

# COMPLIANCE AUDIT

---

## Bensalem Township Police Pension Plan Bucks County, Pennsylvania For the Period January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2018

---

September 2019



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of the Auditor General

Eugene A. DePasquale • Auditor General



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

**EUGENE A. DePASQUALE  
AUDITOR GENERAL**

The Honorable Mayor and Township Council  
Bensalem Township  
Bucks County  
Bensalem, PA 19020

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Bensalem Township Police Pension Plan for the period January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2018. We also evaluated compliance with some requirements subsequent to that period when possible. The audit was conducted pursuant to authority derived from Section 402(j) of Act 205 and in accordance with the standards applicable to performance audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our conclusions based on our audit objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our conclusions based on our audit objective.

The objectives of the audit were:

1. To determine if municipal officials took appropriate corrective action to address the finding contained in our prior audit report; and
2. To determine if the pension plan was administered in compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances and policies.

Our audit was limited to the areas related to the objectives identified above. To determine if municipal officials took appropriate corrective action to address the finding contained in our prior audit report, we inquired of plan officials and evaluated supporting documentation provided by officials evidencing that the suggested corrective action has been appropriately taken. To determine whether the pension plan was administered in compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances and policies, our methodology included the following:

- We determined whether state aid was properly determined and deposited in accordance with Act 205 requirements by verifying the annual deposit date of state aid and determining whether deposits were made within 30 days of receipt for all years within the period under audit.

- We determined whether annual employer contributions were calculated and deposited in accordance with the plan's governing document and applicable laws and regulations by examining the municipality's calculation of the plan's annual financial requirements and minimum municipal obligation (MMO) and comparing these calculated amounts to amounts actually budgeted and deposited into the pension plan as evidenced by supporting documentation.
- We determined whether annual employee contributions were calculated, deducted, and deposited into the pension plan in accordance with the plan's governing document and applicable laws and regulations by testing total members' contributions on an annual basis using the rates obtained from the plan's governing document in effect for all years within the period under audit and examining documents evidencing the deposit of these employee contributions into the pension plan.
- We determined whether retirement benefits calculated for 4 of 10 of the plan members who retired during the current audit period<sup>1</sup> represent payments to all (and only) those entitled to receive them and were properly determined and disbursed in accordance with the plan's governing document, applicable laws and regulations by recalculating the amount of the monthly pension benefit due to retired individuals and comparing these amounts to supporting documentation evidencing amounts determined and actually paid to recipients. We also determined whether retirement benefits calculated for all 3 of the plan members who elected to vest during the current audit period, and through the completion of our fieldwork procedures, represent payments to all (and only) those entitled to receive them and were properly determined in accordance with the plan's governing document, applicable laws and regulations by recalculating the amount of the pension benefit due to retired individuals and comparing these amounts to supporting documentation evidencing amounts determined.
- We determined whether the January 1, 2015 and January 1, 2017 actuarial valuation reports were prepared and submitted by March 31, 2016 and 2018, respectively, in accordance with Act 205 and whether selected information provided on these reports is accurate, complete, and in accordance with plan provisions to ensure compliance for participation in the state aid program by comparing selected information to supporting source documentation.
- We determined whether provisions of the Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP) were in accordance with the provisions of Act 205 by examining provisions stated in the plan's governing documents.

---

<sup>1</sup> We selected plan members randomly from the population of plan members who retired during the current audit period in order to obtain a representative selection for the purpose of our testing to achieve the audit objective. While representative selection is a required factor of audit sampling methodologies, audit sampling methodology was not applied to achieve this test objective; accordingly, the results of this audit procedure are not, and should not be, projected to the population.

Bensalem Township contracted with an independent certified public accounting firm for annual audits of its basic financial statements, which are available at the township's offices. Those financial statements were not audited by us and, accordingly, we express no opinion or other form of assurance on them.

Township officials are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the Bensalem Township Police Pension Plan is administered in compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances and policies. In conducting our audit, we obtained an understanding of the township's internal controls as they relate to the township's compliance with those requirements and that we considered to be significant within the context of our audit objective, and assessed whether those significant controls were properly designed and implemented. Additionally and as previously described, we tested transactions, assessed official actions, performed analytical procedures, and interviewed selected officials to provide reasonable assurance of detecting instances of noncompliance with legal and regulatory requirements or noncompliance with provisions of contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances and policies that are significant within the context of the audit objective.

