### ATTESTATION ENGAGEMENT

### Borough of East Pittsburgh

Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 02-425

Liquid Fuels Tax Fund
For the Period
January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2024

### October 2025



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 have examined the accompanying Forms MS-965 With Adjustments for the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund of the Borough of East Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, for the period January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2024. The municipality's management is responsible for presenting the Forms 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 Forms 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 Forms MS-965 are presented in accordance with the criteria described above, in all material respects. An examination involves performing procedures to obtain evidence about the Forms 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 Forms 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 qualified opinion.

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

As described in the Auditor Description of Select Transactions section of this report, the adjustments included on the Forms MS-965 With Adjustments are made by the Department of the Auditor General.

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

As discussed in Finding No. 1, the municipality expended \$14,932.50 during 2024 from the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund for paving over one inch without obtaining the approval of the Department of Transportation. Additionally, as discussed in Finding No. 2, the municipality did not maintain documentation, such as invoices, to support expenditures of \$6,840.37 that were included in a transfer from its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund to its General Fund on November 9, 2023.

In our opinion, except for the effects of the deviations from the criteria discussed in the preceding paragraph, the Forms MS-965 With Adjustments present, in all material respects, the information required by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation for the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund of the Borough of East Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, for the period January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2024, in accordance with the criteria described in the Background section of this report and the Department of Transportation's *Publication 9*.

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, regulations, contracts, or grant agreements that have a material effect on the Forms MS-965; and any other instances that warrant the attention of those charged with governance. 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 Forms MS-965 are presented in accordance with the criteria described above and not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on internal control over the Forms MS-965 or on compliance and other matters; accordingly, we express no such opinions. Our examination disclosed the following findings that are required to be reported under Government Auditing Standards:

- Failure To Obtain Project Approval.
- Documentation Supporting Expenditures Was Not Available for Examination.

We also noted a matter that, while not required to be included in this report by *Government Auditing Standards*, has been included in the finding below:

• Late Receipt Of Allocation.

The purpose of this report is to provide information related to the municipality's Liquid Fuels Tax Fund to assist the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation in fulfilling its regulatory authority as described in the laws and regulations identified in the Background section of this report and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's *Publication 9*. This report is not suitable for any other purpose.

### Independent Auditor's Report (Continued)

We appreciate the courtesy extended by the Borough of East Pittsburgh, Allegheny 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.

Timothy L. DeFoor

Timothy L. DeFoor

Auditor General

September 10, 2025

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### **Background**

The Liquid Fuels Tax Municipal Allocation Law<sup>1</sup> 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 maintained by all political subdivisions making application in the county; and (2) 50 percent on the proportion of a municipality's population to the total population of all municipalities making application in the state.<sup>2</sup>

Section 9511 (relating to Allocation of proceeds) of the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code provides municipalities with annual maintenance payments to be received from the Motor License Fund.<sup>3</sup>

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).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> 72 P.S. § 2615.1 et seq., Act 655 of 1956, as amended.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> 75 Pa.C.S. § 9010(c)(1)-(2) as last amended by Act 89 of 2013.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> 75 Pa.C.S. § 9511, as last amended by Act 89 of 2013 and Act 101 of 2016, *See also* 72 P.S. § 2615.4, as last amended by Act 42 of 2013.

### **Background** (Continued)

- 2. Make deposits and payments or expenditures in compliance with Act 655, 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 that can be placed into the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund.
- 3. Submit the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development's (DCED) Report of Elected and Appointed Officials by January 31<sup>st</sup> and the Survey of Financial Condition By March 15<sup>th</sup>.
- 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:

2021	2022	2023	2024
\$11,500.00	\$11,800.00	\$12,200.00	\$12,600.00

• 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:

2021	2022	2023	2024
\$11,500.00	\$11,800.00	\$12,200.00	\$12,600.00

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

### 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.

### **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 has been prepared in accordance with reporting requirements prescribed by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation as a result of the Fuels Tax Act 655, 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's financial activities.

### Basis Of Accounting

The accompanying Forms 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.

