

ATTESTATION ENGAGEMENT

Borough of Pine Grove
Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania
53-421

Liquid Fuels Tax Fund
For the Period
January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2022

January 2024



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 Michael Carroll
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 Pine Grove, Schuylkill County, for the period January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2022. 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. An examination involves performing procedures 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.

We are required to be independent and to meet our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with ethical requirements relating to the engagement.

As described in the Auditor Description of Select Transactions section of this report, the adjustments included on the Forms MS-965 With Adjustments are made by the Department of the Auditor General.

Independent Auditor's Report (Continued)

As discussed in the Findings and Recommendations section of this report:

- In 2022, the borough expended \$74,115.000 from its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund for various storm sewers and drain projects without advertising for bids (see Finding No. 1).
- In 2022, the borough expended \$20,950.00 from its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund for the purchase of a Chevrolet Equinox, which is a nonpermissible expenditure. Additionally, the borough failed to maintain documentation for price quotations for this purchase (see Finding No. 2).

In our opinion, except for the bulleted matters discussed above, 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 Pine Grove, Schuylkill County, for the period January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2022, in accordance with the criteria described in the Background section of this report and the Department of Transportation's *Publication 9*.

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we are required to report all deficiencies that are considered to be significant deficiencies or material weaknesses in internal control; fraud and noncompliance with provisions of laws or regulations that have a material effect on the Forms MS-965; and any other instances that warrant the attention of those charged with governance; noncompliance with provisions of contracts or grant agreements, and abuse that has a material effect on the Forms MS-965. We are also required to obtain and report the views of responsible officials concerning the findings, conclusions, and recommendations, as well as any planned corrective actions. 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 internal control over reporting on the Forms MS-965 or on compliance and other matters; accordingly, we express no such opinions.

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.

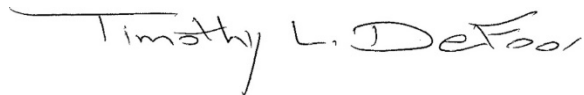
Independent Auditor's Report (Continued)

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the Forms MS-965 are free from material misstatement, we performed tests of the Borough of Pine Grove, Schuylkill 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 instances of noncompliance that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*:

- Noncompliance With Advertising And Bidding Requirements.
- Nonpermissible Expenditure And Documentation For Price Quotations Was Not Available For Examination.

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 Pine Grove, Schuylkill 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
Auditor General
November 28, 2023

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BOROUGH OF PINE GROVE
SCHUYLKILL COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
BACKGROUND
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2020 TO DECEMBER 31, 2022

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.

BOROUGH OF PINE GROVE
 SCHUYLKILL COUNTY
 LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
 BACKGROUND
 FOR THE PERIOD
 JANUARY 1, 2020 TO DECEMBER 31, 2022

Background (Continued)

3. Submit the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development’s (DCED) Report of Elected and Appointed Officials by January 31st and the Survey of Financial Condition By March 15th.
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:

2019	2020	2021	2022
\$11,100.00	\$11,300.00	\$11,500.00	\$11,800.00

- 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:

2019	2020	2021	2022
\$11,100.00	\$11,300.00	\$11,500.00	\$11,800.00

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

BOROUGH OF PINE GROVE
SCHUYLKILL COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
BACKGROUND
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2020 TO DECEMBER 31, 2022

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.

BOROUGH OF PINE GROVE
SCHUYLKILL COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
BACKGROUND
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2020 TO DECEMBER 31, 2022

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 Forms 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 PINE GROVE
SCHUYLKILL COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
2020 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 1
WITH ADJUSTMENTS

<u>Expenditure Summary</u>	<u>Reported</u>	<u>Adjustments</u>	<u>Adjusted Amount</u>
Minor equipment purchases	\$ -	\$ 5,500.00	\$ 5,500.00
Computer/Computer related training	-	-	-
Major equipment purchases	-	-	-
Agility projects	-	-	-
Cleaning streets and gutters	-	-	-
Winter maintenance services	5,019.49	-	5,019.49
Traffic control devices	-	-	-
Street lighting	-	-	-
Storm sewers and drains	1,783.00	-	1,783.00
Repairs of tools and machinery	5,500.00	(5,500.00)	-
Maintenance and repair of roads and bridges	4,840.00	-	4,840.00
Highway construction and rebuilding projects	-	-	-
Miscellaneous	-	557.06	557.06
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total (To Section 2, Line 5)	<u>\$ 17,142.49</u>	<u>\$ 557.06</u>	<u>\$ 17,699.55</u>