The results of our procedures indicated that, in all significant respects, the Bensalem Township Police Pension Plan was administered in compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances and policies.

The accompanying supplementary information is presented for purposes of additional analysis. We did not audit the information or conclude on it and, accordingly, express no form of assurance on it.

The contents of this report were discussed with officials of Bensalem Township and, where appropriate, their responses have been included in the report. We would like to thank township officials for the cooperation extended to us during the conduct of the audit.

August 20, 2019



EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE  
Auditor General

## CONTENTS

|                                 | <u>Page</u> |
|---------------------------------|-------------|
| Background .....                | 1           |
| Status of Prior Finding .....   | 3           |
| Supplementary Information ..... | 4           |
| Report Distribution List .....  | 11          |

## **BACKGROUND**

On December 18, 1984, the Pennsylvania Legislature adopted the Municipal Pension Plan Funding Standard and Recovery Act (P.L. 1005, No. 205, as amended, 53 P.S. § 895.101 et seq.). The Act established mandatory actuarial reporting and funding requirements and a uniform basis for the distribution of state aid to Pennsylvania's public pension plans. Section 402(j) of Act 205 specifically requires the Auditor General, as deemed necessary, to make an audit of every municipality which receives general municipal pension system state aid and of every municipal pension plan and fund in which general municipal pension system state aid is deposited.

Annual state aid allocations are provided from a 2 percent foreign (out-of-state) casualty insurance premium tax, a portion of the foreign (out-of-state) fire insurance tax designated for paid firefighters and any investment income earned on the collection of these taxes. Generally, municipal pension plans established prior to December 18, 1984, are eligible for state aid. For municipal pension plans established after that date, the sponsoring municipality must fund the plan for three plan years before it becomes eligible for state aid. In accordance with Act 205, a municipality's annual state aid allocation cannot exceed its actual pension costs.

In addition to Act 205, the Bensalem Township Police Pension Plan is also governed by implementing regulations adopted by the Public Employee Retirement Commission published at Title 16, Part IV of the Pennsylvania Code and applicable provisions of various other state statutes including, but not limited to, the following:

Act 600 - Police Pension Fund Act, Act of May 29, 1956 (P.L. 1804, No. 600), as amended, 53 P.S. § 767 et seq.

The Bensalem Township Police Pension Plan is a single-employer defined benefit pension plan locally controlled by the provisions of Ordinance No. 2004-07, as amended. The plan is also affected by the provisions of collective bargaining agreements between the township and its police officers. The plan was established January 1, 1971. Active members are required to contribute 2.5 percent of wages to the plan for the years 2015, 2016, and 2017, and 3.5 percent for the year 2018. As of December 31, 2018, the plan had 98 active members, 6 terminated members eligible for vested benefits in the future, and 92 retirees receiving pension benefits from the plan

## **BACKGROUND – (Continued)**

As of December 31, 2018, selected plan benefit provisions are as follows:

### Eligibility Requirements:

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Normal Retirement | If hired before January 1, 1999: Age 50 and 25 years of service. If hired after January 1, 1999: Age 55 and 25 years of service. |
| Early Retirement  | Eligible with 20 years of service.   |
| Vesting           | 100% vesting available after 12 years of service.  |

### Retirement Benefit:

Benefit equals 50% of final 36 months average salary, plus a service increment of \$25 per year of service over 25 years up to a maximum of \$100 per month.

### Survivor Benefit:

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Before Retirement Eligibility | Refund of member contributions plus interest.   |
| After Retirement Eligibility  | A monthly benefit equal to 50% of the pension the member was receiving or was entitled to receive on the day of the member's death. |

### Service Related Disability Benefit:

If hired before January 1, 1994, a monthly benefit equal to 80% of average monthly compensation. If hired on or after January 1, 1994, a monthly benefit equal to 50% of average monthly compensation, offset by Social Security disability benefits received for the same injury.

