ATTESTATION ENGAGEMENT

Borough of Tarentum

Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 02-464

Liquid Fuels Tax Fund
For the Period
January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2023

September 2025



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General

Timothy L. DeFoor • Auditor General



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0018
Facebook: Pennsylvania 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 examined the accompanying Forms MS-965 With Adjustments for the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund of the Borough of Tarentum, Allegheny County, for the period January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2023. 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.

Independent Auditor's Report (Continued)

As discussed in the Finding And Recommendations section of this report, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania electronically deducted \$49,850.44 during 2023 from the municipality's Liquid Fuels Tax Fund for a payment on a loan that had already been paid off. Additionally, on October 1, 2024, which was subsequent to our examination period, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania deducted an additional \$50,348.94 from the municipality's Liquid Fuels Tax Fund for a payment on the same loan.

In our opinion, except for the matters 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 Tarentum, Allegheny County, for the period January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2023, 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 or regulations that have a material effect on the Forms 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 Forms 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 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 reporting on the Forms 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 Forms 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 Forms MS-965 are 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. We did identify a certain deficiency in internal control, described in the finding listed below, that we consider to be a material weakness in internal control:

• Lender Overcharge.

Independent Auditor's Report (Continued)

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the Forms MS-965 are free from material misstatement, we performed tests of the Borough of Tarentum, Allegheny 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 Forms MS-965. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our engagement, and accordingly, we do not express such an opinion. The results of our tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*.

The purpose of this report is to determine whether the municipality's Liquid Fuels Tax Fund money is spent in accordance with the laws and regulations identified in the Background section of this report and the Department of Transportation's *Publication 9*. This report is not suitable for any other purpose.

We appreciate the courtesy extended by the Borough of Tarentum, 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 Auditor General

August 22, 2025

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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.

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:

2020	2021	2022	2023
\$11,300.00	\$11,500.00	\$11,800.00	\$12,200.00

• 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:

2020	2021	2022	2023
\$11,300.00	\$11,500.00	\$11,800.00	\$12,200.00

• 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, 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 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 TARENTUM ALLEGHENY COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2022 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		-		-		-
Traffic control devices		-		-		-
Street lighting		-		-		-
Storm sewers and drains		-		-		-
Repairs of tools and machinery		5,560.11		-		5,560.11
Maintenance and repair of						
roads and bridges		-		-		-
Highway construction and						
rebuilding projects		39,500.00		49,850.44		89,350.44
Miscellaneous		50,197.05		(49,850.44)		346.61
Total (To Section 2, Line 5)	\$	95,257.16	\$	_	\$	95,257.16

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

Fund Balance	Reported		Adjustments		Adjusted Amount
1. Balance, January 1, 2022	\$	39,561.20	\$	-	\$ 39,561.20
Receipts: 2. State allocation		130,353.02		-	130,353.02
2a. Turnback allocation2b. Interest on investments		- 488.71		-	- 488.71
2c. Miscellaneous		46,246.14			 46,246.14
3. Total receipts		177,087.87			 177,087.87
4. Total funds available		216,649.07			 216,649.07
5. Expenditures (Section 1)		95,257.16			 95,257.16
6. Balance, December 31, 2022	\$	121,391.91	\$	-	\$ 121,391.91

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

Equipment Balance	Reported		Reported		ported Adjustments		 Adjusted Amount
1. Prior year equipment balance	\$	(46,246.14)	\$	46,246.14	\$ -		
2. Add: Current year equipment allocation (20% of Lines 2 + 2a, Section 2)		26,070.60		-	26,070.60		
3. PENNDOT approved adjustments		46,246.14		(46,246.14)	 		
4. Total funds available for equipment acquisition		26,070.60		-	26,070.60		
5. Less: Major equipment expenditures		<u>-</u>			 <u>-</u>		
6. Remainder		26,070.60			 26,070.60		
7. Equipment balance available for subsequent year (Lesser of Line 6 or Section 2 balance, but not less than zero)	\$	26,070.60	\$	<u>-</u>	\$ 26,070.60		

