

ATTESTATION ENGAGEMENT

Borough of Arona
Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania
64-402
Liquid Fuels Tax Fund
For the Period
January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022

November 2024



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General

Timothy L. DeFoor • Auditor General



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TIMOTHY L. DEFOOR
AUDITOR GENERAL

Independent Auditor's Report

The Honorable Michael Carroll
Secretary
Department of Transportation
Harrisburg, PA 17120

We were engaged to examine the accompanying Form MS-965 With Adjustments for the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund of the Borough of Arona, Westmoreland County, for the period January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022, which was required to be prepared in accordance with the information required by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and the criteria described in the Background section of this report and the Department of Transportation's Publication 9. The municipality's management is responsible for presenting the Form 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 Form MS-965 With Adjustments based on conducting the examination in accordance with attestation standards established by the AICPA and *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

We are required to be independent and to meet our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with ethical requirements relating to the engagement.

The attestation standards require that we request written representations from management to confirm certain matters and to support other audit evidence. Accordingly, we e-mailed and called the borough but did not receive responses to the emails or phone call, and management failed to provide representations. Management previously agreed to provide representations in the engagement letter, and the failure to do so resulted in a limitation on the scope of our examination.

Because of the limitation on the scope of our examination discussed in the preceding paragraph, the scope of our work was not sufficient to enable us to express, and we do not express, an opinion on whether the Form MS-965 With Adjustments is in accordance with the information required by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation for the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund of the Borough of Arona, Westmoreland County, for the period January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022, in accordance with the criteria described in the Background section of this report and the Department of Transportation's *Publication 9*.

Independent Auditor's Report (Continued)

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; 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 were engaged to perform 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 the 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 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 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 a certain deficiency in internal control, described in the finding listed below, that we consider to be a significant deficiency in internal control:

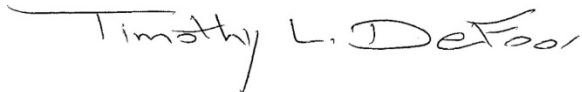
- Untimely Deposit Of Allocation - Recurring.

In connection with our engagement, we performed tests of the Borough of Arona, Westmoreland 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. The results of our tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*. If the scope of our work had been sufficient to enable us to express an opinion on the Forms MS-965, instances of noncompliance or other matters may have been identified and reported herein.

Independent Auditor's Report (Continued)

This report is intended solely for the information and use of PennDOT and the Borough of Ashville, Cambria County, and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than the specified parties.

We appreciate the courtesy extended by the Borough of Arona, Westmoreland 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy L. DeFoor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above the first few letters.

Timothy L. DeFoor
Auditor General
October 28, 2024

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Background.....	1
Financial Section:	
2022 Form MS-965 With Adjustments	5
Finding And Recommendations:	
Finding - Untimely Deposit Of Allocation - Recurring	8
Summary Of Onsite Closeout Meeting.....	9
Report Distribution	10

BOROUGH OF ARONA
WESTMORELAND COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
BACKGROUND
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2022 TO DECEMBER 31, 2022

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.

BOROUGH OF ARONA
 WESTMORELAND COUNTY
 LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
 BACKGROUND
 FOR THE PERIOD
 JANUARY 1, 2022 TO DECEMBER 31, 2022

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.

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:

2019	2020	2021	2022
\$11,100.00	\$11,300.00	\$11,500.00	\$11,800.00

- 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:

2019	2020	2021	2022
\$11,100.00	\$11,300.00	\$11,500.00	\$11,800.00

- Agility projects are exchanges of services with the Department of Transportation.

BOROUGH OF ARONA
WESTMORELAND COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
BACKGROUND
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2022 TO DECEMBER 31, 2022

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.

BOROUGH OF ARONA
WESTMORELAND COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
BACKGROUND
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2022 TO DECEMBER 31, 2022

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 should be 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 required to be 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 required to be 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.

