# ATTESTATION ENGAGEMENT

# Borough of Juniata Terrace

Mifflin County, Pennsylvania 44-406

Liquid Fuels Tax Fund
For the Period
January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2021

# September 2022



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General

Timothy L. DeFoor • Auditor General



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TIMOTHY L. DEFOOR AUDITOR GENERAL

### **Independent Auditor's Report**

The Honorable Yassmin Gramian, 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 Borough of Juniata Terrace, Mifflin County, for the period January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2021. The municipality's management is responsible for presenting the Forms MS-965 in accordance with the criteria described in the Background section of this report and the Department of Transportation's *Publication 9*. 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. Those standards require that we plan and perform the examination to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the Forms MS-965 are presented in accordance with the criteria described above, in all material respects. An examination involves performing procedures to obtain evidence about the Forms MS-965. The nature, timing and extent of the procedures selected depend on our judgement, including an assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the Forms MS-965, whether due to fraud or error. We believe that the evidence we obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a reasonable basis for our opinion.

As discussed in Finding No. 1, the borough expended \$1,198.61 in excess of the approved amount for street lighting during 2020.

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 Borough of Juniata Terrace, Mifflin County, for the period January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2021, in accordance with the criteria described in the Background section of this report and the Department of Transportation's *Publication 9*.

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

A deficiency in internal control 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 and correct, misstatements on a timely basis. A material weakness is a deficiency, or combination of deficiencies, in internal control such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the Forms MS-965 will not be prevented, or detected and corrected, on a timely basis. A significant deficiency is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control that is less severe than a material weakness, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance.

Our consideration of internal control over reporting on the Forms MS-965 was for the limited purpose of expressing an opinion on whether the Forms MS-965 are presented in accordance with the criteria described above and would not necessarily identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies. Given these limitations, during our engagement we did not identify any deficiencies in internal control that we consider to be material weaknesses. However, material weaknesses may exist that have not been identified.

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the Forms MS-965 are free from material misstatement, we performed tests of Borough of Juniata Terrace, Mifflin County's compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements, noncompliance with which could have a direct and material effect on the determination of amounts on the Forms MS-965. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our engagement, and accordingly, we do not express such an opinion. The results of our tests disclosed the following instance of noncompliance that is required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*:

• Over Expenditure Of Street Lighting Costs.

We also noted a matter that, while not required to be included in this report by Government Auditing Standards, has been included in the finding below:

• Late Receipt Of Allocation.

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

The purpose of this report is to determine whether the municipality's Liquid Fuels Tax Fund money is spent in accordance with the laws and regulations identified in the Background section of this report and the Department of Transportation's *Publication 9*. This report is not suitable for any other purpose.

We appreciate the courtesy extended by the Borough of Juniata Terrace, Mifflin County, to us during the course of our examination. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Bureau of County Audits at 717-787-1363.

Timothy L. DeFoor

Timothy L. Detoor

Auditor General

August 23, 2022

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### Background

The Liquid Fuels Tax Municipal Allocation Law, Act 655 of 1956, as amended, see also 72 P.S. § 2615.5, et sec., provides municipalities other than counties (i.e., 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 upon: (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.

Title 75 Pa.C.S. § 9511 of the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code 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 allocation of Liquid Fuels Tax funds and annual maintenance payments that it receives into a special fund called either 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 such a 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. Department of Transportation's *Publication 9* includes the policies and procedures for the administration of Act 655, as amended, and the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund money. However, if there is a difference between *Publication 9* and any legislation, the legislation shall govern.

To qualify for the annual allocation of Liquid Fuels Tax funds, *Publication 9* indicates that each municipality shall:

- 1. Submit annual reports (MS-965, Actual Use Report, MS-965P, Project and Miscellaneous Receipts, and MS-965S, Record of Checks).
- 2. Make deposits and payments or expenditures in compliance with Act 655 of 1956, as amended. Failure to do so may result in not receiving allocations from PennDOT until all discrepancies are resolved. *Publication 9*, Section 2.6, includes information about investing Liquid Fuels Tax monies, using loan or bond proceeds, and types of receipts into the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund.

