ATTESTATION ENGAGEMENT

Township of Sparta

Crawford County, Pennsylvania 20-222

Liquid Fuels Tax Fund
For the Period
January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017

September 2019



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General

Eugene A. DePasquale • Auditor General



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
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EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE AUDITOR GENERAL

Independent Auditor's Report

The Honorable Leslie Richards Secretary Department of Transportation Harrisburg, PA 17120

We examined the accompanying Form MS-965 With Adjustments for the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund of the Township of Sparta, Crawford County, for the period January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017. The municipality's management is responsible for presenting the Form MS-965 in accordance with the criteria set forth in Note 1. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the Form 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 Form MS-965 is presented in accordance with the criteria described above, in all material respects. An examination involves performing procedures to obtain evidence about the Form 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 Form 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 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*.

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

In our opinion, the Form MS-965 With Adjustments presents, in all material respects, the information required by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation for the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund of the Township of Sparta, Crawford County, for the period January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017, in accordance with the criteria set forth in Note 1.

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 Form 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 Form 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 Form MS-965 is presented in accordance with the criteria described above and not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on internal control over reporting on the Form 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 Form 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 Form MS-965 was for the limited purpose of expressing an opinion on whether the Form MS-965 is 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 Form MS-965 is free from material misstatement, we performed tests of the Township of Sparta, Crawford 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 Form 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 no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*. However, we did note matters that, while not required to be included in this report by *Government Auditing Standards*, have been included in the findings below:

- Noncompliance With Advertising And Bidding Requirements.
- Nonpermissible Expenditures.

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 Sparta, Crawford County, to us during the course of our examination. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Michael B. Kashishian, CPA, CGAP, CFE, Director, Bureau of County Audits, at 717-787-1363.

August 23, 2019

Eugene A. DePasquale Auditor General

Eugnet O-Pagur

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TOWNSHIP OF SPARTA CRAWFORD COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND BACKGROUND FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2017 TO DECEMBER 31, 2017

Background

The Liquid Fuels Tax Municipal Allocation Law, Act 655 of 1956, as amended, (72 P.S. § 2615.5 et sec.), 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 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.

TOWNSHIP OF SPARTA CRAWFORD COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND BACKGROUND FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2017 TO DECEMBER 31, 2017

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.

TOWNSHIP OF SPARTA CRAWFORD COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2017 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 1 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Expenditure Summary	Reported		Adjustments		Adjusted Amount	
Major equipment purchases	\$	54,038.73	\$	-	\$	54,038.73
Minor equipment purchases		-		-		-
Computer/Computer related training		-		-		-
Agility projects		-		-		-
Cleaning streets and gutters		-		-		-
Winter maintenance services		9,993.00		-		9,993.00
Traffic control devices		-		-		-
Street lighting		-		-		-
Storm sewers and drains		-		-		-
Repairs of tools and machinery		3,184.30		-		3,184.30
Maintenance and repair of						
roads and bridges		128,181.98		-		128,181.98
Highway construction and						
rebuilding projects		-		-		-
Miscellaneous						
Total (To Section 2, Line 5)	\$	195,398.01	\$		\$	195,398.01

TOWNSHIP OF SPARTA CRAWFORD COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2017 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 2 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Fund Balance	Reported	Adj	ustments	Adjusted Amount
1. Balance, January 1, 2017	\$ 92,159.09	\$	-	\$ 92,159.09
Receipts:				
2. State allocation	177,592.37		-	177,592.37
2a. Turnback allocation	11,960.00		-	11,960.00
2b. Interest on investments (Note 3)	1,372.64		-	1,372.64
2c. Miscellaneous	 			
3. Total receipts	 190,925.01		_	 190,925.01
4. Total funds available	 283,084.10		_	 283,084.10
5. Expenditures (Section 1)	 195,398.01			195,398.01
6. Balance, December 31, 2017	\$ 87,686.09	\$	_	\$ 87,686.09

