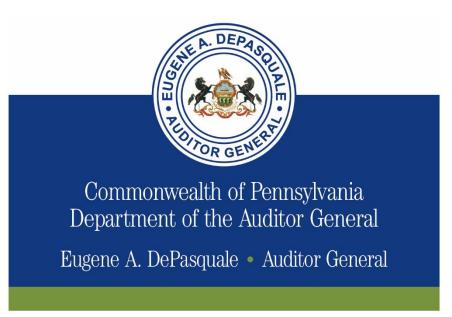
# **COMPLIANCE AUDIT**

# Mount Pleasant Borough Non-Uniformed Pension Plan Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania For the Period January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2019

January 2021







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

The Honorable Mayor and Borough Council Mount Pleasant Borough Westmoreland County Mount Pleasant, PA 15666

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Mount Pleasant Borough 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.
- 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 by the plan's governing document and applicable laws and regulations for the years covered by our audit period. We also tested individual voluntary employee contributions made during the audit period for 3 of the active employees employed during the years 2016 and 2017, amounting to \$8,285 and \$12,335, respectively, for 4 of the active employees employed during the year 2018, amounting to \$11,420, and for 2 of the active employees employed during the year 2019, amounting to \$7,269.
- We determined whether retirement benefits calculated for plan members 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 benefits due to the retired individuals and comparing these amounts to supporting documentation evidencing amounts determined and actually paid to the recipients.
- 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.
- We determined whether provisions of the Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP) were in accordance with the provisions of Act 205 by examining provisions stated in the plan's governing documents.

The Mount Pleasant Borough 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.

Borough officials are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the Mount Pleasant Borough 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 with provisions of contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinance with provisions of contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances with provisions of contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances with ministrative procedures to the audit objective.

The results of our procedures indicated that, in all significant respects, the Mount Pleasant Borough 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	<ul> <li>Receipt Of State Aid In Excess Of Entitlement</li> </ul>
Finding No. 2	<ul> <li>Municipal Contributions Made In Excess Of Contributions Required To Fund The Plan</li> </ul>
Finding No. 3	<ul> <li>Incorrect Data On Certification Form AG 385 Resulting In An Overpayment Of State Aid</li> </ul>
Finding No. 4	<ul> <li>Failure To Maintain An Adequate Record-Keeping System To Effectively Monitor Activity Of The Pension Plan</li> </ul>

The contents of this report were discussed with officials of Mount Pleasant 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.

Eugn f. O-Pargue

December 3, 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 <u>et seq</u>.). 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 Mount Pleasant Borough 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 Mount Pleasant Borough Non-Uniformed Pension Plan is a single-employer cash balance pension plan locally controlled by the provisions of Ordinance No. 617, as amended, and a separately executed plan agreement with the Pennsylvania Municipal Retirement System (PMRS), adopted pursuant to Act 15. The plan is also affected by the provisions of collective bargaining agreements between the borough and its non-uniformed employees. The plan was established January 1, 1990. Active members are not required to contribute; however, may contribute up to 10 percent of their compensation into the plan. The municipality was required to contribute \$3.20 per hour worked for the year 2016, \$3.25 per hour worked for the year 2017, \$3.30 per hour worked for the year 2018, and \$3.35 per hour worked for the year 2019, to the plan for each eligible member. As of December 31, 2019, the plan had 7 active members, 9 terminated members eligible for vested benefits in the future, and 9 retirees receiving pension benefits.

# Finding No. 1 - Receipt Of State Aid In Excess Of Entitlement

<u>Condition</u>: The borough received state aid in excess of the non-uniformed pension plan's actual pension costs in the years 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019, as illustrated below:

	<u>2016</u>		<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	
State aid allocation	\$	52,618	\$ 55,743	\$ 51,767	\$	50,017
State aid returned to Commonwealth		(2,208)	 (9,938)	 -		-
Adjusted state aid received		50,410	 45,805	 51,767		50,017
Actual municipal pension costs		(49,242)	 (43,360)	 (35,916)		(41,669)
Excess state aid	\$	1,168	\$ 2,445	\$ 15,851	\$	8,348

In addition, as of the date of our audit fieldwork completion, \$4,276 of the 2018 excess state aid and all of the 2019 excess state aid remained in the borough's general fund and had not been deposited into the pension plan according to municipal records.

#### 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.

<u>Cause</u>: Although the borough returned excess state aid to the Commonwealth in 2016 and 2017, the amounts were not correct, and in 2018 and 2019, the borough failed to reconcile the borough's annual state aid allocation with the plan's actual pension costs and reimburse the difference to the Commonwealth.

# **Finding No. 1 – (Continued)**

<u>Effect</u>: 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 overpayments of state aid in the years 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019 must be returned to the Commonwealth for redistribution.

Furthermore, the borough's future state aid allocations may be withheld until the finding recommendation is complied with.

<u>Recommendation</u>: We recommend that the municipality return the \$27,812 of excess state aid received in the years 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019 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, 321 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120. A copy of the interest calculation must be submitted along with evidence of payment.