### Background (Continued)

- 3. Submit the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development's (DCED) Report of Elected and Appointed Officials by January 31<sup>st</sup> and the Survey of Financial Condition By March 15<sup>th</sup>.
- 4. Ensure resolution of all Contractor Responsibility Program (CRP) holds and blocks imposed by the Department of Revenue and the Department of Labor and Industry.
- 5. Ensure resolution of all reimbursements required as a result of audits performed by the Department of the Auditor General or monitoring reviews performed by the Department of Transportation's Financial Consultants.

#### Criteria

The criteria for the Form MS-965 With Adjustment are described below.

Section 1 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 with varying yearly costs in excess of the amounts indicated below:

2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>#10.000.00</b>	<b>#11.100.00</b>	<b>#11 200 00</b>	¢11.500.00
\$10,900.00	\$11,100.00	\$11,300.00	\$11,500.00

• Minor equipment purchases are purchases of road machinery and road equipment with varying yearly costs that are less than or equal to the amounts indicated below:

 2018	2019	2020	2021
\$10,900.00	\$11,100.00	\$11,300.00	\$11,500.00

• Agility projects are exchanges of services with the Department of Transportation.

### Background (Continued)

Section 2 of Form MS-965 With Adjustments provides information on the fund balance. Categories requiring explanation include:

- The state allocation is available from the Department of Transportation in March of each year. The amount the municipality receives is based half on its population and half on its road mileage.
- Municipalities that transferred roads from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to the municipality through the Highway Transfer Program receive annual turnback allocations in March of each year from the Department of Transportation. Turnback allocations are based on the mileage of the roads transferred.
- Expenditures include the total transferred from Section 1.

Section 3 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.

### Background (Continued)

### 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 Form MS-965 has 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 Form MS-965 With Adjustments is restricted to the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund, which represents a segment of the entity.

### Basis Of Accounting

The accompanying Form MS-965 With Adjustments is 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.

#### 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.

# BOROUGH OF JUNIATA TERRACE MIFFLIN COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2020 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 1 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Expenditure Summary	Reported		Adjustments		Adjusted Amount	
Minor equipment purchases	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-
Computer/Computer related training		-		-		-
Major equipment purchases		-		-		-
Agility projects		-		-		-
Cleaning streets and gutters		-		-		-
Winter maintenance services		-		-		-
Traffic control devices		648.43		-		648.43
Street lighting		2,087.78		-		2,087.78
Storm sewers and drains		-		-		-
Repairs of tools and machinery		444.54		-		444.54
Maintenance and repair of						
roads and bridges		-		-		-
Highway construction and						
rebuilding projects		-		-		-
Miscellaneous						
Total (To Section 2, Line 5)	\$	3,180.75	\$		\$	3,180.75

# BOROUGH OF JUNIATA TERRACE MIFFLIN COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2020 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 2 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Fund Balance	Reported		Reported Adjustments		Adjusted Amount	
1. Balance, January 1, 2020	\$	42,421.76	\$	-	\$	42,421.76
Receipts: 2. State allocation 2a. Turnback allocation 2b. Interest on investments		16,206.51 - 164.98		- - -		16,206.51 - 164.98
<ul><li>2c. Miscellaneous</li><li>3. Total receipts</li></ul>		16,371.49		<u>-</u>		16,371.49
4. Total funds available		58,793.25		-		58,793.25
5. Expenditures (Section 1)		3,180.75				3,180.75
6. Balance, December 31, 2020	\$	55,612.50	\$		\$	55,612.50

