

CITY OF CARBONDALE LACKAWANNA COUNTY 35-301

LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND EXAMINATION REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2011 TO DECEMBER 31, 2012

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE - AUDITOR GENERAL

DEPARTMENT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL





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

EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE AUDITOR GENERAL

Independent Auditor's Report

The Honorable Barry J. Schoch, P.E. Secretary
Department of Transportation
Harrisburg, PA 17120

We examined the accompanying Forms MS-965 With Adjustments for the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund of the City of Carbondale, Lackawanna County, for the period January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2012. The municipality's management is responsible for the Forms MS-965. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the Forms MS-965 With Adjustments based on our examination.

Our examination was conducted in accordance with attestation standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the standards applicable to attestation engagements contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. An examination includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the City of Carbondale, Lackawanna County's Forms MS-965 for the period January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2012 and performing such other procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances. We believe that our examination provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

We are mandated by Section 403 of *The Fiscal Code*, 72 P.S. § 403, to audit each municipality's Liquid Fuels Tax Fund to ensure that funds received are expended in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States include attestation engagements as a separate type of audit. An attestation engagement performed pursuant to *Government Auditing Standards* involves additional standards that exceed the standards provided by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. Accordingly, this attestation engagement complies with both *Government Auditing Standards* and Section 403 of *The Fiscal Code*.

As described in Note 4, the adjustments included on the Forms MS-965 With Adjustments are made by the Department of the Auditor General.

<u>Independent Auditor's Report (Continued)</u>

As discussed in the Finding and Recommendations section of this report, the municipality transferred \$10,000.00 from its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund to its General Fund.

In our opinion, except for the matter discussed in the preceding paragraph, the Forms MS-965 With Adjustments present, in all material respects, the information required by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation for the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund of the City of Carbondale, Lackawanna County, for the period January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2012, in conformity with the criteria set forth in Note 1.

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we are required to report findings of significant deficiencies in internal control, violations of provisions of contracts or grant agreements, and abuse that are material to the Forms MS-965 and any fraud and illegal acts that are more than inconsequential that come to our attention during our examination. We are also required to obtain the views of management on those matters. We performed our examination to express an opinion on whether the Forms MS-965 are presented in accordance with the criteria described above and not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the internal control over reporting on the Forms MS-965 or on compliance and other matters; accordingly, we express no such opinions.

A control deficiency exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent or detect misstatements on a timely basis. A significant deficiency is a control deficiency, or combination of control deficiencies, that adversely affects the City of Carbondale, Lackawanna County's ability to initiate, authorize, record, process, or report data reliably in accordance with the applicable criteria such that there is more than a remote likelihood that a misstatement of the City of Carbondale, Lackawanna County's Forms MS-965 that is more than inconsequential will not be prevented or detected by the City of Carbondale, Lackawanna County's internal control.

A material weakness is a significant deficiency or combination of significant deficiencies that results in more than a remote likelihood that a material misstatement of the Forms MS-965 will not be prevented or detected by the City of Carbondale, Lackawanna County's internal control.

Our consideration of internal control over reporting on the Forms MS-965 was for the limited purpose described in the first paragraph of this section and would not necessarily identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be significant deficiencies or material weaknesses. We did not identify any significant deficiencies or material weaknesses, as defined above, in internal control over reporting on the Forms MS-965.

The results of our tests disclosed the following instance of noncompliance that is required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*:

• Liquid Fuels Money Transferred To The General Fund.

Independent Auditor's Report (Continued)

This report is intended solely for the information and use of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and the management of the City of Carbondale, Lackawanna County, and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

August 15, 2013

EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE

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Auditor General

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CITY OF CARBONDALE LACKAWANNA COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND BACKGROUND FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2011 TO DECEMBER 31, 2012

Background

The Liquid Fuels Tax Municipal Allocation Law, Title 72 P.S. § 2615.5, provides municipalities other than counties (townships, boroughs, cities, towns, home rule, and optional plan governments) with an annual allocation of liquid fuels taxes from the state's Motor License Fund to be used for the maintenance and repair of streets, roads, and bridges for which the municipality is responsible. The allocation of these funds to municipalities is based: (1) 50 percent on the municipality's proportion of local road mileage to the total local road mileage in the state, and (2) 50 percent on the proportion of a municipality's population to the total population in the state.