We also recommend that, in the future, plan officials reconcile the borough's annual state aid allocation with the plan's actual pension costs and reimburse any excess state aid received to the Commonwealth.

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

<u>Auditor's Conclusion</u>: Due to the potential withhold of state aid, the borough's compliance with the finding recommendation will be monitored subsequent to the release of the audit report and through our next audit of the pension plan.

# <u>Finding No. 2 – Municipal Contributions Made In Excess Of Contributions Required To</u> <u>Fund The Plan</u>

<u>Condition</u>: The borough made contributions to the non-uniformed pension plan in excess of contributions required to fund the pension plan, as illustrated below:

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
Actual municipal pension costs	\$ 49,242	\$ 43,360
State aid allocated to plan	 (50,410)	 (45,805)
Municipal contributions required to fund plan	\$ 	\$ -
Actual municipal contributions made	\$ 2,648	\$ 1,022
Municipal contributions required to fund plan	 -	-
Excess municipal contributions	\$ 2,648	\$ 1,022

<u>Criteria</u>: Resolution No. 2016-07 and Article XVII of the agreement between the borough and the non-uniformed employees' union for the period October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2016 set the 2016 pension contribution rate at \$3.20 per hour worked by a member, and Resolution No. 2017-02 and Article 17 of the agreement for the period October 1, 2016 to September 30, 2018 set the 2017 pension contribution rate at \$3.25 per hour worked by a member.

In addition, since state aid allocated to a pension plan must be expended on pension costs, it is the opinion of this department that where municipal contributions and state aid are both deposited into a pension plan, the state aid is expended first to fund pension costs.

<u>Cause</u>: The borough did not have adequate internal control procedures in place to ensure that municipal contributions would not exceed the required contributions outlined in the plan's governing document.

#### **Finding No. 2 – (Continued)**

<u>Effect</u>: As a result of the borough making contributions to the non-uniformed pension plan in excess of contributions required to fund the pension plan, an unallocated reserve fund in the amount of \$931 at January 1, 2015 increased to a reserve fund in the amount of \$13,800 at December 31, 2018, as illustrated by the following:

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018*</u>	
Unallocated reserve fund at January 1	\$ 931	\$ 3,422	\$	6,398
Excess state aid deposited into the plan (see Finding No. 1)	1,168	2,445		11,575
Excess municipal contributions	2,648	1,022		-
Municipal contributions made to plan members in error **	(213)	(177)		-
Interest earned on reserve funds	(157)	126		122
Transfer to pay administrative expenses	-	(440)		-
Transfer to members accounts	 (955)	 		(4,295)
Unallocated reserve fund at December 31	\$ 3,422	\$ 6,398	\$	13,800

\* Table as of December 31, 2018 due to PMRS transaction statements not available for 2019. See Finding No. 4 contained in this report.

\*\* The borough paid an incorrect pension contribution rate for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter in 2016 and 2017, resulting in municipal contributions being made to plan members in error.

The unallocated reserve fund maintained by the non-uniformed pension plan resulted because no reduction of municipal contributions occurred to reconcile the amount of state aid with the plan's actual annual pension costs. It is appropriate to use state aid to reimburse a municipality for contributions made to the pension plan to fund the pension costs in that same fiscal year, as long as annual pension costs for that pension plan are equal to or greater than the state aid allocated to that pension plan.

# **Finding No. 2 – (Continued)**

It is the opinion of this department that the borough's failure to withdraw excess municipal contributions made in prior years does not preclude the borough from withdrawing the municipal contributions maintained in the unallocated reserve fund at this time.

<u>Recommendation</u>: We recommend that the borough liquidate the unallocated reserve fund maintained by the non-uniformed pension plan by transferring the assets, which represent non-state aid funds, to the borough's general fund and returning the excess state aid to the Commonwealth. In addition, any interest income earned on assets held in the reserve fund to the date of transfer should also be transferred to the general fund.

We also recommend that, in the future, plan officials reconcile the amount of state aid allocated to the non-uniformed pension plan and municipal contributions made to the pension plan with the pension plan's annual pension costs.

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.

# <u>Finding No. 3 – Incorrect Data On Certification Form AG 385 Resulting In An</u> <u>Overpayment Of State Aid</u>

<u>Condition</u>: The borough certified 1 ineligible non-uniformed employee (1 unit) and overstated payroll by \$23,602 on the Certification Form AG 385 filed in 2020. The data contained on this certification form is based on prior calendar year information.

<u>Criteria</u>: Pursuant to Act 205, at Section 402(e)(2), in order to be eligible for certification, an employee must have been employed on a full-time basis for at least six consecutive months and must have been participating in a pension plan during the certification year.

<u>Cause</u>: Plan officials certified an employee who terminated employment on May 27, 2019 and therefore did not meet the eligibility criteria in 2019 to be certified on the Certification Form AG 385 filed in 2020. Additionally, the borough lacked adequate internal control procedures, such as having another individual review the data certified to ensure compliance with the instructions that accompanied Certification Form AG 385 prior to submission.

