

COMPLIANCE AUDIT

Paxtang Borough Police Pension Plan Dauphin County, Pennsylvania For the Period January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2020

November 2021



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General

Timothy L. DeFoor • Auditor General



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**TIMOTHY L. DEFOOR
AUDITOR GENERAL**

The Honorable Mayor and Borough Council
Paxtang Borough
Dauphin County
Harrisburg, PA 17111

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Paxtang Borough Police Pension Plan for the period January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2020. We also evaluated compliance with some requirements subsequent to that period when possible. The audit was conducted pursuant to authority derived from the Municipal Pension Plan Funding Standard and Recovery Act (Act 205 of 1984, as amended, 53 P.S. § 895.402(j)), which requires the Auditor General, as deemed necessary, to audit every municipality which receives general municipal pension system state aid and every municipal pension plan and fund in which general municipal pension system state aid is deposited. The audit was not conducted, nor was it required to be, in accordance with Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. We planned and performed the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective.

The objective of the audit was 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 objective identified above. 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 that there were no employee contributions required for the years covered by our audit period due to the fact that there are no active members in the plan.
- We determined that there were no benefit calculations prepared for the years covered by our audit period.
- We determined whether the January 1, 2017 and January 1, 2019 actuarial valuation reports were prepared and submitted by March 31, 2018 and 2020, 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.

The Paxtang Borough Police Pension Plan participates in the Pennsylvania Municipal Retirement System (PMRS), which is an agent multiple-employer public employee retirement system that acts as a common investment and administrative agent for participating municipal pension plans. PMRS issues a separate Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, copies of which are available from the PMRS accounting office. PMRS's financial statements were not audited by us and, accordingly, we express no opinion or other form of assurance on them.

Borough officials are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the Paxtang Borough Police Pension Plan is administered in compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances and policies. As previously described, we tested transactions, interviewed selected officials and performed procedures to the extent necessary 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.

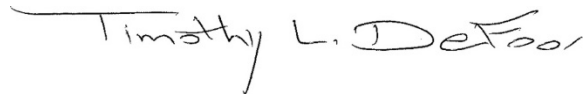
The results of our procedures indicated that, in all significant respects, the Paxtang Borough Police Pension Plan was administered in compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances and policies, except as noted in the following findings further discussed later in this report:

Finding No. 1 – Incorrect Pension Benefit Calculation

Finding No. 2 – Failure To Maintain An Adequate Record-Keeping System To Effectively Monitor Activity Of The Pension Plan

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 Paxtang Borough and, where appropriate, their responses have been included in the report. We would like to thank borough officials for the cooperation extended to us during the conduct of the audit.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy L. DeFoor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the left of the first letter.

November 3, 2021

Timothy L. DeFoor
Auditor General

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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.

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 Paxtang Borough Police Pension Plan is also governed by implementing regulations 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 15 - Pennsylvania Municipal Retirement Law, Act of February 1, 1974
(P.L. 34, No. 15), as amended, 53 P.S. § 881.101 et seq.

The Paxtang Borough Police Pension Plan is a single-employer defined benefit pension plan locally controlled by the provisions of Ordinance No. 571, and a separately executed plan agreement with the Pennsylvania Municipal Retirement System (PMRS), adopted pursuant to Act 15. The plan was established January 1, 1970. Active members are required to contribute 5 percent of compensation to the plan, however, member contributions are currently waived. As of December 31, 2020, the plan had no active members, 1 terminated member eligible for vested benefits in the future, and 2 retirees receiving pension benefits.

PAXTANG BOROUGH POLICE PENSION PLAN
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 1 – Incorrect Pension Benefit Calculation

Condition: During the prior audit, a verbal observation was given to plan officials regarding a pension benefit that needed to be recalculated for a member of the pension plan who retired on January 1, 2014. The member's pension benefit had been incorrectly determined because municipal officials failed to accurately calculate the member's final monthly average salary in accordance with the plan's governing document. However, during the current audit period, no action was taken to recalculate the pension benefit.