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

TOWNSHIP OF SPARTA CRAWFORD COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2017 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 3 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Equipment Balance	Reported	Adjus	tments	 Adjusted Amount
1. Prior year equipment balance	\$ 92,159.09	\$	-	\$ 92,159.09
2. Add: Current year equipment allocation (20% of Lines 2 + 2a, Section 2)	37,910.47		-	37,910.47
3. PENNDOT approved adjustments			-	
4. Total funds available for equipment acquisition	130,069.56		-	130,069.56
5. Less: Major equipment expenditures	54,038.73			54,038.73
6. Remainder	 76,030.83			 76,030.83
7. Equipment balance available for subsequent year (Lesser of Line 6 or Section 2 balance, but not less than zero)	\$ 76,030.83	\$	<u>-</u>	\$ 76,030.83

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

2013	2014	2015/2016	2017	
\$10,200.00	\$10,300.00	\$10,500.00	\$10,700.00	

• 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:

2013	2014	2015/2016	2017
\$10.200.00	\$10,200,00	\$10,500,00	¢10.700.00
\$10,200.00	\$10,300.00	\$10,500.00	\$10,700.00

• 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 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.

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

Section 2 (Continued)

• Expenditures include the total transferred from Section 1.

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 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.

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

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.

2. Deposits

The Second Class Township Code, Title 53 P.S. § 68204, 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 or
 savings bank's assets minus liabilities.

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

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

There were no deposits exposed to custodial credit risk as of December 31, 2017. Custodial credit risk, as defined by GASB No. 40, as amended, 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.

Fund Balance

The fund balance as of December 31, 2017, consists of the following:

Cash \$87,686.09

3. Interest On Investments

Our examination disclosed that the municipality deposited idle liquid fuels tax money in an interest-bearing account which earned \$1,372.64 during 2017, thus providing additional funds for road maintenance and repairs.

4. Lease-Purchase Agreement

On January 31, 2017, the municipality entered into a lease-purchase agreement with John Deere Financial to purchase a 2012 BOMAG BW 213 Roller for \$88,900.00. The municipality received a rental allowance of \$3,200.00 and was charged a \$300.00 document fee and a \$168.00 lease processing fee. The total amount to be financed was \$86,168.00. The agreement was for a term of five years at an interest rate of 4.5 percent. Principal and interest payments of \$1,606.41 are due monthly.

During the current examination period the municipality paid principal of \$3,996.69 and interest of \$822.54 from the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund. This amount is reflected in major equipment purchases on the 2017 Form MS-965 - Section 1. Additionally, the municipality paid principal of \$11,724.29 and interest of \$2,733.40 from the General Fund. The outstanding balance of the lease-purchase agreement as of December 31, 2017, was \$70,447.02, plus interest. Because the municipality failed to advertise for bids for the roller, future payments are not eligible to be made from the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund (see Finding No. 1).

5. <u>Lease-Purchase Agreement</u>

On November 20, 2015, the municipality entered into a lease-purchase agreement with John Deere Financial to purchase a John Deere 672GH Motor Grader for \$234,900.00. The municipality received a trade-in allowance of \$57,000.00 for a John Deere grader and was charged a \$300 document fee and a \$168.00 lease processing fee. The total amount to be financed was \$178,368.00. The agreement was for a term of five years at an interest rate of 2.5 percent. Principal and interest payments of \$38,469.50 are due annually.

During the current examination period the municipality paid principal of \$34,972.66 and interest of \$3,496.84 from the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund. This amount is reflected in major equipment purchases on the 2017 Form MS-965 - Section 1. Additionally, the municipality paid principal of \$33,589.90 and interest of \$4,879.67 from the General Fund. The outstanding balance of the lease-purchase agreement as of December 31, 2017 was \$109,805.44, plus interest.