### BOROUGH OF EAST PITTSBURGH ALLEGHENY COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2023 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 1 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Expenditure Summary	Reported		Adjustments		Adjusted Amount	
Minor equipment purchases	\$	-	\$	_	\$	-
Computer/Computer related training		-		-		-
Major equipment purchases		-		-		-
Agility projects		-		-		-
Cleaning streets and gutters		-		-		-
Winter maintenance services		3,513.17		-		3,513.17
Traffic control devices		1,013.20		-		1,013.20
Street lighting		51,684.93		-		51,684.93
Storm sewers and drains		-		-		-
Repairs of tools and machinery		-		-		-
Maintenance and repair of						
roads and bridges		-		-		-
Highway construction and						
rebuilding projects		-		-		-
Miscellaneous						
Total (To Section 2, Line 5)	\$	56,211.30	\$	-	\$	56,211.30

### BOROUGH OF EAST PITTSBURGH ALLEGHENY COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2023 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 2 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Fund Balance	Reported	Adjustments	Adjusted Amount		
1. Balance, January 1, 2023	\$ 120,714.74	\$ -	\$ 120,714.74		
Receipts: 2. State allocation 2a. Turnback allocation 2b. Interest on investments 2c. Miscellaneous	50,769.26 - 5,198.73	- - -	50,769.26 - 5,198.73 -		
3. Total receipts	55,967.99		55,967.99		
4. Total funds available	176,682.73		176,682.73		
5. Expenditures (Section 1)	56,211.30		56,211.30		
6. Balance, December 31, 2023	\$ 120,471.43	\$ -	\$ 120,471.43		

### BOROUGH OF EAST PITTSBURGH ALLEGHENY COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2023 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 3 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Equipment Balance	Reported		Reported		Reported		Reported		Reported		Reported		Reported		Reported		Reported		Reported		Reported		Reported		Adju	stments	 Adjusted Amount
1. Prior year equipment balance	\$	83,943.71	\$	-	\$ 83,943.71																						
2. Add: Current year equipment allocation (20% of Lines 2 + 2a, Section 2)		10,153.85		-	10,153.85																						
3. PENNDOT approved adjustments					 																						
4. Total funds available for equipment acquisition		94,097.56		-	94,097.56																						
5. Less: Major equipment expenditures					 																						
6. Remainder		94,097.56			94,097.56																						
7. Equipment balance available for subsequent year (Lesser of Line 6 or Section 2 balance, but not less than zero)	\$	94,097.56	\$		\$ 94,097.56																						

### BOROUGH OF EAST PITTSBURGH ALLEGHENY COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2024 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 1 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Expenditure Summary	Reported		 Adjustments		Adjusted Amount	
Minor equipment purchases	\$	-	\$ -	\$	-	
Computer/Computer related training		_	-		-	
Major equipment purchases		_	-		-	
Agility projects		_	-		-	
Cleaning streets and gutters		-	-		-	
Winter maintenance services		7,699.27	-		7,699.27	
Traffic control devices		-	-		-	
Street lighting		42,202.58	-		42,202.58	
Storm sewers and drains		-	-		-	
Repairs of tools and machinery		-	-		-	
Maintenance and repair of						
roads and bridges		14,932.50	(14,932.50)		-	
Highway construction and						
rebuilding projects		-	14,932.50		14,932.50	
Miscellaneous			 			
Total (To Section 2, Line 5)	\$	64,834.35	\$ _	\$	64,834.35	

### BOROUGH OF EAST PITTSBURGH ALLEGHENY COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2024 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 2 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Fund Balance	Reported	Adjustments	Adjusted Amount		
1. Balance, January 1, 2024	\$ 120,471.43	\$ -	\$ 120,471.43		
Receipts: 2. State allocation 2a. Turnback allocation	50,433.29	-	50,433.29		
2b. Interest on investments  2c. Miscellaneous	5,495.17	- - -	5,495.17		
3. Total receipts	55,928.46		55,928.46		
4. Total funds available	176,399.89		176,399.89		
5. Expenditures (Section 1)	64,834.35		64,834.35		
6. Balance, December 31, 2024	\$ 111,565.54	\$ -	\$ 111,565.54		