BOROUGH OF TARENTUM 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		-		-		-
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		173,216.41		49,850.44		223,066.85
Miscellaneous		49,850.44		(49,850.44)		
Total (To Section 2, Line 5)	\$	223,066.85	\$		\$	223,066.85

BOROUGH OF TARENTUM 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	\$	121,391.91	\$	-	\$	121,391.91	
Receipts: 2. State allocation 2a. Turnback allocation		133,584.56		-		133,584.56	
2b. Interest on investments 2c. Miscellaneous		1,049.80		<u>-</u>		1,049.80	
3. Total receipts		134,634.36				134,634.36	
4. Total funds available		256,026.27				256,026.27	
5. Expenditures (Section 1)		223,066.85				223,066.85	
6. Balance, December 31, 2023	\$	32,959.42	\$	-	\$	32,959.42	

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

Reported		Adjustments			Adjusted Amount
\$	26,070.60	\$	-	\$	26,070.60
	26,716.91		-		26,716.91
			<u>-</u>		
	52,787.51		-		52,787.51
	52,787.51				52,787.51
\$	32,959,42	\$	_	\$	32,959.42
		\$ 26,070.60 26,716.91 - 52,787.51	\$ 26,070.60 \$ 26,716.91	\$ 26,070.60 \$ - 26,716.91 - 52,787.51 - 52,787.51 -	\$ 26,070.60 \$ - \$ 26,716.91 - 52,787.51 - 52,787.51 -

BOROUGH OF TARENTUM ALLEGHENY COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND AUDITOR DESCRIPTION OF SELECT TRANSACTIONS FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2022 TO DECEMBER 31, 2023

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

Adjustments

2022 - Section 1

Adjustments were made to "Highway construction and rebuilding projects" and "Miscellaneous" because expenditures of \$49,850.44 were misclassified.

2022 - Section 3

An adjustment of \$46,246.14 was made to "Prior year equipment balance" because an incorrect equipment balance was carried forward.

An adjustment of \$(46,246.14) was made to "PENNDOT approved adjustments" because there were no approved adjustments.

2023 - Section 1

Adjustments were made to "Highway construction and rebuilding projects" and "Miscellaneous" because expenditures of \$49,850.44 were misclassified.

Deposit In Error

On October 18, 2021, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania electronically deposited state funds of \$346.61 into the municipality's Liquid Fuels Tax Fund in error. On August 1, 2022, the municipality transferred \$346.61 from its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund to its General Fund to correct the deposit in error.

BOROUGH OF TARENTUM ALLEGHENY COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND AUDITOR DESCRIPTION OF SELECT TRANSACTIONS FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2022 TO DECEMBER 31, 2023

Pennsylvania Infrastructure Bank Loan

On September 1, 2017, the municipality borrowed \$453,700.00 from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for a bridge project. The term of the loan was for ten years at an interest rate of 1.75 percent. Principal and interest payments of \$49,850.44 are due annually. Prior years' principal and interest payments from the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund were \$172,094.95 and \$27,306.81, respectively.

On September 1, 2022, the municipality paid principal of \$44,922.35 and interest of \$4,928.09 from the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund. These amounts are reflected in highway construction and rebuilding projects on the 2022 Form MS-965 - Section 1. Additionally, on October 26, 2022, the municipality paid the remaining principal and interest balances of \$236,682.70 and \$667.31, respectively, from the General Fund.

On September 1, 2023, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania incorrectly electronically deducted principal of \$45,708.49 and interest of \$4,141.95 from the municipality's Liquid Fuels Tax Fund for the loan resulting in an overpayment (see Finding). These amounts are reflected in highway construction and rebuilding projects on the 2023 Form MS-965 - Section 1.