BOROUGH OF PINE GROVE
SCHUYLKILL COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
2020 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 2
WITH ADJUSTMENTS

<u>Fund Balance</u>	<u>Reported</u>	<u>Adjustments</u>	<u>Adjusted Amount</u>
1. Balance, January 1, 2020	\$ 12,738.52	\$ -	\$ 12,738.52
Receipts:			
2. State allocation	75,616.73	-	75,616.73
2a. Turnback allocation	1,160.00	-	1,160.00
2b. Interest on investments	206.48	-	206.48
2c. Miscellaneous	18,580.65	557.06	19,137.71
3. Total receipts	95,563.86	557.06	96,120.92
4. Total funds available	108,302.38	557.06	108,859.44
5. Expenditures (Section 1)	17,142.49	557.06	17,699.55
6. Balance, December 31, 2020	<u>\$ 91,159.89</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 91,159.89</u>

BOROUGH OF PINE GROVE
SCHUYLKILL COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
2020 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 3
WITH ADJUSTMENTS

<u>Equipment Balance</u>	<u>Reported</u>	<u>Adjustments</u>	<u>Adjusted Amount</u>
1. Prior year equipment balance	\$ 12,738.52	\$ -	\$ 12,738.52
2. Add: Current year equipment allocation (20% of Lines 2 + 2a, Section 2)	15,355.35	-	15,355.35
3. PENNDOT approved adjustments	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
4. Total funds available for equipment acquisition	28,093.87	-	28,093.87
5. Less: Major equipment expenditures	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
6. Remainder	<u>28,093.87</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>28,093.87</u>
7. Equipment balance available for subsequent year (Lesser of Line 6 or Section 2 balance, but not less than zero)	<u>\$ 28,093.87</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 28,093.87</u>

BOROUGH OF PINE GROVE
SCHUYLKILL COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
2021 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 1
WITH ADJUSTMENTS

<u>Expenditure Summary</u>	<u>Reported</u>	<u>Adjustments</u>	<u>Adjusted Amount</u>
Minor equipment purchases	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Computer/Computer related training	-	-	-
Major equipment purchases	-	-	-
Agility projects	-	-	-
Cleaning streets and gutters	-	-	-
Winter maintenance services	-	-	-
Traffic control devices	-	-	-
Street lighting	-	-	-
Storm sewers and drains	-	-	-
Repairs of tools and machinery	603.73	-	603.73
Maintenance and repair of roads and bridges	-	-	-
Highway construction and rebuilding projects	73,268.00	-	73,268.00
Miscellaneous	-	524.02	524.02
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total (To Section 2, Line 5)	<u>\$ 73,871.73</u>	<u>\$ 524.02</u>	<u>\$ 74,395.75</u>

BOROUGH OF PINE GROVE
SCHUYLKILL COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
2021 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 2
WITH ADJUSTMENTS

<u>Fund Balance</u>	<u>Reported</u>	<u>Adjustments</u>	<u>Adjusted Amount</u>
1. Balance, January 1, 2021	\$ 91,159.89	\$ -	\$ 91,159.89
Receipts:			
2. State allocation	70,199.52	-	70,199.52
2a. Turnback allocation	1,160.00	-	1,160.00
2b. Interest on investments	16.69	-	16.69
2c. Miscellaneous	-	524.02	524.02
3. Total receipts	<u>71,376.21</u>	<u>524.02</u>	<u>71,900.23</u>
4. Total funds available	<u>162,536.10</u>	<u>524.02</u>	<u>163,060.12</u>
5. Expenditures (Section 1)	<u>73,871.73</u>	<u>524.02</u>	<u>74,395.75</u>
6. Balance, December 31, 2021	<u><u>\$ 88,664.37</u></u>	<u><u>\$ -</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 88,664.37</u></u>

BOROUGH OF PINE GROVE
SCHUYLKILL COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
2021 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 3
WITH ADJUSTMENTS

<u>Equipment Balance</u>	<u>Reported</u>	<u>Adjustments</u>	<u>Adjusted Amount</u>
1. Prior year equipment balance	\$ 28,093.87	\$ -	\$ 28,093.87
2. Add: Current year equipment allocation (20% of Lines 2 + 2a, Section 2)	14,271.90	-	14,271.90
3. PENNDOT approved adjustments	-	-	-
4. Total funds available for equipment acquisition	42,365.77	-	42,365.77
5. Less: Major equipment expenditures	-	-	-
6. Remainder	<u>42,365.77</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>42,365.77</u>
7. Equipment balance available for subsequent year (Lesser of Line 6 or Section 2 balance, but not less than zero)	<u>\$ 42,365.77</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 42,365.77</u>