BOROUGH OF ARONA
WESTMORELAND COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
2022 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 1
WITH ADJUSTMENTS

<u>Expenditure Summary</u>	<u>Reported</u>	<u>Adjustments</u>	<u>Adjusted Amount</u>
Minor equipment purchases	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Computer/Computer related training	-	-	-
Major equipment purchases	-	-	-
Agility projects	-	-	-
Cleaning streets and gutters	-	-	-
Winter maintenance services	-	-	-
Traffic control devices	-	-	-
Street lighting	-	-	-
Storm sewers and drains	-	-	-
Repairs of tools and machinery	-	-	-
Maintenance and repair of roads and bridges	-	-	-
Highway construction and rebuilding projects	-	-	-
Miscellaneous	-	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total (To Section 2, Line 5)	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>

BOROUGH OF ARONA
WESTMORELAND COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
2022 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 2
WITH ADJUSTMENTS

<u>Fund Balance</u>	<u>Reported</u>	<u>Adjustments</u>	<u>Adjusted Amount</u>
1. Balance, January 1, 2022	\$ 21,853.65	\$ -	\$ 21,853.65
Receipts:			
2. State allocation	8,396.99	-	8,396.99
2a. Turnback allocation	-	-	-
2b. Interest on investments	116.93	-	116.93
2c. Miscellaneous	-	-	-
3. Total receipts	<u>8,513.92</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>8,513.92</u>
4. Total funds available	<u>30,367.57</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>30,367.57</u>
5. Expenditures (Section 1)	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
6. Balance, December 31, 2022	<u><u>\$ 30,367.57</u></u>	<u><u>\$ -</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 30,367.57</u></u>

BOROUGH OF ARONA
WESTMORELAND COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
2022 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 3
WITH ADJUSTMENTS

<u>Equipment Balance</u>	<u>Reported</u>	<u>Adjustments</u>	<u>Adjusted Amount</u>
1. Prior year equipment balance	\$ 4,412.16	\$ -	\$ 4,412.16
2. Add: Current year equipment allocation (20% of Lines 2 + 2a, Section 2)	1,679.40	-	1,679.40
3. PENNDOT approved adjustments	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
4. Total funds available for equipment acquisition	6,091.56	-	6,091.56
5. Less: Major equipment expenditures	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
6. Remainder	<u>6,091.56</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>6,091.56</u>
7. Equipment balance available for subsequent year (Lesser of Line 6 or Section 2 balance, but not less than zero)	<u>\$ 6,091.56</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 6,091.56</u>

BOROUGH OF ARONA
WESTMORELAND COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2022 TO DECEMBER 31, 2022

Finding - Untimely Deposit Of Allocation - Recurring

We cited the municipality for untimely deposit of its allocation in our prior examination for period January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021. Our current examination disclosed that the 2022 Liquid Fuels Tax Fund allocation, which was received on April 5, 2022, was not deposited into the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund until May 5, 2022.

Good internal control procedures require that all funds received be deposited immediately upon receipt. The failure to do so increases the risk that errors and misappropriations may occur and remain undetected.

Because the municipality failed to deposit the allocation timely as noted above, the municipality did not have use of the 2022 allocation for one month. Furthermore, had the allocation been deposited timely, money may have been available for investment purposes, potentially earning interest income which could have been used for road maintenance and repairs.

We were unable to determine why the allocation was not deposited timely.

Recommendations

We again recommend that the municipality deposit all allocations immediately upon receipt.

In addition, the municipal officials should consider using the electronic transfer of funds offered by the Department of Transportation.

Management's Response

The secretary/treasurer stated:

Agree to untimely deposit. Has been corrected for next year (2023).

Auditor's Conclusion

This is a recurring finding. We strongly recommend the municipality comply with our recommendations. During our next examination, we will determine if the municipality complied with our recommendations.

BOROUGH OF ARONA
WESTMORELAND COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
SUMMARY OF ONSITE CLOSEOUT MEETING
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2022 TO DECEMBER 31, 2022

An onsite closeout meeting was held February 26, 2024. Those participating were:

BOROUGH OF ARONA

Mr. Joseph S. Levandosky, Secretary/Treasurer

DEPARTMENT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

Mrs. Michele Simpson, Auditor

BOROUGH OF ARONA
WESTMORELAND COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
REPORT DISTRIBUTION
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2022 TO DECEMBER 31, 2022

This report was initially distributed to:

The Honorable Michael Carroll
Secretary
Department of Transportation

Borough of Arona
Westmoreland County
P. O. Box 200
Arona, PA 15617

The Honorable Kathy Sikora
President of Council

The Honorable David Ruppert
Supervisor

Mr. Joseph S. Levandosky
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.