BOROUGH OF TARENTUM ALLEGHENY COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND FINDING AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2022 TO DECEMBER 31, 2023

Finding - Lender Overcharge

Our examination disclosed that the municipality had a Pennsylvania Infrastructure Bank (PIB) Loan with annual payments that were automatically electronically withdrawn by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Although the municipality paid principal and interest of \$237,350.01 from the General Fund to satisfy the loan on October 26, 2022, the Commonwealth automatically withdrew \$49,850.44 on September 1, 2023, during our examination period, and \$50,348.94 on October 1, 2024, subsequent to our examination period, from the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund.

Additionally, the borough was notified on October 2, 2024 that the loan was not paid off and, therefore, the borough paid \$144,788.86 on October 11, 2024 from the Capital Reserve Fund to, again, satisfy the loan. As of the date of the onsite closeout meeting for this examination of March 28, 2025, the municipality was working with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to correct this issue.

Good internal controls ensure that loan payments are properly recorded and reconciled with the lending institution records. If discrepancies exist, timely resolution is necessary to ensure funds are accounted for and not misappropriated. Failure to follow this procedure increases the possibility that excess loan payments will go undetected or misappropriated for long periods of time.

It is not known why this condition occurred.

Recommendations

We recommend that the municipality reimburse \$100,199.38 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund upon official notification of the Department of Transportation. We also recommend that the municipal officials contact the Pennsylvania Infrastructure Bank as soon as possible to obtain reimbursement for the \$244,988.24 overpaid.

We further recommend that the municipality investigate any questionable electronic withdrawals promptly to avoid duplication or improper payments to vendors.

BOROUGH OF TARENTUM ALLEGHENY COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND FINDING AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2022 TO DECEMBER 31, 2023

Finding - Lender Overcharge (Continued)

Management's Response

The Borough Manager stated:

I started in 2022 and paid off the PIB Loan in October of 2022. The borough was charged in 2023 our loan installment despite paying off the loan. From 2023 through 2024 PIB continued to take borough funds. In 2024 the borough paid the amount that PIB informed us we owed. Several email inquiries between the borough, PIB, Department of the Comptroller, and the borough were exchanged to identify the issue. In 2024 the borough received a payoff letter from PIB. The borough believes there was a mix up due to several of the documents containing other municipality loan numbers. Tarentum will follow up with PIB to identify where the funds went and to request repayment of overcharge.

Auditor's Conclusion

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

BOROUGH OF TARENTUM ALLEGHENY COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND SUMMARY OF PRIOR EXAMINATION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2022 TO DECEMBER 31, 2023

Summary Of Prior Examination Recommendations

In our prior report, we recommended that the Department of Transportation review our examination finding to determine if the municipality should reimburse \$46,246.14 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund for an over expenditure of its equipment purchase tally.

During our current examination, we reviewed a letter dated September 29, 2022, from the Department of Transportation directing the municipality to reimburse \$46,246.14 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund. We noted that the municipality reimbursed this amount to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund on October 3, 2022.

In our prior report, we also recommended that the municipality only expend up to the approved amount on equipment expenditures in accordance with the Department of Transportation's *Publication 9*.

During our current examination, we noted that the municipality complied with our recommendations.

BOROUGH OF TARENTUM ALLEGHENY COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND SUMMARY OF ONSITE CLOSEOUT MEETING FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2022 TO DECEMBER 31, 2023

An onsite closeout meeting was held March 28, 2025. Those participating were:

BOROUGH OF TARENTUM

Mr. Dwight Boddorf, Borough Manager

DEPARTMENT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

Ms. Penelope Fjellanger, Auditor

Mr. Anthony Bledsoe, Auditor

This report was initially distributed to:

The Honorable Michael Carroll

Secretary
Department of Transportation

Borough of Tarentum

Allegheny County 318 Second Avenue Tarentum, PA 15084

The Honorable Scott Dadowski

President of Council

Mr. Dwight Boddorf
Borough Manager

Ms. Sharon Richards

Finance Director

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.