Finding No. 1 - Noncompliance With Advertising And Bidding Requirements

Our examination disclosed that on January 31, 2017, the township entered into a lease-purchase agreement with John Deere Financial to purchase a 2012 BOMAG BW 213 Roller for \$88,900.00 without advertising for bids (see Note 4). During 2017 the municipality made principal and interest payments totaling \$4,819.23 from the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund. These payments were as follows:

Invoice <u>Date</u>	Check <u>Number</u>	Check <u>Date</u>	<u>Amount</u>
11/26/17	740	11/10/17	\$1,606.41
12/26/17	746	12/08/17	1,606.41
01/26/18	754	12/30/17	1,606.41
Total		_	\$4,819.23

The above expenditures were not made in compliance with the advertising, bidding, and contract requirements of *The Second Class Township Code*, 53 P.S. § 68102(a), (also found at § 3102(a) of *The Second Class Township Code* as published by the Local Government Commission), which requires that purchases over \$18,500.00 during 2012 must be advertised, bid, and awarded by contract. The bidding threshold increased to purchases over \$19,700 for 2017, \$20,100.00 for 2018, and \$20,600.00 for 2019. *The Second Class Township Code*, 53 P.S. § 68104(a), (also found at § 3104(a) of *The Second Class Township Code* as published by the Local Government Commission) further states that advertising, bidding and contract requirements should not be evaded through piecemeal purchases.

The failure to comply with *The Second Class Township Code* could result in the township having to reimburse \$4,819.23 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund.

Recommendations

We recommend that the township reimburse \$4,819.23 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund upon official notification by the Department of Transportation.

We further recommend that, in the future, the township complies with *The Second Class Township Code* as noted in this finding.

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

Management's Response

The Secretary/Treasurer stated:

The Supervisors rented the 2012 BOMAG Roller to utilize during an emergency road washout and then purchased the roller afterward without advertising or bidding it.

Auditor's Conclusion

As stated above during 2017 purchases in excess of \$19,700.00 were required to be advertised and bid. During our next examination we will determine if the municipality complied with our recommendations.

Finding No. 2 - Purchase Of Uncertified Stone

Our examination disclosed that the municipality expended \$4,402.77 during 2017 from the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund for the purchase and delivery of dolo stone. However, the dolo stone was not certified by the Materials Unit of the Department of Transportation. These expenditures are as follows:

Invoice	Invoice	Check	Check		
<u>Number</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Number</u>	Date	Amount	Totals
Dolo stone			_		_
Various	Various	723	08/11/17	\$2,489.34	
Various	Various	728	09/08/17	843.93	
					3,333.27
Delivery of dolo stor	ne				
1458	08/10/17	725	08/11/17	1,069.50	
					1,069.50
2017 Total					\$4,402.77

The above purchase was not in compliance with the Department of Transportation's *Publication* 408, Section 106.02 (a), which states:

Have each material and material source of supply listed on Form CS-2000 (Source of Supply – Materials) or Form CS-201 (Source of Supply – Traffic Control Devices) and approved before delivery to project. . . .

The failure to follow the Department of Transportation's *Publication 408* could result in the municipality having to reimburse \$4,402.77 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund.

Recommendations

We recommend that the municipality reimburse \$4,402.77 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund upon official notification by the Department of Transportation.

We further recommend that, in the future, the municipality purchase stone that is approved by the Department of Transportation.

Finding No. 2 - Nonpermissible Expenditures (Continued)

Management's Response

The Secretary/Treasurer stated:

The Supervisors utilized the dolo stone during an emergency situation immediately after heavy rains caused a road washout on State Hwy 77. This stone helped keep tree limbs and other debris from clogging up the ditches and culverts again and causing another washout.

Auditor's Conclusion:

The municipality should ensure that all stone purchased is certified by the Department of Transportation. During our next examination we will determine if the municipality complied with our recommendations.

TOWNSHIP OF SPARTA CRAWFORD COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND SUMMARY OF EXIT CONFERENCE FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2017 TO DECEMBER 31, 2017

An exit conference was held August 9, 2019. Those participating were:

TOWNSHIP OF SPARTA

Mrs. Susan C. Jewell, Secretary/Treasurer

DEPARTMENT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. R.J. Zonna, Auditor

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

TOWNSHIP OF SPARTA
CRAWFORD COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
REPORT DISTRIBUTION
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2017 TO DECEMBER 31, 2017

This report was initially distributed to:

The Honorable Leslie Richards

Secretary
Department of Transportation

Township of Sparta Crawford County 43262 State Highway 77 Spartansburg, PA 16434

The Honorable James Scouten
Chairman of the Board of Supervisors

Mrs. Susan C. Jewell 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.