# ATTESTATION ENGAGEMENT

Township of Solebury Bucks County, Pennsylvania 09-221 Liquid Fuels Tax Fund For the Period January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2021

June 2023



Timothy L. DeFoor • Auditor General



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

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 Township of Solebury, Bucks 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.

We are required to be independent and to meet our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with relevant 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 Finding No. 1, the municipality expended \$96,380.74 in excess of the amount available for the purchase of major equipment in 2021. This amount was reimbursed to the municipality's Liquid Fuels Tax Fund on May 19, 2022, which was subsequent to our examination period. Additionally, as discussed in Finding No. 2, the municipality was overcharged \$2,940.88 for the purchase of superpave in 2021. This amount was reimbursed to the township's Liquid Fuels Tax Fund on June 21, 2022, which was subsequent to our examination period.

In our opinion, except for the matters 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 Township of Solebury, Bucks 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*.

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 the 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 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.

#### Independent Auditor's Report (Continued)

Our consideration of internal control was for the limited purpose of expressing an opinion on whether the Forms are presented in accordance with the criteria described above and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies and therefore, material weaknesses or significant deficiencies may exist that were not identified. 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. We did identify certain deficiencies in internal control, described in the finding listed below, that we consider to be a significant deficiency in internal control:

• Vendor Overcharges.

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the Forms MS-965 are free from material misstatement, we performed tests of the Township of Solebury, Bucks 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 Expended Equipment Purchase Tally.

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 Township of Solebury, Bucks 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. Detoor

Timothy L. DeFoor Auditor General May 11, 2023

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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
\$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.

## TOWNSHIP OF SOLEBURY BUCKS COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2020 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 1 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Expenditure Summary	Reported		Adjustments		Adjusted Amount	
Minor equipment purchases	\$	1,011.12	\$	-	\$	1,011.12
Computer/Computer related training		-		-		-
Major equipment purchases		95,930.46	0.46 -			95,930.46
Agility projects		-		-		-
Cleaning streets and gutters	2,610.00		-			2,610.00
Winter maintenance services		-		-		-
Traffic control devices		13,061.99		-		13,061.99
Street lighting		-		-		-
Storm sewers and drains		2,369.51		-		2,369.51
Repairs of tools and machinery		38,547.05		-		38,547.05
Maintenance and repair of						
roads and bridges		131,502.65		-		131,502.65
Highway construction and						
rebuilding projects		-		-		-
Miscellaneous		-				-
Total (To Section 2, Line 5)	\$	285,032.78	\$		\$	285,032.78

## TOWNSHIP OF SOLEBURY BUCKS COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2020 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 2 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Fund Balance	Reported Adjustmer		Adjusted Amount
1. Balance, January 1, 2020	\$ 632,200.54	\$ -	\$ 632,200.54
Receipts: 2. State allocation 2a. Turnback allocation 2b. Interest on investments 2c. Miscellaneous	391,538.22 - 3,460.46	- - - -	391,538.22 - 3,460.46 -
3. Total receipts	394,998.68		394,998.68
4. Total funds available	1,027,199.22		1,027,199.22
5. Expenditures (Section 1)	285,032.78		285,032.78
6. Balance, December 31, 2020	\$ 742,166.44	\$ -	\$ 742,166.44

## TOWNSHIP OF SOLEBURY BUCKS COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2020 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 3 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Equipment Balance	Reported	Adjustments	Adjusted Amount
1. Prior year equipment balance	\$ 310,847.97	\$-	\$ 310,847.97
<ol> <li>Add: Current year equipment allocation (20% of Lines 2 + 2a, Section 2)</li> </ol>	78,307.64	-	78,307.64
3. PENNDOT approved adjustments			
4. Total funds available for equipment acquisition	389,155.61	-	389,155.61
5. Less: Major equipment expenditures	95,930.46		95,930.46
6. Remainder	293,225.15		293,225.15
<ol> <li>Equipment balance available for subsequent year (Lesser of Line 6 or Section 2 balance, but not less than zero)</li> </ol>	\$ 293,225.15	<u>\$                                    </u>	\$ 293,225.15