Criteria: Section 2 of the separately executed plan agreement adopted by Ordinance No. 571 states:

The basic annual benefit shall be equal to two percent (2%) of the member's final salary multiplied by all the years of credited service. Provided however, in no event shall the basic benefit exceed fifty percent (50%) of the member's final salary.

In addition, section 3 of the plan agreement states, in part:

The final salary shall be the average annual compensation earned and paid during the member's final three (3) consecutive years of employment....

Cause: Municipal officials failed to adhere to this department's prior verbal observation regarding recalculation of the benefit.

Effect: The retiree is receiving a monthly pension benefits less than that to which he is entitled in accordance with the plan's governing document.

Recommendation: We recommend that municipal officials adjust the retiree's pension benefit in accordance with the provisions contained in the plan's governing document and make payments due to the retiree retroactive to the commencement of pension benefits.

Management's Response: Municipal officials agreed with the finding without exception. Subsequent to the audit period, the borough contacted PMRS to request that the benefit be recalculated with retroactive payments made to the retiree.

Auditor's Conclusion: Based on the management response, it appears municipal officials are taking action to comply with the finding recommendation. Compliance will be evaluated during our next audit of the plan.

PAXTANG BOROUGH POLICE PENSION PLAN
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 2 – Failure To Maintain An Adequate Record-Keeping System To Effectively Monitor Activity Of The Pension Plan

Condition: The borough’s record-keeping system did not provide effective control over the transactional activity of the police pension plan during 2019 and 2020. Municipal officials were unable to furnish annual financial statements or custodial account transaction statements for the police pension plan. These annual financial and account statements have historically been provided by the plan’s custodian, PMRS. However, as of our fieldwork completion date, annual financial and accounting statements summarizing the pension account activity have not been provided for the years 2019 and 2020.

Criteria: An adequate system of accounting and record keeping is a prerequisite for sound administration of pension plans. In addition, assets held in a custodial account for the purpose of plan management are to be governed by the terms and provisions of the account contract, provided that the terms and provisions of the contract are within the parameters of all prevailing pension legislation. Although the municipality may contract with a trustee to administer the financial management of the plan, the fiduciary responsibility for the plan remains with the municipality.

Cause: Municipal officials indicated that the plan’s custodian, PMRS, failed to provide copies of the custodial account transaction statements summarizing activity of the pension plan account for the year 2019 and 2020. In addition, municipal officials did not maintain a separate detailed accounting of pension plan transactions which, among other things, helps assure the production of proper financial statements to effectively monitor the annual activity of the pension plan.

Effect: Although we were able to obtain alternate documentation from the municipality to evidence the propriety of the individual transactions tested during performance of the audit for the years 2019 and 2020, the failure to maintain annual financial and/or account transaction statements prohibits municipal officials from effectively monitoring the plan’s financial operations. Additionally, inadequate monitoring of the pension plan account could lead to undetected errors or improprieties in account transactions as well as deficiencies in authorizing and implementing pension plan policies and procedures.

Recommendation: We recommend that municipal officials contact the plan custodian and obtain annual financial statements of the custodial account of the police pension plan for the years 2019 and 2020 to ensure the accuracy and propriety of the transaction activity. In addition, we recommend that municipal officials establish and maintain a financial record-keeping system that allows the municipality to effectively monitor the plan’s financial operations, even in the absence of statements from the plan custodian. Municipal officials should refer to the Auditor General’s Bulletin No. 2-88 entitled “Preparation, Maintenance and Auditability of Financial Records,” for further guidance in establishing adequate accounting and record-keeping procedures.

PAXTANG BOROUGH POLICE PENSION PLAN
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 2 – (Continued)

Management's Response: Municipal officials indicated that this finding is due to PMRS's failure to provide information in a timely manner.