The Vehicle Code, Title 75 P.S. § 9511, provides municipalities with annual maintenance payments to be received from the Motor License Fund for functionally local highways that were transferred to a municipality from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Each municipality must deposit the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund money and annual maintenance payments that it receives into a special fund called the Municipal Liquid Fuels Tax Fund or State Fund. A municipality may not deposit any other monies into this fund except when the municipality does not have enough money in the special fund to meet the payments called for by its current annual budget for road and bridge purposes. In this case, the municipality may borrow money or transfer money from its General Fund to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund.

The Department of Transportation has been given the regulatory authority for the administration of these funds. To qualify for its annual allocation, each municipality shall submit the following documents and information to the Department of Transportation:

- 1. Evidence that the treasurer is bonded in accordance with the law, or that its treasurer is a bank requiring no bond by January 31 of each year.
- 2. A report indicating the manner in which its liquid fuels tax allocation was expended in the previous year (Form MS-965) by January 31 of each year.
- 3. A report of elected and appointed officials by January 31 of each year.
- 4. A Survey of Financial Condition by March 15 of each year.

Department of Transportation *Publication 9* contains the policies and procedures that govern the use of Liquid Fuels Tax Fund money. However, if there is a difference between *Publication 9* and any legislation, the legislation shall govern.

CITY OF CARBONDALE LACKAWANNA COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2011 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 1 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Expenditure Summary	Reported	A	Adjustments (Note 4)	 Adjusted Amount
Major equipment purchases	\$ _	\$	-	\$ -
Minor equipment purchases	-		-	-
Computer/Computer related training	_		-	-
Agility projects	-		-	-
Cleaning streets and gutters	-		-	-
Winter maintenance services	-		-	-
Traffic control devices	-		-	-
Street lighting	119,233.00		(84.00)	119,149.00
Storm sewers and drains	-		-	-
Repairs of tools and machinery	-		-	-
Maintenance and repair of				
roads and bridges	78,346.92		(65,000.00)	13,346.92
Highway construction and				
rebuilding projects	-		-	-
Miscellaneous (Note 6)			65,084.00	65,084.00
Total (To Section 2, Line 5)	\$ 197,579.92	\$	-	\$ 197,579.92

CITY OF CARBONDALE LACKAWANNA COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2011 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 2 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Fund Balance	Reported	djustments (Note 4)	Adjusted Amount
1. Balance, January 1, 2011	\$ 1,129.98	\$ 978.35	\$ 2,108.33
Receipts: 2. State allocation 2a. Turnback allocation	180,800.34	-	180,800.34
2b. Interest on investments (Note 3) 2c. Miscellaneous (Note 5)	115.91 62,399.28	 6.22 30.00	122.13 62,429.28
3. Total receipts	243,315.53	36.22	243,351.75
4. Total funds available	244,445.51	1,014.57	245,460.08
5. Expenditures (Section 1)	197,579.92		197,579.92
6. Balance, December 31, 2011	\$ 46,865.59	\$ 1,014.57	\$ 47,880.16

CITY OF CARBONDALE LACKAWANNA COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2011 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 3 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Equipment Balance		Reported	justments Note 4)	Adjusted Amount
1. Prior year equipment balance	\$	1,129.98	\$ 978.35	\$ 2,108.33
2. Add: Current year equipment allocation (20% of Lines 2 + 2a, Section 2)	1	36,160.07	-	36,160.07
3. PENNDOT approved adjustments				
4. Total funds available for equipment acquisition		37,290.05	978.35	38,268.40
5. Less: Major equipment expenditures			 	
6. Remainder		37,290.05	 978.35	38,268.40
7. Equipment balance available for subsequent year (Lesser of Line 6 or Section 2 balance, but not less than zero)	\$	37 290 05	\$ 978 35	\$ 38 268 40
but not less than zero)	\$	37,290.05	\$ 978.35	\$ 38,268.40

Notes to Forms MS-965 With Adjustments are an integral part of this report.