BOROUGH OF PINE GROVE
SCHUYLKILL COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
2022 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 1
WITH ADJUSTMENTS

<u>Expenditure Summary</u>	<u>Reported</u>	<u>Adjustments</u>	<u>Adjusted Amount</u>
Minor equipment purchases	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Computer/Computer related training	-	-	-
Major equipment purchases	20,850.00	-	20,850.00
Agility projects	-	-	-
Cleaning streets and gutters	-	-	-
Winter maintenance services	-	-	-
Traffic control devices	-	-	-
Street lighting	-	-	-
Storm sewers and drains	60,678.75	-	60,678.75
Repairs of tools and machinery	-	-	-
Maintenance and repair of roads and bridges	23,674.37	-	23,674.37
Highway construction and rebuilding projects	-	-	-
Miscellaneous	-	501.79	501.79
 Total (To Section 2, Line 5)	 <u>\$ 105,203.12</u>	 <u>\$ 501.79</u>	 <u>\$ 105,704.91</u>

BOROUGH OF PINE GROVE
SCHUYLKILL COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
2022 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 2
WITH ADJUSTMENTS

<u>Fund Balance</u>	<u>Reported</u>	<u>Adjustments</u>	<u>Adjusted Amount</u>
1. Balance, January 1, 2022	\$ 88,664.37	\$ -	\$ 88,664.37
Receipts:			
2. State allocation	67,365.00	-	67,365.00
2a. Turnback allocation	1,160.00	-	1,160.00
2b. Interest on investments	1,536.21	-	1,536.21
2c. Miscellaneous	-	501.79	501.79
3. Total receipts	<u>70,061.21</u>	<u>501.79</u>	<u>70,563.00</u>
4. Total funds available	<u>158,725.58</u>	<u>501.79</u>	<u>159,227.37</u>
5. Expenditures (Section 1)	<u>105,203.12</u>	<u>501.79</u>	<u>105,704.91</u>
6. Balance, December 31, 2022	<u><u>\$ 53,522.46</u></u>	<u><u>\$ -</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 53,522.46</u></u>

BOROUGH OF PINE GROVE
SCHUYLKILL COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
2022 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 3
WITH ADJUSTMENTS

<u>Equipment Balance</u>	<u>Reported</u>	<u>Adjustments</u>	<u>Adjusted Amount</u>
1. Prior year equipment balance	\$ 42,365.77	\$ -	\$ 42,365.77
2. Add: Current year equipment allocation (20% of Lines 2 + 2a, Section 2)	13,705.00	-	13,705.00
3. PENNDOT approved adjustments	-	-	-
4. Total funds available for equipment acquisition	56,070.77	-	56,070.77
5. Less: Major equipment expenditures	20,850.00	-	20,850.00
6. Remainder	<u>35,220.77</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>35,220.77</u>
7. Equipment balance available for subsequent year (Lesser of Line 6 or Section 2 balance, but not less than zero)	<u>\$ 35,220.77</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 35,220.77</u>

BOROUGH OF PINE GROVE
SCHUYLKILL COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
AUDITOR DESCRIPTION OF SELECT TRANSACTIONS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2020 TO DECEMBER 31, 2022

The following information relates to certain types of transactions for which the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation requested that we provide additional detail:

Adjustments

2020 - Section 1

Adjustments were made to “Minor equipment purchases” and “Repairs of tools and machinery” because expenditures of \$5,500.00 were misclassified.

An adjustment of \$557.06 was made to “Miscellaneous” because a correction of a deposit in error was not reported.

2020 - Section 2

An adjustment of \$557.06 was made to “Miscellaneous” because a deposit in error was not reported.

2021 - Section 1

An adjustment of \$524.02 was made to “Miscellaneous” because a correction of a deposit in error was not reported.

2021 - Section 2

An adjustment of \$524.02 was made to “Miscellaneous” because a deposit in error was not reported.

2022 - Section 1

An adjustment of \$501.79 was made to “Miscellaneous” because a correction of a deposit in error was not reported.

2022 - Section 2

An adjustment of \$501.79 was made to “Miscellaneous” because a deposit in error was not reported.