Auditor's Conclusion: As aforementioned earlier in this report, the department's authority to audit every municipality which receives general municipal pension system state aid is derived from the Municipal Pension Plan Funding Standard and Recovery Act (Act 205 of 1984, as amended, 53 P.S. § 895.402(j)). The department does not have the authority to audit plan custodians. And as indicated in the Criteria above, although the municipality may contract with a trustee to administer the financial management of the plan, the fiduciary responsibility for the plan remains with the municipality. It is noted that PMRS recently went through a substantial upgrade to the plan administration software and implemented a new accounting system. The modernization process, along with the COVID-19 pandemic, resulted in unforeseen delays in the year-end reporting process for financial statements and GASB 68 reports. PMRS officials have taken active measures to resolve these issues and indicated that they anticipate the process of completing and distributing 2019 Year-End Financial Activity Reports and Annual Member Statements for all of their plans will be completed this year, at which time they will transition to 2020 reports and statements. Compliance with the finding recommendation will be evaluated during our next audit of the plan.

PAXTANG BOROUGH 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, 2015, is as follows:

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
|--------------------------------|--|--|--|----------------------------|
| Actuarial Valuation Date | Actuarial Value of Assets (a) | Actuarial Accrued Liability (AAL) - Entry Age (b) | Unfunded (Assets in Excess of) Actuarial Accrued Liability (b) - (a) | Funded Ratio (a)/(b) |
| 01-01-15 | \$ 1,449,789 | \$ 1,617,407 | \$ 167,618 | 89.6% |
| 01-01-17 | 1,493,136 | 1,544,446 | 51,310 | 96.7% |
| 01-01-19 | 839,133 | 836,938 | (2,195) | 100.3% |

PAXTANG BOROUGH 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.

PAXTANG BOROUGH POLICE PENSION PLAN
 SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
 (UNAUDITED)

SCHEDULE OF CONTRIBUTIONS

| <u>Year Ended December 31</u> | <u>Actuarially Determined Contribution</u> | <u>Actual Contributions</u> | <u>Contribution Deficiency (Excess)</u> | <u>Covered- Employee Payroll</u> | <u>Contributions as a Percentage of Covered- Employee Payroll</u> |
|-----------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|---|--|---|
| 2014 | \$ 45,416 | \$ 45,424 | \$ (8) | \$ 256,688 | 17.70% |
| 2015 | 40,309 | 45,424 | (5,115) | - | |
| 2016 | - | - | - | - | |
| 2017 | 19,628 | 20,267 | (639) | - | |
| 2018 | 19,628 | 19,628 | - | - | |
| 2019 | - | 18,022 | (18,022) | - | |
| 2020 | 18,022 | 18,022 | - | - | |

PAXTANG BOROUGH 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, 2019 |
| Actuarial cost method | Entry age normal |
| Amortization method | Not applicable |
| Remaining amortization period | None |
| Asset valuation method | The Actuarial Value of Assets equal the sum of all audited reserve funds as of the valuation date, including Member, Municipal, Retired, Disability, and DROP Reserves, when applicable, and a one year administration expense reserve, plus the portion of any additional investment income to be distributed as excess interest, based on PMRS Policy Statement 05-2. This asset valuation is based on the unique legislative structure of PMRS and the administrative rules adopted by the PMRS Board in conjunction with Pennsylvania Municipal Retirement Law. ¹ |

Actuarial assumptions:

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Investment rate of return * | 5.25%, compounded annually, net of investment and administration expenses. |
| Projected salary increases * | 2.8%-7.05% |
| * Includes inflation at | 2.8% |
| Cost-of-living adjustments | 2.8% per year, subject to plan limitations. |

¹ The administrative rules adopted by the PMRS Board, which are not subject to comply with Actuarial Standards of Practice (ASOP), when defining the Actuarial Value of Assets (AVA), does not necessarily meet the requirement of ASOP 44 Selection and Use of Asset Valuation Methods for Pension Valuations. The AVA provided within this report follow the Pennsylvania Municipal Retirement Law and the PMRS policy statement.

PAXTANG BOROUGH 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 Sheilah Borne Fuller
Mayor

Ms. Kathleen Bloss
Council President

Ms. Keldeen Stambaugh
Borough Manager

Ms. Cynthia Cranmer, CPA
Pennsylvania Municipal Retirement System

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.