CITY OF CARBONDALE LACKAWANNA COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2012 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 1 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Evnanditura Cummory	Danamad	djustments		Adjusted Amount
Expenditure Summary	Reported	 (Note 4)	Alliount	
Major equipment purchases	\$ -	\$ -	\$	-
Minor equipment purchases	-	-		-
Computer/Computer related training	-	-		-
Agility projects	-	-		-
Cleaning streets and gutters	-	-		-
Winter maintenance services	14,377.39	-		14,377.39
Traffic control devices	-	-		-
Street lighting	142,986.26	74.19		143,060.45
Storm sewers and drains	-	-		-
Repairs of tools and machinery	-	-		-
Maintenance and repair of				
roads and bridges	7,930.90	-		7,930.90
Highway construction and				
rebuilding projects	-	-		-
Miscellaneous (Bank service charges)	 164.98	-		164.98
Total (To Section 2, Line 5)	\$ 165,459.53	\$ 74.19	\$	165,533.72

CITY OF CARBONDALE LACKAWANNA COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2012 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 2 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Fund Balance	Reported	djustments (Note 4)	 Adjusted Amount
1. Balance, January 1, 2012	\$ 46,865.59	\$ 1,014.57	\$ 47,880.16
Receipts: 2. State allocation	177,736.82	-	177,736.82
2a. Turnback allocation2b. Interest on investments (Note 3)2c. Miscellaneous (Note 5)	112.36 6,681.20	- - -	112.36 6,681.20
3. Total receipts	184,530.38	 	 184,530.38
4. Total funds available	231,395.97	1,014.57	232,410.54
5. Expenditures (Section 1)	 165,459.53	 74.19	 165,533.72
6. Balance, December 31, 2012	\$ 65,936.44	\$ 940.38	\$ 66,876.82

Notes to Forms MS-965 With Adjustments are an integral part of this report.

CITY OF CARBONDALE LACKAWANNA COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2012 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 3 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Equipment Balance		Reported	•	justments Note 4)		Adjusted Amount
1. Prior year equipment balance	\$	37,290.05	\$	978.35	\$	38,268.40
2. Add: Current year equipment allocation (20% of Lines 2 + 2a, Section 2)	1	35,547.36		-		35,547.36
3. PENNDOT approved adjustments		<u> </u>				
4. Total funds available for equipment acquisition		72,837.41		978.35		73,815.76
5. Less: Major equipment expenditures						
6. Remainder		72,837.41		978.35		73,815.76
7. Equipment balance available for subsequent year (Lesser of Line 6 or Section 2 balance, but not less than zero)	¢	65,936.44	\$	940.38	\$	66,876.82
out not less than zero)	φ	03,330.44	φ	940.30	φ	00,870.82

Notes to Forms MS-965 With Adjustments are an integral part of this report.

1. Criteria

Section 1

This section of Form MS-965 With Adjustments provides a summary of Liquid Fuels Tax Fund expenditures by category. Categories requiring explanation include:

- Major equipment purchases are purchases of road machinery and road equipment that cost in excess of \$4,000.00 prior to 2012 and in excess of \$10,000.00 during 2012 and subsequent years.
- Minor equipment purchases are purchases of road machinery and road equipment that cost \$4,000.00 or less prior to 2012 and \$10,000.00 or less during 2012 and subsequent years.
- Agility projects are exchanges of services with the Department of Transportation.

Section 2

This section of Form MS-965 With Adjustments provides information on the fund balance. Categories requiring explanation include:

- The state allocation is generally received from the Department of Transportation during the first week in April of each year. The amount the municipality receives is based half on its population and half on its road mileage.
- The turnback allocation is generally received from the Department of Transportation during the first week in April of each year. A municipality receives a yearly turnback allocation based on road mileage for all roads that were transferred to the municipality from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania through the Highway Transfer Program.
- Expenditures include the total transferred from Section 1.

1. <u>Criteria (Continued)</u>

Section 3

This section of Form MS-965 With Adjustments determines if the municipality expended Liquid Fuels Tax Fund money in excess of the permissible amount for equipment and the balance that the municipality may carry forward for the purchase of equipment to the subsequent year.

Department of Transportation *Publication 9* requires that the amount expended for equipment purchases in a given year not exceed the sum of the equipment balance carried forward from the previous year and 20 percent of the current year's Liquid Fuels Tax Fund allocation and, if applicable, 20 percent of the turnback allocation plus other Department of Transportation approved adjustments.