# BOROUGH OF JUNIATA TERRACE MIFFLIN COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2020 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 3 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Equipment Balance	Reported		Reported Adjustments		 Adjusted Amount
1. Prior year equipment balance	\$	12,783.35	\$	-	\$ 12,783.35
2. Add: Current year equipment allocation (20% of Lines 2 + 2a, Section 2)		3,241.30		-	3,241.30
3. PENNDOT approved adjustments				<u>-</u>	 <u>-</u>
4. Total funds available for equipment acquisition		16,024.65		-	16,024.65
5. Less: Major equipment expenditures					 
6. Remainder		16,024.65			 16,024.65
7. Equipment balance available for subsequent year (Lesser of Line 6 or Section 2 balance, but not less than zero)	\$	16,024.65	\$	_	\$ 16,024.65

# BOROUGH OF JUNIATA TERRACE MIFFLIN COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2021 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 1 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Expenditure Summary	Reported		Adjustments		Adjusted Amount	
Minor equipment purchases	\$	_	\$	-	\$	-
Computer/Computer related training		-		-		-
Major equipment purchases		-		-		-
Agility projects		-		-		-
Cleaning streets and gutters		-		-		-
Winter maintenance services		2,593.12		-		2,593.12
Traffic control devices		282.31		-		282.31
Street lighting		199.28		-		199.28
Storm sewers and drains		-		-		-
Repairs of tools and machinery		1,517.14		-		1,517.14
Maintenance and repair of						
roads and bridges		-		-		-
Highway construction and						
rebuilding projects		-		-		-
Miscellaneous						
Total (To Section 2, Line 5)	\$	4,591.85	\$	-	\$	4,591.85

# BOROUGH OF JUNIATA TERRACE MIFFLIN COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2021 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 2 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Fund Balance	Reported Adjustm		ustments	Adjusted Amount	
1. Balance, January 1, 2021	\$	55,612.50	\$	-	\$ 55,612.50
Receipts: 2. State allocation		15,046.43		-	15,046.43
<ul><li>2a. Turnback allocation</li><li>2b. Interest on investments</li><li>2c. Miscellaneous</li></ul>		28.40		- - -	 28.40
3. Total receipts		15,074.83			 15,074.83
4. Total funds available		70,687.33			 70,687.33
5. Expenditures (Section 1)		4,591.85			4,591.85
6. Balance, December 31, 2021	\$	66,095.48	\$		\$ 66,095.48

# BOROUGH OF JUNIATA TERRACE MIFFLIN COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2021 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 3 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Equipment Balance	Reported		Reported Adjustn		 Adjusted Amount
1. Prior year equipment balance	\$	16,024.65	\$	-	\$ 16,024.65
2. Add: Current year equipment allocation (20% of Lines 2 + 2a, Section 2)		3,009.29		-	3,009.29
3. PENNDOT approved adjustments					<u>-</u>
4. Total funds available for equipment acquisition		19,033.94		-	19,033.94
5. Less: Major equipment expenditures					
6. Remainder		19,033.94			 19,033.94
7. Equipment balance available for subsequent year (Lesser of Line 6 or Section 2 balance, but not less than zero)	\$	19,033.94	\$	-	\$ 19,033.94

### Finding No. 1 - Over Expenditure Of Street Lighting Costs

Our examination disclosed that the municipality expended \$2,087.78 during 2020 from the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund, which is \$1,198.61 more than what was allowed to be expended from Liquid Fuels funds.

The Borough Code, 53 P.S. § 46302(a)(4), or § 1302 and § 1302(4) of The Borough Code as published by the Local Government Commission provide that:

The council of the borough shall have power, by ordinance, to levy and collect annually, a tax, not exceeding thirty mills for general borough purposes, unless the council by majority action shall, upon due cause shown by resolution, petition the court of common pleas, in which case the court may order a rate of not more than five mills additional to be levied and in addition thereto any of the following taxes:...

(4) For lighting and illuminating the streets, highways and other public places with electric light, gas light or other illuminant, not exceeding eight mills;...

We noted that the municipality had levied a real estate tax assessment of 1 mills, which generated \$5,301.04 in revenue during 2020.

The Department of Transportation's Regulations permit only those street lighting expenditures in excess of the tax actually collected for street lighting to be expended from the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund.