BOROUGH OF PINE GROVE
SCHUYLKILL COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
AUDITOR DESCRIPTION OF SELECT TRANSACTIONS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2020 TO DECEMBER 31, 2022

Miscellaneous Receipts

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

<u>Source</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania General Fund	Deposit in error Reimbursement (Summary of Prior Examination Recommendation)	\$ 557.06	\$524.02	\$501.79
		<u>18,580.65</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Totals		<u>\$19,137.71</u>	<u>\$524.02</u>	<u>\$501.79</u>

Miscellaneous Expenditures

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

<u>Payee</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania	Correction of a deposit in error	<u>\$557.06</u>	<u>\$524.02</u>	<u>\$501.79</u>

Deposit In Error

On December 1, 2020, December 1, 2021 and December 1, 2022, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania electronically deposited \$557.06, \$524.02 and \$501.79, respectively, into the municipality's Liquid Fuels Tax Fund in error. On December 3, 2020, December 2, 2021, and December 2, 2022, the municipality transferred \$557.06, \$524.02 and \$501.79, respectively, from its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund to its General Fund to correct the deposits in error.

BOROUGH OF PINE GROVE
SCHUYLKILL COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2020 TO DECEMBER 31, 2022

Finding No. 1 - Noncompliance With Advertising And Bidding Requirements

Our examination disclosed that the borough expended \$74,115.00 during 2022 from the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund for various storm sewers and drain projects without advertising for bids. These expenditures were as follows:

<u>Invoice Number</u>	<u>Invoice Date</u>	<u>Check Number</u>	<u>Check Date</u>	<u>Amount</u>
183	08/04/22	12332	08/04/22	\$ 7,310.00
183	08/04/22	12333	08/04/22	7,980.00
194	10/14/22	12528	11/11/22	14,391.00
195	10/14/22	12527	11/11/22	6,944.00
200	12/01/22	12576	12/02/22	25,100.00
203	12/14/22	12599	12/14/22	12,390.00
Total				<u>\$74,115.00</u>

The above expenditures were not made in compliance with the advertising, bidding, and contract requirements of *The Borough Code*, 53 P.S. § 46402(a), (also found at § 1402(a) of *The Borough Code* as published by the Local Government Commission), which requires that purchases made over \$18,500.00 during 2012 must be advertised, bid, and awarded by contract. The bidding threshold increased to purchases over \$21,000.00 for 2020, \$21,300.00 for 2021, \$21,900.00 for 2022, and \$22,500.00 for 2023. *The Borough Code*, 53 P.S. § 46403(a), (also found at § 1403(a) of *The Borough Code* as published by the Local Government Commission) further states that advertising, bidding and contract requirements should not be evaded through piecemeal purchases.

The Borough indicated it did not advertise for bids due to the belief that the In-Kind portion of a Low Volume Road Grant didn't need to be included in the project total due to it being the Borough's portion.

The failure to comply with *The Borough Code* could result in the borough having to reimburse \$74,115.00 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund.

Recommendations

We recommend that the borough reimburse \$74,115.00 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund upon official notification by the Department of Transportation.

We further recommend that the borough comply with *The Borough Code* as noted in this finding.

BOROUGH OF PINE GROVE
SCHUYLKILL COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2020 TO DECEMBER 31, 2022

Finding No. 1 - Noncompliance With Advertising And Bidding Requirements (Continued)

Management's Response

The borough officials stated:

Pine Grove Borough thought the In-Kind portion of the Low Volume Road Grant didn't need to be included in the project total due to it being the Borough's portion. This is why the projects were not bid out per the bidding thresholds for 2022.

Auditor's Conclusion

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

BOROUGH OF PINE GROVE
SCHUYLKILL COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2020 TO DECEMBER 31, 2022

Finding No. 2 - Nonpermissible Expenditure And Documentation For Price Quotations Was Not Available For Examination

Our examination disclosed that the borough expended \$20,950.00 during 2022 from the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund for the purchases of a Chevrolet Equinox, which is a nonpermissible expenditure. In addition, our examination further disclosed that the borough was required to obtain three written or telephonic price quotations for this expenditure. However, documentation for price quotations was not available for examination.

The Liquid Fuels Tax Municipal Allocation Law, 72 P.S. § 2615.4, provides, in part, that monies herein allocated may be used only for construction, reconstruction, maintenance, and repairs of such public roads or streets, including bridges, culverts and drainage structures, for which they are legally responsible. Also permitted are expenditures involving acquisition, maintenance, repairs and operation of street signs, traffic signs, traffic signal control systems, road equipment, and snow fences.