If the municipality spent in excess of the amount listed on Line 4, the excess must be reimbursed to the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund.

The equipment balance to be carried forward for the subsequent year is the lesser of the amount on Line 6 or the ending fund balance on Line 6 of Section 2, but not less than zero.

Basis Of Presentation

The financial activities of the municipality are accounted for in separate funds. The Liquid Fuels Tax Fund is used to account for state aid revenues from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation used primarily for building and improving local roads and bridges. The Forms MS-965 have been prepared in accordance with reporting requirements prescribed by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation as a result of the Fuels Tax Act 655, dated 1956 and as amended, which does not constitute a complete presentation of the entity's assets, liabilities, expenses, and fund balance. Accordingly, the presentation of Forms MS-965 With Adjustments is restricted to the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund, which represents a segment of the entity.

Basis Of Accounting

The accompanying Forms MS-965 With Adjustments are prepared in accordance with reporting requirements prescribed by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. Under this method, revenues are recognized when received and expenditures are recorded when paid.

1. Criteria (Continued)

General Fixed Assets

General fixed assets are recognized as expenditures at the time of purchase. No depreciation has been provided on the heavy equipment used to maintain and repair roads and bridges.

2. Deposits

The Third Class Township Code, Title 53 P.S. § 36804, authorizes the township to deposit its funds in the following:

- Deposits in savings accounts or time deposits, other than certificates of deposit or share accounts of institutions having their principal place of business in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) or other like insurance. For any amount above the insured maximum, the depository shall pledge approved collateral.
- Certificates of deposit purchased from institutions insured by the FDIC or other like insurance to the extent that such accounts are so insured. For any amounts in excess of the insured maximum, such deposits shall be collateralized by a pledge or assignment of assets. Certificates of deposit may not exceed 20 percent of a bank's total capital surplus or 20 percent of a savings and loan's or savings bank's assets minus liabilities.

Deposits consist of receipts and deposits in financial institutions. Pennsylvania statutes require all deposits to be insured and, for any amount above the insured maximum, to be secured with approved collateral as defined.

There were no deposits exposed to custodial credit risk as of December 31, 2012. Custodial credit risk, as defined by GASB No. 40, includes deposits that are not covered by depository insurance and the deposits are uncollateralized, collateralized with securities held by the pledging financial institution, or collateralized with securities held by the pledging financial institution's trust department or agent but not in the municipality's name.

2. <u>Deposits (Continued)</u>

Fund Balance

The fund balance as of December 31, 2012 consists of the following:

Cash \$66,876.82

3. Interest On Investments

Our examination disclosed that the municipality deposited idle liquid fuels tax money in interest-bearing accounts which earned \$122.13 during 2011, and \$112.36 during 2012, thus providing additional funds for road maintenance and repairs.

4. Adjustments

2011 - Section 1

Adjustments were made to "Street lighting," "Maintenance and repair of roads and bridges," and "Miscellaneous" because expenditures of \$65,084.00 were misclassified.

2011 - Section 2

An adjustment of \$978.35 was made to "Balance, January 1, 2011" because an incorrect fund balance was reported.

An adjustment of \$6.22 was made to "Interest on investments" because interest earned was understated.

An adjustment of \$30.00 was made to "Miscellaneous" because these receipts were understated.

2011 - Section 3

An adjustment of \$978.35 was made to "Prior year equipment balance" because an incorrect equipment balance was carried forward.

4. Adjustments (Continued)

<u>2012 - Section 1</u>

An adjustment of \$74.19 was made to "Street lighting" because a transfer to the sweep account was not reported.

2012 - Section 2

An adjustment of \$1,014.57 was made to "Balance, January 1, 2012" to reflect the adjustments made in 2011 - Section 2.

2012 - Section 3

An adjustment of \$978.35 was made to "Prior year equipment balance" to reflect the adjustments made in 2011 - Section 3.