Our calculations are as follows:

Total 2020 street lighting costs paid from all funds	\$ 6,190.21
Less total tax collected for street lighting in 2020	(5,301.04)
Permissible amount of street lighting to be paid using liquid fuels tax money	889.17
Less amount expended for street lighting from liquid fuels	2,087.78
Amount over expended – 2020	\$(1,198.61)

### Finding No. 1 - Over Expenditure Of Street Lighting Costs (Continued)

The failure to follow *The Borough Code* and the Department of Transportation's Regulations as noted above could result in the municipality having to reimburse \$1,198.61 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund.

We could not determine why this condition occurred because the current borough manager was not employed by the borough until November 2020.

## Recommendations

We recommend that the municipality reimburse \$1,198.61 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund upon official notification by the Department of Transportation.

We further recommend that, in the future, the municipality follow the Department of Transportation's Regulations by limiting their street lighting expenditures from the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund only to lighting costs which exceed the tax amount collected for street lighting.

#### Management's Response

The borough manager stated:

The 2020 transfer of funds between street light tax and Liquid Fuels was prior to my employment began. I was not hired until November of 2020. I now keep separate files for transfer, deposit, expenditures. As well as provide council with detail reports between Quickbooks and bank statements. Passwords are changed regularly. Basic accounting procedures are now kept better than before.

#### Auditor's Conclusion

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

### Finding No. 2 - Late Receipt Of Allocation

Our examination disclosed that the 2020 Liquid Fuels Tax Fund allocation of \$16,206.51, which should have been distributed from the Department of Transportation to the municipality during the first week of March of that year, was not received until September 10, 2020, because the municipality failed to comply with the Department of Transportation's *Publication 9*, Chapter Two, Section 2.4, which states:

To qualify for the annual liquid fuels tax allocation, a municipality shall:

- Submit annual reports (MS-965, Actual Use Report, MS-965P, Project and Miscellaneous Receipts, and MS-965S, Record of Checks).
- Make deposits and payments or expenditures in compliance with the Act 655. Failure to do so may result in not receiving allocations from PENNDOT until all discrepancies are resolved.
- Submit the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development's (DCED) Report of Elected and Appointed Officials by January 31<sup>st</sup> and the Survey of Financial Condition by March 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Ensure resolution of all Contractor Responsibility Program (CRP) holds and blocks imposed by the Department of Revenue and the Department of Labor and Industry.
- Ensure resolution of all reimbursements required as a result of audits performed by the Department of the Auditor General or monitoring reviews performed by the Department of Transportation's Financial Consultants.

Because the municipality failed to file documents and information timely as noted above, the municipality did not have use of the 2020 for more than six months. Furthermore, had the allocation been received timely, money may have been available for investment purposes, potentially earning interest income which could have been used for road maintenance and repairs.

This finding occurred because the municipality did not file its Survey of Financial Condition with the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development until August 26, 2020.

### Finding No. 2 - Late Receipt Of Allocation (Continued)

### Recommendation

We recommend that, in the future, the municipality complies with the Department of Transportation's *Publication 9* to ensure that the allocations are received during the first week in March as outlined above.

### Management's Response

The borough officials offered no formal response at this time.

### **Auditor's Conclusion**

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

# BOROUGH OF JUNIATA TERRACE MIFFLIN COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND SUMMARY OF EXIT CONFERENCE FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2020 TO DECEMBER 31, 2021

An exit conference was held July 15, 2022. Those participating were:

## **BOROUGH OF JUNIATA TERRACE**

Ms. Caitlin Noland, Borough Manager

## **DEPARTMENT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL**

Mr. Jordan M. Goodling, Auditor

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

This report was initially distributed to:

The Honorable Yassmin Gramian, P.E.

Secretary Department of Transportation

**Borough of Juniata Terrace** 

Mifflin County 80 Hudson Avenue Lewistown, PA 17044

The Honorable Eric Rhodes

President of Council

Ms. Caitlin Noland Borough Manager

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at <a href="www.PaAuditor.gov">www.PaAuditor.gov</a>. 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: <a href="mailto:news@PaAuditor.gov">news@PaAuditor.gov</a>.