local governmental pension plans. Due to the timing of this audit, covered-employee payroll for 2019 was not provided in this schedule.

\*\* Amount was deposited into the plan on January 1, 2019.

LIVERPOOL TOWNSHIP NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

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

**Mr. Darwin Hess**  
Chairman, Board of Township Supervisors

**Ms. Donna Wood**  
Chief Administrative Officer

**Ms. Charity Rosenberry, CPA**  
Pennsylvania Municipal Retirement System

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).