5. <u>Miscellaneous Receipts</u>

The following miscellaneous receipts were deposited into the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund during the examination period:

Source	Description	2011	2012
General Fund Commonwealth	Temporary loan (Note 8)	\$55,000.00	\$ -
of Pennsylvania	Gas tax refund	7,399.28	6,681.20
Financial institution	Refund bank service charges	30.00	
Total		\$62,429.28	\$6,681.20

6. Miscellaneous Expenditures

The following miscellaneous expenditures were paid from the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund during the examination period:

Payee	Description	2011
General Fund Financial institution General Fund	Repayment of temporary loan (Note 8) Bank service charges Transfers to General Fund (Finding)	\$55,000.00 84.00 10,000.00
Total		\$65,084.00

7. General Obligation Note

On December 5, 2002, the City of Carbondale entered into an agreement to borrow \$542,670.00 from Community Bank to purchase street lighting fixtures. The term of the loan was for 20 years at an interest rate of 3.33 percent. The Liquid Fuels Tax Fund is responsible for \$425,100.00 and the General Fund is responsible for \$117,570.00. Prior years' principal and interest payments from the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund were \$45,870.46 and \$119,018.83, respectively. Additionally, the municipality paid principal of \$57,643.79 and interest of \$3,482.11 from the General Fund.

During the current examination period the municipality paid principal of \$58,352.41 and interest of \$27,135.59 from the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund. These amounts are reflected in street lighting on the 2011 and 2012 Forms MS-965 - Section 1. Additionally, the municipality paid principal of \$2,468.96 and interest of \$1,093.04 from the General Fund. The financial institution gave an additional \$4,056.53 refund in the form of a principal reduction to the balance because of an incorrect interest rate being charged. As of December 31, 2012, the outstanding balance of the loan is \$374,277.85; of which the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund is responsible for \$317,699.45 and the General Fund is responsible for \$56,578.40.

8. Temporary Loans

On January 19, 2011, and April 19, 2011, the municipality loaned \$30,000.00 and \$25,000.00, respectively, from its General Fund to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund. On May 13, 2011, the municipality transferred \$55,000.00 from its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund to its General Fund to repay the temporary loans.

CITY OF CARBONDALE LACKAWANNA COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND FINDING AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2011 TO DECEMBER 31, 2012

Finding - Liquid Fuels Money Transferred To The General Fund

Our examination disclosed that the municipality transferred \$10,000.00 from its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund to its General Fund on July 27, 2011, which is in noncompliance with the Liquid Fuels Tax Municipal Allocation Law.

The practice of transferring liquid fuels money into any account other than the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund account is contrary to the Act of June 1, 1956, P.L. (1955) 1944, 72 P.S. § 2615.5, known as the Liquid Fuels Tax Municipal Allocation Law, which states:

. . .each city, borough, town and township, shall . . . Establish and maintain a special fund into which the moneys [liquid fuels tax funds] . . . shall be deposited and into which no other moneys may be deposited or commingled . . .

The risk that Liquid Fuels Tax Fund money may be used for unauthorized purposes increases when liquid fuels money is commingled with other funds.

Recommendations

We recommend that the municipality reimburse \$10,000.00 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund upon official notification by the Department of Transportation.

We also recommend that, in the future, the municipality only transfer Liquid Fuels Tax Fund money to other funds if it is for the reimbursement of permissible Liquid Fuels Tax Fund expenditures.

Management's Response

The city clerk stated:

The City of Carbondale acknowledges the Finding. There was a break-down in communication between accounts.

Auditor's Conclusion

During our next examination we will determine if the municipality complied with our recommendations.

CITY OF CARBONDALE LACKAWANNA COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND SUMMARY OF EXIT CONFERENCE FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2011 TO DECEMBER 31, 2012

An exit conference was held August 15, 2013. Those participating were:

CITY OF CARBONDALE

Ms. Michele Bannon, City Clerk

DEPARTMENT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. Jerome Werner, Auditor

The results of the examination were presented and discussed in their entirety.

CITY OF CARBONDALE LACKAWANNA COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND REPORT DISTRIBUTION FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2011 TO DECEMBER 31, 2012

This report was initially distributed to:

The Honorable Barry J. Schoch, P.E. Secretary
Department of Transportation

City of Carbondale Lackawanna County 1 North Main Street Carbondale, PA 18407

The Honorable Justin Taylor Mayor

The Honorable Kathleen Connor President of Council

Thomas Rainey, CPA Finance Director

Ms. Michele Bannon City Clerk

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at www.auditorgen.state.pa.us. Media questions about the report can be directed to the Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General, Office of Communications, 231 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120; via email to: news@auditorgen.state.pa.us.