### BOROUGH OF EAST PITTSBURGH ALLEGHENY COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2024 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 3 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Equipment Balance	Reported		Reported		Reported		Reported		Reported		Reported		Reported		Reported		Reported		Reported		Reported		Reported		Adju	ıstments	Adjusted Amount
1. Prior year equipment balance	\$	94,097.56	\$	-	\$ 94,097.56																						
2. Add: Current year equipment allocation (20% of Lines 2 + 2a, Section 2)		10,086.66		-	10,086.66																						
3. PENNDOT approved adjustments																											
4. Total funds available for equipment acquisition		104,184.22		-	104,184.22																						
5. Less: Major equipment expenditures					<del>-</del>																						
6. Remainder		104,184.22			104,184.22																						
7. Equipment balance available for subsequent year (Lesser of Line 6 or Section 2 balance, but not less than zero)	\$	104,184.22	\$	<u>-</u>	\$ 104,184.22																						

## BOROUGH OF EAST PITTSBURGH ALLEGHENY COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND AUDIOTR DESCRIPTION OF SELECT TRANSACTIONS FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2023 TO DECEMBER 31, 2024

The following information relates to certain types of transactions for which the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation requested that we provide additional details.

### **Adjustments**

### 2024 - Section 1

Adjustments were made to "Maintenance and repair of roads and bridges" and "Highway construction and rebuilding projects" because expenditures of \$14,932.50 were misclassified.

### Finding No. 1 - Failure To Obtain Project Approval

Our examination disclosed that the municipality had one expenditure for \$14,932.50 during 2024 for paving in excess of one inch on Bryan Alley without obtaining the approval of the Department of Transportation. Before paving of one inch in thickness or greater is done, the municipality must obtain the approval of the Department of Transportation. However, the municipality did not file an application with the Department of Transportation for the project and also failed to submit specifications for approval.

The Department of Transportation's *Publication 9* contains the policies and procedures for the administration of the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund. *Publication 9*, Chapter Two, Section 2.7.2, states that nonpermissible expenditures include "Construction and reconstruction projects without prior PENNDOT approval."

Additionally, *Publication 9*, Chapter Two, Section 2.8, states, in part:

The following criteria is used to determine when a project is required for work on local roads utilizing Liquid Fuels Tax Funds, when construction, reconstruction and/or resurfacing work exceeds one inch or more in depth as well as other activities.

Bituminous Surface: One inch thickness or greater

We could not determine the cause of this condition.

The failure to comply with the Department of Transportation's *Publication 9* could result in the municipality having to reimburse \$14,932.50 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund.

### Recommendations

We recommend that the municipality reimburse \$14,932.50 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund upon official notification by the Department of Transportation.

We further recommend that before the municipality expends money on a project, it applies for and obtains prior approval for the project, and when the project is completed, it obtains approval of the completed work.

### Finding No. 1 - Failure To Obtain Project Approval (Continued)

### Management's Response

The borough manager stated:

Emergency repair as noted in minutes and email communications with the council and the borough engineer. 2023 rates applied for cost efficiency.

### **Auditor's Conclusion**

An emergency situation does not waive the township's responsibility to obtain project approval from the Department of Transportation. The Department of Transportation will determine if the municipality will be required to reimburse \$14,932.50 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund. During our next examination, we will determine if the municipality complied with our recommendations.

### Finding No. 2 - Documentation Supporting Expenditures Was Not Available For Examination

We tested a transfer made on November 9, 2023, from the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund to the General Fund, totaling \$13,663.57 for street lighting expenditures and found that the municipality did not maintain documentation, such as invoices, to support \$6,840.37 of these expenditures.

An adequate system of internal controls includes procedures to provide assurance that documentation to support all expenditures is maintained.

