

COMPLIANCE AUDIT

Morris-Cooper Regional Police Pension Plan Clearfield County, Pennsylvania

July 2025



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General

Timothy L. DeFoor • Auditor General



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**TIMOTHY L. DEFOOR
AUDITOR GENERAL**

Morris-Cooper Regional Police Commission
Clearfield County
Allport, PA 16821

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Morris-Cooper Regional Police Pension Plan 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 finding and conclusions based on our audit objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our finding and conclusions based on our audit objective.

The objective of the audit was to determine whether 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 area 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:

- For the period January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024, we determined whether state aid was properly determined and deposited in accordance with Act 205 requirements by verifying the deposit date of state aid and determining whether deposits were made within 30 days of receipt.
- For the period January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024, we determined whether 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 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.

- For the period January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024, we determined that there were no employee contributions required by the plan's governing document and applicable laws and regulations.
- For the period January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024, we determined that there were no benefit calculations prepared.
- We determined whether the January 1, 2023 actuarial valuation report was prepared and submitted by March 31, 2024 in accordance with Act 205 and whether selected information provided on this report 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.

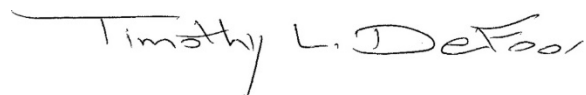
Commission officials are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the Morris-Cooper Regional Police Pension Plan is administered in compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, administrative procedures, and local 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 Morris-Cooper Regional 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 finding further discussed later in this report:

Finding – Ordinance Improperly Amended By Resolution

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 Morris-Cooper Regional Police Pension Commission and, where appropriate, their responses have been included in the report. We would like to thank commission officials for the cooperation extended to us during the conduct of the audit.



Timothy L. DeFoor
Auditor General
May 7, 2025

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Background	1
Finding and Recommendation:	
Finding – Ordinance Improperly Amended By Resolution	2
Supplementary Information	3
Report Distribution List	7

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 two 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 Morris-Cooper Regional 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:

Act 177 - General Local Government Code, Act of December 19, 1996 (P.L. 1158, No. 177), as amended, 53 Pa.C.S. § 101 et seq.

Act 600 - Police Pension Fund Act, Act of May 29, 1956 (P.L. 1804, No. 600), as amended, 53 P.S. § 761 et seq.

The Morris-Cooper Regional Police Pension Plan is a single-employer defined benefit pension plan locally controlled by the provisions of Morris Township Ordinance No. 1986-1 and Cooper Township Ordinance No. 4-86, as amended, adopted pursuant to Act 177. The plan was established October 1, 1979. Active members are not required to contribute to the plan. As of December 31, 2024, the plan had no active members, no terminated members eligible for vested benefits in the future, and two retirees receiving pension benefits from the plan.

MORRIS-COOPER REGIONAL POLICE PENSION PLAN
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – Ordinance Improperly Amended By Resolution

Condition: The pension plan's governing documents, Ordinance No. 1986-1 and Ordinance No. 4-86, were restated in their entirety by a plan document adopted by resolution effective January 1, 2025. Plan provisions adopted by ordinance must be amended by ordinance, not by a resolution.

Criteria: In Wynne v. Lower Merion Twp., 181 Pa. Super. 524, 529, 124 A.2d 487, 490 (1956), the Pennsylvania Superior Court held that an ordinance may be amended only by another ordinance and not by a resolution.

Cause: Commission officials were not aware that a resolution cannot amend an ordinance.

Effect: The failure to properly adopt the restated plan document could result in inconsistent or improper benefit calculations and incorrect benefit payments from the pension plan.

Recommendation: We recommend that the commission amend the plan's governing documents with a properly executed ordinance.

Management's Response: Commission officials agreed with the finding without exception.

Auditor Conclusion: Compliance will be evaluated during our next audit of the plan.

MORRIS-COOPER REGIONAL 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, 2019, 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)
01-01-19	\$ 313,553	\$ 403,255	\$ 89,702	77.8%
01-01-21	324,590	390,990	66,400	83.0%
01-01-23	359,578	390,462	30,884	92.1%

Note: The market value of the plan's assets at 01-01-23 has been adjusted to reflect the smoothing of gains and/or losses subject to a maximum 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.

MORRIS-COOPER REGIONAL 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.

MORRIS-COOPER REGIONAL 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>
2015	\$ 19,888	\$ 19,888	\$ -	\$ 35,447	56.11%
2016	24,440	24,440	-	35,674	68.51%
2017	25,138	27,176	(2,038)	34,234	79.38%
2018	39,248	39,248	-	7,748	506.56%
2019	30,135	30,135	-	-	N/A
2020	15,198	15,198	-	-	N/A
2021	27,602	27,602	-	-	N/A
2022	34,964	34,964	-	-	N/A
2023	27,663	27,663	-	-	N/A
2024	34,553	34,553	-	-	N/A

N/A – Not applicable

MORRIS-COOPER REGIONAL 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, 2023
Actuarial cost method	Entry age normal
Amortization method	Level dollar
Remaining amortization period	1 year
Asset valuation method	Plan assets are valued using the method described in Section 210 of Act 205, as amended, subject to a ceiling of 120% of the market value of assets.
Actuarial assumptions:	
Investment rate of return	4.0%
Projected salary increases	3.5%
Cost-of-living adjustments	None assumed

MORRIS-COOPER REGIONAL POLICE PENSION PLAN
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Joshua D. Shapiro
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Mr. Wayne Josephson
Chairman, Regional Police Commission

Ms. Patti Moore
Secretary, Morris Township

Ms. Bernice Yedlosky
Secretary, Cooper Township

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.