BENSALEM TOWNSHIP POLICE PENSION PLAN  
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDING

Status of Prior Audit Recommendation

· Pension Benefit Not Authorized By Act 600

The audit report for the period January 1, 2012, to December 31, 2014, contained a finding that the plan's governing document provided for the inclusion of lump-sum payments to the Deputy Director of Public Safety for unused vacation days that were not earned during the final 36 month averaging period for pension benefit calculations. The township has eliminated the inclusion of lump-sum payments for unused vacation days for the Deputy Director of Public Safety position that were not earned during the final 36 months of employment in pension benefit calculations. However, excess benefits are still being paid to an existing retiree. Since the township received state aid based on unit value during the audit period, it did not receive state aid attributable to the excess benefits provided. The department will continue to monitor the impact of the excess benefits being paid to the existing retirees on the plan's future state aid allocations.



BENSALEM TOWNSHIP POLICE PENSION PLAN  
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION  
(UNAUDITED)

The supplementary information contained on Pages 4 through 7 reflects the implementation of GASB Statement No. 67, *Financial Reporting for Pension Plans*. The objective of this statement is to improve financial reporting by state and local governmental pension plans.

SCHEDULE OF CHANGES IN THE NET PENSION  
LIABILITY AND RELATED RATIOS  
FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2014, 2015, AND 2016

|  | <u>2014</u>         | <u>2015</u>         | <u>2016</u>         |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Total Pension Liability  |                     |                     |                     |
| Service cost   | \$ 1,588,461        | \$ 1,723,257        | \$ 1,809,420        |
| Interest   | 4,711,748           | 5,050,203           | 5,309,824           |
| Difference between expected and actual experience                          | -                   | (148,312)           | -                   |
| Changes of assumptions   | -                   | 1,410,863           | -                   |
| Benefit payments, including refunds of member contributions                | (3,051,986)         | (3,317,649)         | (3,478,377)         |
| Net Change in Total Pension Liability                                      | 3,428,223           | 4,718,362           | 3,640,867           |
| Total Pension Liability – Beginning  | 62,760,833          | 66,009,056          | 70,727,418          |
| Total Pension Liability – Ending (a)                                       | <u>\$66,009,056</u> | <u>\$70,727,418</u> | <u>\$74,368,285</u> |
| Plan Fiduciary Net Position  |                     |                     |                     |
| Contributions – employer   | \$ 1,048,468        | \$ 1,041,474        | \$ 1,774,973        |
| Contributions – state aid  | 1,126,950           | 1,140,963           | 860,154             |
| Contributions – member   | 280,962             | 284,708             | 292,269             |
| Net investment income  | 3,230,372           | 440,522             | 3,012,605           |
| Benefit payments, including refunds of member contributions                | (3,051,986)         | (3,317,649)         | (3,478,377)         |
| Net Change in Plan Fiduciary Net Position                                  | 2,634,766           | (409,982)           | 2,461,624           |
| Plan Fiduciary Net Position – Beginning                                    | 44,752,414          | 47,387,180          | 46,977,198          |
| Plan Fiduciary Net Position – Ending (b)                                   | <u>\$47,387,180</u> | <u>\$46,977,198</u> | <u>\$49,438,822</u> |
| Net Pension Liability – Ending (a-b)                                       | <u>\$18,621,876</u> | <u>\$23,750,220</u> | <u>\$24,929,463</u> |
| Plan Fiduciary Net Position as a Percentage of the Total Pension Liability | 71.8%               | 66.4%               | 66.5%               |
| Estimated Covered Employee Payroll   | \$11,185,130        | \$11,243,376        | \$11,409,516        |
| Net Pension Liability as a Percentage of Covered Employee Payroll          | 166.5%              | 211.2%              | 218.5%              |

BENSALEM TOWNSHIP POLICE PENSION PLAN  
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION  
(UNAUDITED)

SCHEDULE OF CHANGES IN THE NET PENSION  
LIABILITY AND RELATED RATIOS  
FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2017 AND 2018