#### **Finding No. 3 – (Continued)**

<u>Effect</u>: The data submitted on this certification form is used, in part, to calculate the state aid due to the municipality for distribution to its pension plans. Because the borough's state aid allocation was based on pension costs, the incorrect certification of pension data affected the borough's state aid allocation, as identified below:

Year	Normal Cost		Payroll verstated	State Aid Overpayment			
					-F-J		
2020	23.45664%	\$	23,602	\$	5,536		

Furthermore, the borough's future state aid allocations may be withheld until the finding recommendation is complied with.

<u>Recommendation</u>: We recommend that the total overpayment of state aid, in the amount of \$5,536, plus interest, be returned 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 pension plan, should be made payable to: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and mailed to: Department of the Auditor General, Municipal Pension & Fire Relief Programs Unit, 321 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120. A copy of the interest calculation must be submitted along with the check.

We also recommend that in the future, plan officials establish adequate internal control procedures, such as having at least two people review the data certified, to ensure compliance with the instructions that accompany Certification Form AG 385 to assist them in accurately reporting the required pension data.

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

<u>Auditor's Conclusion</u>: Due to the potential withhold of state aid, the borough's compliance with the finding recommendation will be monitored subsequent to the release of the audit report and through our next audit of the pension plan.

# <u>Finding No. 4 – Failure To Maintain An Adequate Record-Keeping System To Effectively</u> <u>Monitor Activity Of The Pension Plan</u>

<u>Condition</u>: The borough'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.

<u>Criteria</u>: 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.

<u>Cause</u>: 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.

<u>Effect</u>: 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.

<u>Recommendation</u>: 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.

#### **Finding No. 4 – (Continued)**

Management's Response: Borough officials provided the following response:

The definition of Failure to Maintain an Adequate Record-Keeping System to Effectively Monitor Activity of the Pension Plan is not specific enough. The record keeping information is being held up by PMRS; and, not from any failure of the Borough. The wording in the definition should specify that the failure is PMRS. Therefore, I am disputing the finding and believe it should not be placed upon the borough.

<u>Auditor's Conclusion</u>: The department acknowledges the municipality's position regarding the finding; however, it is the responsibility of the municipality to maintain full and complete fiduciary records of <u>all</u> transactions with regards to the pension plan for the sake of accountability and transparency. Although the municipality may contract with a trustee to administer the financial management of the plan, the fiduciary responsibility for the plan remains solely with the municipality.

Likewise, the department also acknowledges that 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.

# MOUNT PLEASANT BOROUGH NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN POTENTIAL WITHHOLD OF STATE AID

Finding Nos. 1 and 3 contained in this audit report cite overpayments of state aid to the borough in the total amount of \$33,348, plus interest. Conditions of this nature may lead to a total withholding of state aid in the future unless those findings are corrected. A check in this amount with interest, at a rate earned by the pension plan, should be made payable to: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and mailed to: Department of the Auditor General, Municipal Pension & Fire Relief Programs Unit, 321 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120.

# MOUNT PLEASANT BOROUGH NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION (UNAUDITED)

Year Ended December 31	Re Con	tutorily equired tribution SRC)*	in R	Contributions in Relation to the SRC*		ntribution eficiency xcess)**	Covered- Employee Payroll***	Contributions as a Percentage of Covered- Employee Payroll
2014 2015 2016	\$	49,015 47,886 50,390	\$	94,713 2,850 53,058	\$	(45,698) 45,036 (2,668)	\$ 228,452 287,229 320,232	41.46% 0.99% 16.57%
2010 2017 2018 2019		43,937 40,631 41,669		46,827 47,951 41,669		(2,890) (7,320)	272,573 250,907	17.18% 19.11%

#### SCHEDULE OF CONTRIBUTIONS

\* The Statutorily Required Contribution is a contribution amount based upon the payroll and the contribution rate as outlined under the terms of the cash balance pension plan.

\*\* The Statutorily Required Contribution and the actual Contribution were provided by PMRS. Deviation between these amounts may be due to or transfers from the municipal reserve account.

In 2016, the borough met the plan's \$50,390 funding requirement through the deposit of \$50,410 in state aid (see Finding No. 1), \$955 in municipal reserve funds, and the deposit of \$2,648 in employer contributions (see Finding No. 2).

In 2017, the borough met the plan's \$43,937 funding requirement through the deposit of \$45,805 in state aid (see Finding No. 1) and the deposit of \$1,022 in employer contributions (see Finding No. 2).

In 2018, the borough met the plan's \$40,631 funding requirement through the deposit of \$47,491 in state aid (see Finding No. 1) and \$4,295 in municipal reserve funds.

In 2019, the borough met the plan's \$41,669 funding requirement through the deposit of \$41,669 of state aid.

\*\*\* Due to the timing of this audit, covered-employee payroll for 2019 was not provided in this schedule.

# MOUNT PLEASANT BOROUGH NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

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

#### **The Honorable Gerald D. Lucia** Mayor

Mr. Jack Caruso, Jr. Council President

# Mr. Jeffrey Landy Borough Manager

Ms. Sharon Lesko Borough Secretary

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

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at <u>www.PaAuditor.gov</u>. 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.