The Department of Transportation has been statutorily authorized to promulgate regulations concerning the administration of Liquid Fuels Tax Fund money and has determined that certain items, including a Chevrolet Equinox, are outside the scope of permissible expenditures.

In addition, the above expenditure was not made in compliance with the contract requirements of *The Borough Code*, 53 P.S. § 46402(a.1), (also found at § 1402(a.1) of *The Borough Code* as published by the Local Government Commission), which states, in part:

Written or telephonic price quotations from at least three qualified and responsible contractors shall be requested for all contracts [during 2012] that exceed ten thousand eight hundred dollars (\$10,000.00) but are less than the amount [in excess of \$18,500.00] requiring advertisement and competitive bidding or, in lieu of price quotations, a memorandum shall be kept on file showing that fewer than three qualified contractors exist in the market area within which it is practicable to obtain quotations. A written record of telephonic price quotations shall be made and shall contain at least the date of the quotation, the name of the contractor and the contractor's representative, the construction, reconstruction, repair, maintenance or work which was the subject of the quotation and the price. Written price quotations, written records of telephonic price quotations and memoranda shall be retained for a period of three years.

The thresholds for obtaining price quotations increased to purchases between \$11,300.00 and \$21,000.00 for 2020, \$11,500.00 and \$21,300.00 for 2021, \$11,800.00 and \$21,900.00 for 2022, and \$12,200.00 and \$22,500.00 for 2023.

BOROUGH OF PINE GROVE
SCHUYLKILL COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2020 TO DECEMBER 31, 2022

Finding No. 2 - Nonpermissible Expenditure And Documentation For Price Quotations Was Not Available For Examination (Continued)

Borough officials believed this was a permissible expenditure because it was being purchased for the road crew to run for parts and attend various trainings. We were unable to determine why the borough did not obtain price quotations for this purchase.

The failure to follow the Liquid Fuels Tax Municipal Allocation Law and the Department of Transportation's Regulations as noted above could result in the borough having to reimburse \$20,950.00 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund.

Recommendations

We recommend that the municipality reimburse \$20,950.00 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund upon official notification by the Department of Transportation.

In addition, we recommend that the borough comply with the Liquid Fuels Tax Municipal Allocation Law and the Department of Transportation's Regulations regarding permissible expenditures.

We further recommend that the borough comply with *The Borough Code* as noted in this finding.

Management's Response

Borough officials offered no formal response at this time.

Auditor's Conclusion

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

BOROUGH OF PINE GROVE
SCHUYLKILL COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
SUMMARY OF PRIOR EXAMINATION RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2020 TO DECEMBER 31, 2022

Summary Of Prior Examination Recommendations

In our prior report, we recommended that the Department of Transportation review our examination finding to determine if the municipality should reimburse \$18,580.65 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund for over expending liquid fuels money on a road construction project.

During our current examination, we reviewed a letter dated July 15, 2020, from the Department of Transportation directing the municipality to reimburse \$18,580.65 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund. We noted that the municipality reimbursed this amount to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund on August 6, 2020.

In our prior report, we also recommended that the municipality only expend the approved amount of liquid fuels tax fund money on road construction projects.

During our current examination, we noted that the municipality complied with our recommendation.

BOROUGH OF PINE GROVE
SCHUYLKILL COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
SUMMARY OF ONSITE CLOSEOUT MEETING
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2020 TO DECEMBER 31, 2022

An onsite closeout meeting was held August 30, 2023. Those participating were:

BOROUGH OF PINE GROVE

Ms. Melissa Dyer, Secretary/Treasurer

DEPARTMENT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. Brian P. Dries, Auditor

BOROUGH OF PINE GROVE
SCHUYLKILL COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
REPORT DISTRIBUTION
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2020 TO DECEMBER 31, 2022

This report was initially distributed to:

The Honorable Michael Carroll
Secretary
Department of Transportation

Borough of Pine Grove
Schuylkill County
1 Snyder Avenue
Pine Grove, PA 17963

The Honorable Thomas Fickinger
Chairman of the Board of Supervisors

Ms. Melissa Dyer
Secretary/Treasurer

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at www.PaAuditor.gov. Media questions about the report can be directed to the Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General, Office of Communications, 229 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120; via email to: news@PaAuditor.gov.