|  | <u>2017</u>          | <u>2018</u>          |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|
| Total Pension Liability  |                      |                      |
| Service cost   | \$ 1,843,489         | \$ 1,935,663         |
| Interest   | 5,574,411            | 5,844,481            |
| Difference between expected and actual experience                          | (245,317)            | -                    |
| Changes of assumptions   | 197,001              | -                    |
| Benefit payments, including refunds of member contributions                | (3,675,944)          | (4,142,340)          |
| Net Change in Total Pension Liability                                      | 3,693,640            | 3,637,804            |
| Total Pension Liability – Beginning  | 74,368,285           | 78,061,925           |
| Total Pension Liability – Ending (a)                                       | <u>\$ 78,061,925</u> | <u>\$ 81,699,729</u> |
| Plan Fiduciary Net Position  |                      |                      |
| Contributions – employer   | \$ 1,750,318         | \$ 2,473,670         |
| Contributions – state aid  | 890,121              | 908,771              |
| Contributions – member   | 312,542              | 453,673              |
| Net investment income  | 8,489,609            | (2,936,051)          |
| Benefit payments, including refunds of member contributions                | (3,675,944)          | (4,142,340)          |
| Net Change in Plan Fiduciary Net Position                                  | 7,766,646            | (3,242,277)          |
| Plan Fiduciary Net Position – Beginning                                    | 49,438,822           | 57,205,468           |
| Plan Fiduciary Net Position – Ending (b)                                   | <u>\$ 57,205,468</u> | <u>\$ 53,963,191</u> |
| Net Pension Liability – Ending (a-b)                                       | <u>\$ 20,856,457</u> | <u>\$ 27,736,538</u> |
| Plan Fiduciary Net Position as a Percentage of the Total Pension Liability | 73.3%                | 66.1%                |
| Estimated Covered Employee Payroll   | \$ 11,449,882        | \$ 12,196,264        |
| Net Pension Liability as a Percentage of Covered Employee Payroll          | 182.2%               | 227.4%               |

BENSALEM TOWNSHIP POLICE PENSION PLAN  
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION  
(UNAUDITED)

Sensitivity of the Net Pension Liability to Changes in the Discount Rate

The following presents the net pension liability of the township as of December 31, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018, calculated using the discount rate of 7.50%, as well as what the Bensalem Township Police Pension Plan net pension liability would be if it were calculated using a discount rate that is 1 percentage-point lower or 1 percentage-point higher than the current rate:

|                                  | 1% Decrease<br>(6.50%) | Current<br>Discount Rate<br>(7.50%) | 1% Increase<br>(8.50%) |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Net Pension Liability – 12/31/14 | \$ 26,844,284          | \$ 18,581,331                       | \$ 11,665,646          |
| Net Pension Liability – 12/31/15 | \$ 32,800,203          | \$ 23,750,220                       | \$ 16,187,718          |
| Net Pension Liability – 12/31/16 | \$ 34,384,184          | \$ 24,929,463                       | \$ 17,020,593          |
| Net Pension Liability – 12/31/17 | \$ 30,674,319          | \$ 20,856,457                       | \$ 12,639,204          |
| Net Pension Liability – 12/31/18 | \$ 37,975,518          | \$ 27,736,538                       | \$ 19,159,140          |

Note: The net pension liability at 12/31/14 at the current discount rate does not reflect a \$40,545 adjustment that was made to net investment income, which is reflected in the net pension liability balance presented on the Schedule of Changes in the Net Pension Liability and Related Ratios.

SCHEDULE OF CONTRIBUTIONS

| Year Ended<br>December<br>31 | Actuarially<br>Determined<br>Contribution | Actual<br>Contributions | Contribution<br>Deficiency<br>(Excess) | Covered-<br>Employee<br>Payroll | Contributions<br>as a Percentage<br>of Covered-<br>Employee<br>Payroll |
|------------------------------|---|-------------------------|--|---------------------------------|--|
| 2014                         | \$ 2,175,418                              | \$ 2,175,418            | \$ -                                   | \$11,185,130                    | 19.45%   |
| 2015                         | 2,182,437                                 | 2,182,437               | -                                      | 11,243,376                      | 19.41%   |
| 2016                         | 2,635,127                                 | 2,635,127               | -                                      | 11,409,516                      | 23.10%   |
| 2017                         | 2,640,439                                 | 2,640,439               | -                                      | 11,449,882                      | 23.06%   |
| 2018                         | 3,382,441                                 | 3,382,441               | -                                      | 12,196,264                      | 27.73%   |

BENSALEM TOWNSHIP POLICE PENSION PLAN  
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION  
(UNAUDITED)

SCHEDULE OF INVESTMENT RETURNS

Annual Money-Weighted Rate of Return, Net of Investment Expense:

|      |         |
|------|---------|
| 2018 | (5.13%) |
| 2017 | 17.02%  |
| 2016 | 6.41%   |
| 2015 | 0.54%   |
| 2014 | 6.89%   |

BENSALEM TOWNSHIP POLICE PENSION PLAN  
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION  
(UNAUDITED)

SCHEDULE OF FUNDING PROGRESS

Historical trend information about the plan is presented herewith as supplementary information. It is intended to help users assess the plan's funding status on a going-concern basis, assess progress made in accumulating assets to pay benefits when due, and make comparisons with other state and local government retirement systems.

