COMPLIANCE AUDIT

Lower Merion Township Non-Uniformed Pension Plan

Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

For the Period

January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2018

June 2019

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General

Eugene A. DePasquale • Auditor General

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0018
Facebook: Pennsylvania Auditor General
Twitter: @PAAuditorGen
www.PaAuditor.gov

EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL

Board of Township Commissioners
Lower Merion Township
Montgomery County
Ardmore, PA 19003

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Lower Merion Township Non-Uniformed Pension Plan for the period January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2018. 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 total 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 13 of the 50 plan members who retired during the current audit period[1] 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 also determined whether retirement benefits calculated for 2 of the 9 plan members who elected to vest during the current audit period[2] represent payments to all (and only) those entitled to receive them and were properly determined in accordance with the plan's governing document, applicable laws and regulations by recalculating the amount of the pension benefit due to retired individuals and comparing these amounts to supporting documentation evidencing amounts determined.

- We determined whether the January 1, 2015 and January 1, 2017 actuarial valuation reports were prepared and submitted by March 31, 2016 and 2018, 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.

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[1] We selected plan members randomly from the population of plan members who retired during the current audit period in order to obtain a representative selection for the purpose of our testing to achieve the audit objective. While representative selection is a required factor of audit sampling methodologies, audit sampling methodology was not applied to achieve this test objective; accordingly, the results of this audit procedure are not, and should not be, projected to the population.

[2] We selected plan members randomly from the population of plan members who elected to vest during the current audit period in order to obtain a representative selection for the purpose of our testing to achieve the audit objective. While representative selection is a required factor of audit sampling methodologies, audit sampling methodology was not applied to achieve this test objective; accordingly, the results of this audit procedure are not, and should not be, projected to the population.

Lower Merion Township contracted with an independent certified public accounting firm for annual audits of its basic financial statements for the years ended December 31, 2015, 2016, and 2017, 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 Lower Merion Township Non-Uniformed 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 Lower Merion Township Non-Uniformed 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 Lower Merion Township and, where appropriate, their responses have been included in the report.

June 11, 2019

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 Lower Merion Township Non-Uniformed Pension Plan is also governed by implementing regulations adopted by the former Public Employee Retirement Commission published at Title 16, Part IV of the Pennsylvania Code and applicable provisions of various other state statutes.

The Lower Merion Township Non-Uniformed Pension Plan is a single-employer defined benefit pension plan locally controlled by the provisions of Ordinance No. 1041, as amended. The plan is also affected by the provisions of collective bargaining agreements between the township and its non-uniformed employees. The plan was established October 1, 1947. Active members hired prior to January 1, 2003 are required to contribute 4 percent of compensation to the plan for 0 to 4.99 years of credited service, 2 percent for 5 to 9.99 years of credited service, 1 percent for 10 to 24.99 years of credited service, and not required for over 25 years of service. Active members hired on or after January 1, 2003 are required to contribute 5 percent of compensation to the plan. As of December 31, 2018, the plan had 255 active members, 24 terminated members eligible for vested benefits in the future, and 214 retirees receiving pension benefits from the plan.

BACKGROUND – (Continued)

As of December 31, 2018, selected plan benefit provisions are as follows:

Eligibility Requirements:

Normal Retirement	Age 60 for 40 hour employees and management, age 63 for 37.5 hour employees.
Early Retirement	Age 55
Vesting	100% vesting available after 5 years of service.

Retirement Benefit:

Benefit equals 1.4% of average monthly pay based on the final 36 months, times years of service up to 35. If hired before 1-1-1995, a maximum normal retirement pension is 2.0% of average monthly pay times years of service up to 25.

Survivor Benefit:

If vested member has attained age 50 or dies while on duty and has been married at least 1 year – a monthly benefit equal to 50% of benefit to surviving spouse. (Reduced 0.5% for each year greater than 5 that spouse is younger than employee)

Disability Benefit:

None

LOWER MERION NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
(UNAUDITED)

The supplementary information contained on Pages 3 through 6 reflects 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 YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2014 AND 2015

	2014	2015
Total Pension Liability		
Service cost	$ 1,215,974	$ 1,574,131
Interest	5,585,931	5,614,351
Difference between expected and actual experience	-	(1,822,212)
Assumption Changes	-	5,820,526
Benefit payments, including refunds of member contributions	(2,867,719)	(3,143,107)
Net Change in Total Pension Liability	3,934,186	8,043,689
Total Pension Liability – Beginning	70,042,017	73,976,203
Total Pension Liability – Ending (a)	$ 73,976,203	$ 82,019,892
Plan Fiduciary Net Position		
Contributions – employer	$ 705,710	$ 670,235
Contributions – member	299,971	354,914
Net investment income	6,946,407	19,719
Benefit payments, including refunds of member contributions	(2,867,719)	(3,143,107)
Administrative expense	(20,265)	(33,960)
Net Change in Plan Fiduciary Net Position	5,064,104	(2,132,199)
Plan Fiduciary Net Position – Beginning	81,070,314	86,134,418
Plan Fiduciary Net Position – Ending (b)	$ 86,134,418	$ 84,002,219
Net Pension Liability – Ending (a-b)	$ (12,158,215)	$ (1,982,327)
Plan Fiduciary Net Position as a Percentage of the Total Pension Liability	116.44%	102.42%
Estimated Covered Employee Payroll	$ 16,067,828	$ 17,852,222
Net Pension Liability as a Percentage of Covered Employee Payroll	(75.67%)	(11.10%)