## TOWNSHIP OF SOLEBURY BUCKS COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2021 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 1 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Expenditure Summary	Reported		Adjustments		Adjusted Amount	
Minor equipment purchases	\$	8,541.01	\$	-	\$	8,541.01
Computer/Computer related training		-		-		-
Major equipment purchases		462,296.69	- 296.69			462,296.69
Agility projects		-		-		-
Cleaning streets and gutters		2,193.75		-		2,193.75
Winter maintenance services		-		-		-
Traffic control devices		13,019.37		-		13,019.37
Street lighting		-		-		-
Storm sewers and drains		10,205.95		-		10,205.95
Repairs of tools and machinery		118,613.02		20.00		118,633.02
Maintenance and repair of						
roads and bridges		124,229.69		-		124,229.69
Highway construction and						
rebuilding projects		-		-		-
Miscellaneous				-		
Total (To Section 2, Line 5)	\$	739,099.48	\$	20.00	\$	739,119.48

## TOWNSHIP OF SOLEBURY BUCKS COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2021 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 2 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Fund Balance	Reported Adjustments		Adjusted Amount
1. Balance, January 1, 2021	\$ 742,166.44	\$-	\$ 742,166.44
Receipts: 2. State allocation 2a. Turnback allocation	363,454.02	-	363,454.02
2b. Interest on investments 2c. Miscellaneous	2,474.04 25,573.50		2,474.04 25,573.50
3. Total receipts	391,501.56		391,501.56
4. Total funds available	1,133,668.00		1,133,668.00
5. Expenditures (Section 1)	739,099.48	20.00	739,119.48
6. Balance, December 31, 2021	\$ 394,568.52	\$ (20.00)	\$ 394,548.52

## TOWNSHIP OF SOLEBURY BUCKS COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2021 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 3 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Equipment Balance	 Reported	Adjus	tments	 Adjusted Amount
1. Prior year equipment balance	\$ 293,225.15	\$	-	\$ 293,225.15
<ol> <li>Add: Current year equipment allocation (20% of Lines 2 + 2a, Section 2)</li> </ol>	72,690.80		-	72,690.80
3. PENNDOT approved adjustments	 -		-	 
4. Total funds available for equipment acquisition	365,915.95		-	365,915.95
5. Less: Major equipment expenditures	 462,296.69		-	 462,296.69
6. Remainder	 (96,380.74)			 (96,380.74)
<ol> <li>Equipment balance available for subsequent year (Lesser of Line 6 or Section 2 balance, but not less than zero)</li> </ol>	\$ _	\$		\$ 

## TOWNSHIP OF SOLEBURY BUCKS COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND AUDITOR DESCRIPTION OF SELECT TRANSACTIONS FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2020 TO DECEMBER 31, 2021

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

#### Adjustments

#### 2021 - Section 1

An adjustment of \$20.00 was made to "Repairs of tools and machinery" because these expenditures were understated.

#### Miscellaneous Receipts

The following miscellaneous receipts were deposited into the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund during 2021:

Source	Description	Amount
Insurance Company Vendor Vendor	Reimbursement for damages Refund for manhole risers Refund for materials	\$15,778.50 9,320.00 475.00
Total	-	\$25,573.50

## TOWNSHIP OF SOLEBURY BUCKS COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2020 TO DECEMBER 31, 2021

## Finding No. 1 - Over Expended Equipment Purchase Tally

Our examination disclosed that the municipality expended \$96,380.74 in excess of the amount available for the purchase of equipment for 2021 as follows:

<u>2021</u>		Actual
1.	Prior year equipment balance	\$293,225.15
2.	Current year equipment allocation (20% of Lines 2 + 2A, Section 2)	72,690.80
3.	PENNDOT approved adjustments	
4.	Total funds available for equipment acquisition	365,915.95
5.	Less: Major equipment purchases	462,296.69
6.	Amount Over Expended for equipment – 2021	\$(96,380.74)

The Department of Transportation's, *Publication 9*, Appendix D, Section 449.11, 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, 20 percent of the current year's Liquid Fuels Tax Fund allocations, and any approved adjustments.