The Liquid Fuels Tax Municipal Allocation Law, 72 P.S. § 2615.4, provides, in part, that monies herein allocated may be used only for construction, reconstruction, maintenance and repairs of such public roads or streets, including bridges, culverts and drainage structures, for which they are legally responsible. Also permitted are expenditures involving acquisition, maintenance, repairs and operation of street signs, traffic signs, traffic signal control systems, road equipment, and snow fences.

The Department of Transportation has been statutorily authorized to promulgate regulations concerning the administration of Liquid Fuels Tax Fund money and has determined that certain items, including expenditures made without supporting documentation, are outside the scope of permissible expenditures.

The condition occurred because the municipality did not have sufficient internal controls to ensure that documentation is maintained to support all Liquid Fuels Tax Fund expenditures.

The failure to maintain documentation to support expenditures could result in the municipality having to reimburse \$6,840.37 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund.

### Recommendations

We recommend that the municipality reimburse \$6,840.37 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund upon official notification by the Department of Transportation.

We further recommend that the municipality maintain adequate documentation to support all expenditures.

### Finding No. 2 - Documentation Supporting Expenditures Was Not Available For Examination (Continued)

### Management's Response

The borough manager stated:

Bank institutions delay in delivery of check images. Personnel transition error resulted in payment from incorrect account.

### Auditor's Conclusion

During our next examination, we will determine if the municipality complied with our recommendations.

### Finding No. 3 - Late Receipt Of Allocation

Our examination disclosed that the 2023 Liquid Fuels Tax Fund allocation of \$50,769.26, which should have been distributed from the Department of Transportation to the municipality during the first week of March of that year, was not received until June 26, 2023, because the municipality failed to comply with the Department of Transportation's *Publication 9*, Chapter Two, Section 2.4, which states:

To qualify for the annual liquid fuels tax allocation, a municipality shall:

- Submit annual reports (MS-965, Actual Use Report, MS-965P, Project and Miscellaneous Receipts, and MS-965S, Record of Checks).
- Make deposits and payments or expenditures in compliance with the Act 655. Failure to do so may result in not receiving allocations from PENNDOT until all discrepancies are resolved.
- Submit the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development's (DCED) Report of Elected and Appointed Officials by January 31<sup>st</sup> and the Survey of Financial Condition by March 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Ensure resolution of all Contractor Responsibility Program (CRP) holds and blocks imposed by the Department of Revenue and the Department of Labor and Industry.
- 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.

Because the municipality did not file its Survey of Financial Condition with the Department of Community and Economic Development timely, the municipality did not have use of the 2023 allocation for more than three months. Furthermore, had the allocation been received timely, money may have been available for investment purposes, potentially earning interest income which could have been used for road maintenance and repairs.

### Finding No. 3 - Late Receipt Of Allocation (Continued)

### Recommendation

We recommend that the municipality comply with the Department of Transportation's *Publication* 9 to ensure that the allocations are received during the first week in March as outlined above.

### Management's Response

The borough manager stated:

Transition of personnel responsible for records management and reporting delay.

### Auditor's Conclusion

During our next examination, we will determine if the municipality complied with our recommendation.

## BOROUGH OF EAST PITTSBURGH ALLEGHENY COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND SUMMARY OF ONSITE CLOSEOUT MEETING FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2023 TO DECEMBER 31, 2024

An onsite closeout meeting was held August 7, 2025. Those participating were:

### **BOROUGH OF EAST PITTSBURGH**

Mr. Benjamin Walker, Borough Manager

### **DEPARTMENT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL**

Ms. Lizann Tokarski, Auditor

This report was initially distributed to:

The Honorable Michael Carroll

Secretary
Department of Transportation

**Borough of East Pittsburgh** 

Allegheny County 813 Linden Avenue East Pittsburgh, PA 15112

The Honorable Mary Carol Kennedy

President of Council

Mr. Benjamin Walker Borough Manager

Ms. Denise L. Hartford

**Borough Secretary** 

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at <a href="www.PaAuditor.gov">www.PaAuditor.gov</a>. 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: <a href="mailto:news@PaAuditor.gov">news@PaAuditor.gov</a>.