The actuarial information is required by Act 205 biennially. The historical information, beginning as of January 1, 2013, is as follows:

|                                | (1)                                    | (2)  | (3)  | (4)                        |
|--------------------------------|--|--|--|----------------------------|
| Actuarial<br>Valuation<br>Date | Actuarial<br>Value of<br>Assets<br>(a) | Actuarial<br>Accrued<br>Liability<br>(AAL) -<br>Entry Age<br>(b) | Unfunded<br>(Assets in<br>Excess of)<br>Actuarial<br>Accrued<br>Liability<br>(b) - (a) | Funded<br>Ratio<br>(a)/(b) |
| 01-01-13                       | \$ 51,825,316                          | \$ 59,648,835  | \$ 7,823,519   | 86.9%                      |
| 01-01-15                       | 56,864,616                             | 67,271,607   | 10,406,991   | 84.5%                      |
| 01-01-17                       | 59,326,586                             | 74,319,969   | 14,993,383   | 79.8%                      |

Note: The market values of the plan's assets at 01-01-13, 01-01-15, and 01-01-17 have been adjusted to reflect the smoothing of gains and/or losses subject to a ceiling of 120 percent of the market value of assets. This method will lower contributions in years of less than expected returns and increase contributions in years of greater than expected returns. The net effect over long periods of time is to have less variance in contribution levels from year to year.

BENSALEM TOWNSHIP POLICE PENSION PLAN  
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION  
(UNAUDITED)

The comparability of trend information is affected by changes in actuarial assumptions, benefit provisions, actuarial funding methods, accounting policies, and other changes. Those changes usually affect trends in contribution requirements and in ratios that use the actuarial accrued liability as a factor.

Analysis of the dollar amount of the actuarial value of assets, actuarial accrued liability, and unfunded (assets in excess of) actuarial accrued liability in isolation can be misleading. Expressing the actuarial value of assets as a percentage of the actuarial accrued liability (Column 4) provides one indication of the plan's funding status on a going-concern basis. Analysis of this percentage, over time, indicates whether the system is becoming financially stronger or weaker. Generally, the greater this percentage, the stronger the plan.

BENSALEM TOWNSHIP POLICE PENSION PLAN  
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION  
NOTES TO SUPPLEMENTARY SCHEDULES  
(UNAUDITED)

The information presented in the supplementary schedules was determined as part of the actuarial valuation at the date indicated. Additional information as of the latest actuarial valuation date follows:

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Actuarial valuation date      | January 1, 2017  |
| Actuarial cost method         | Entry age normal   |
| Amortization method           | Level dollar   |
| Remaining amortization period | 14 years   |
| Asset valuation method        | Asset smoothing subject to a ceiling of 120% of the market value of assets.  |
| Actuarial assumptions:        |  |
| Investment rate of return     | 7.5%   |
| Projected salary increases    | 5.0%   |
| Cost-of-living adjustments    | An increase in the monthly benefit equal to the percentage change in the Consumer Price Index for the Philadelphia Region. The total increases may not exceed 30% of the original benefit. |

BENSALEM TOWNSHIP POLICE PENSION PLAN  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

**The Honorable Tom W. Wolf**  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

**The Honorable Joseph DiGirolamo**  
Mayor

**Mr. Joseph Knowles**  
Council President

**Mr. Ed Kisselback**  
Council Vice President

**Mr. Joseph Pilieri**  
Council Member

**Mr. Jesse Sloane**  
Council Member

**Mr. Ed Tokmajian**  
Council Member

**Mr. William Cmorey**  
Director of Administration

**Mr. John Chaykowski**  
Finance Manager

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at [www.PaAuditor.gov](http://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](mailto:news@PaAuditor.gov).