The assistant township manager stated that this condition occurred because the municipality had to replace many large pieces of equipment that were damaged during Hurricane Ida.

The municipality reimbursed \$96,380.74 to the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund on May 19, 2022, which was subsequent to our examination period.

## Recommendation

We recommend that the municipality only expend up to the approved amount on equipment expenditures in accordance with the Department of Transportation's *Publication 9*.

## TOWNSHIP OF SOLEBURY BUCKS COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2020 TO DECEMBER 31, 2021

## Finding No. 1 - Over Expended Equipment Purchase Tally (Continued)

#### Management's Response

The assistant township manager stated:

Solebury Township acknowledges the over-expenditure in capital equipment, but it was due to extenuating circumstances - the failure of a large piece of equipment and other equipment, lost or damaged beyond repair during tropical storm/hurricane Ida in September 2021. We will make every effort to comply in the future.

#### Auditor's Conclusion

In the future, the municipality should only expend up to the approved amount on equipment expenditures. During our next examination, we will determine if the municipality complied with our recommendation.

## TOWNSHIP OF SOLEBURY BUCKS COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2020 TO DECEMBER 31, 2021

## Finding No. 2 - Vendor Overcharge

Our examination disclosed that the municipality was overcharged \$2,940.88 for an invoice dated June 11, 2021, for the purchase of superpave 9.5 mm wearing as follows:

Product	Quantity	Contract	Invoice	Unit Price	Total Price
	Purchased	Price	Price	Difference	Difference
Superpave 9.5 mm wearing	271.80 tons	\$46.98/ton	\$57.80/ton	\$10.82/ton	\$2,940.88

Good internal controls ensure that invoice prices are compared to contract prices before payments are made on vendor invoices. The failure to follow this procedure increases the possibility that overpayments can be made on vendor invoices and go undetected for long periods of time.

The assistant township manager stated that this condition occurred due to an oversight.

The municipality reimbursed \$2,940.88 to the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund on June 21, 2022, which was subsequent to our examination period.

#### Recommendation

We recommend that the municipality compare invoice prices to contract prices prior to making payments on vendor invoices.

#### Management's Response

The assistant township manager stated:

We acknowledge the overpayment of the expense. It was an oversight and controls have been put in place to prevent this from happening again in the future.

#### Auditor's Conclusion

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

## TOWNSHIP OF SOLEBURY BUCKS COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND SUMMARY OF PRIOR EXAMINATION RECOMMENDATION FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2020 TO DECEMBER 31, 2021

## Summary Of Prior Examination Recommendation

In our prior report, we recommended that the municipality establish and implement internal controls to ensure vendor invoices are reviewed timely to avoid duplicate payments.

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

## TOWNSHIP OF SOLEBURY BUCKS COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND SUMMARY OF EXIT CONFERENCE FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2020 TO DECEMBER 31, 2021

An exit conference was held January 12, 2023. Those participating were:

## TOWNSHIP OF SOLEBURY

Ms. Michele K. Blood, Assistant Township Manager

## DEPARTMENT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. Fred Casella, Auditor

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

This report was initially distributed to:

#### **The Honorable Michael Carroll**

Secretary Department of Transportation

#### **Township of Solebury**

Bucks County 3092 Sugan Road Solebury, PA 18963

#### The Honorable Mark Baum Baicker

Chairman of the Board of Supervisors

#### Ms. Michele K. Blood

Assistant Township Manager

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: <u>news@PaAuditor.gov</u>.