LOWER MERION NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
(UNAUDITED)

SCHEDULE OF CHANGES IN THE NET PENSION
LIABILITY AND RELATED RATIOS
FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2016 AND 2017

	2016	2017
Total Pension Liability		
Service cost	$ 1,644,967	$ 1,791,824
Interest	5,903,515	6,210,443
Difference between expected and actual experience	-	(2,884,236)
Changes of assumptions	-	2,948,234
Benefit payments, including refunds of member contributions	(3,343,182)	(3,649,721)
Net Change in Total Pension Liability	4,205,300	4,416,544
Total Pension Liability – Beginning	82,019,892	86,225,192
Total Pension Liability – Ending (a)	$ 86,225,192	$ 90,641,736
Plan Fiduciary Net Position		
Contributions – employer	$ 750,108	$ 725,647
Contributions – member	400,241	440,615
Net investment income	5,609,419	14,215,183
Benefit payments, including refunds of member contributions	(3,343,182)	(3,649,721)
Administrative expense	(20,975)	(60,971)
Net Change in Plan Fiduciary Net Position	3,395,611	11,670,753
Plan Fiduciary Net Position – Beginning	84,002,219	87,397,830
Plan Fiduciary Net Position – Ending (b)	$ 87,397,830	$ 99,068,583
Net Pension Liability – Ending (a-b)	$ (1,172,638)	$ (8,426,847)
Plan Fiduciary Net Position as a Percentage of the Total Pension Liability	101.36%	109.30%
Estimated Covered Employee Payroll	$ 17,108,829	$ 18,178,518
Net Pension Liability as a Percentage of Covered Employee Payroll	6.85%	46.36%

LOWER MERION NON-UNIFORMED 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 township as of December 31, 2014, calculated using the discount rate of 8.0%, as well as what the township'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 (7.0%)	Current Discount Rate (8.0%)	1% Increase (9.0%)
Net Pension Liability – 12/31/14	$ (4,319,572)	$ (12,158,215)	$ (18,837,394)

In addition, the following presents the net pension liability of the township as of December 31, 2015, 2016, and 2017, calculated using the discount rate of 7.2%, as well as what the township'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 (6.2%)	Current Discount Rate (7.2%)	1% Increase (8.2%)
Net Pension Liability – 12/31/15	$ 7,236,071	$ (1,982,327)	$ (9,821,148)
Net Pension Liability – 12/31/16	$ 8,264,893	$ (1,172,638)	$ (9,199,644)
Net Pension Liability – 12/31/17	$ 2,157,525	$ (8,426,846)	$ (17,200,616)

LOWER MERION NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
(UNAUDITED)

SCHEDULE OF CONTRIBUTIONS

Year Ended December 31	Actuarially Determined Contribution	Actual Contributions	Contribution Deficiency (Excess)	Covered-Employee Payroll *	Contributions as a Percentage of Covered-Employee Payroll*
2014	$ 625,489	$ 705,710	$ (80,221)	$ 16,067,828	4.39%
2015	625,947	670,235	(44,288)	17,852,222	3.75%
2016	750,108	750,108	-	17,108,829	4.38%
2017	665,987	725,647	(59,660)	18,178,518	3.99%
2018	579,640	874,091	(294,451)		

* Due to the timing of this audit, covered-employee payroll for 2018 was not provided in this schedule.

SCHEDULE OF INVESTMENT RETURNS

Annual Money-Weighted Rate of Return, Net of Investment Expense:

2017	16.79%
2016	6.92%
2015	0.17%
2014	8.80%

LOWER MERION NON-UNIFORMED 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, 2013, 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)
01-01-13	$ 70,226,369	$ 66,164,255	$ (4,062,114)	106.1%
01-01-15	86,134,418	77,974,517	(8,159,901)	110.5%
01-01-17	89,159,044	86,289,190	(2,869,854)	103.3%

Note: The market values of the plan's assets at 01-01-17 have been adjusted to reflect the smoothing of gains and/or losses over a five-year averaging period, which will be limited to a maximum of 120 percent and a minimum of 80 percent of the fair market value of assets. This method will lower contributions in years of less than expected returns and increase contributions in years of greater than expected returned. The net effect over long periods of time is to have less variance in contributions levels from year to year.

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.

LOWER MERION TOWNSHIP NON-UNIFORMED 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, 2017
Actuarial cost method	Entry age normal.
Amortization method	N/A
Remaining amortization period	N/A
Asset valuation method	Fair value.
Actuarial assumptions:	
Investment rate of return	7.20%
Projected salary increases	4.50%
Cost-of-living adjustments	Capped at 3.0%

LOWER MERION TOWNSHIP NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN
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