

COMPLIANCE AUDIT

Whitehall Borough Police Pension Plan Allegheny County, Pennsylvania For the Period January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2018

November 2019



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General

Eugene A. DePasquale • Auditor General



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EUGENE A. DePASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL

The Honorable Mayor and Borough Council
Whitehall Borough
Allegheny County
Pittsburgh, PA 15236

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Whitehall Borough Police Pension Plan for the period January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2018. We also evaluated compliance with some requirements subsequent to that period when possible. The audit was conducted pursuant to authority derived from Section 402(j) of Act 205 and in accordance with the standards applicable to performance audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our conclusions based on our audit objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our 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 whether annual employee contributions were calculated, deducted, and deposited into the pension plan in accordance with the plan's governing document and applicable laws and regulations by testing total members' contributions on an annual basis using the rates obtained from the plan's governing document in effect for all years within the period under audit and examining documents evidencing the deposit of these employee contributions into the pension plan.
- We determined whether retirement benefits calculated for all four of the plan members who retired during the current audit period represent payments to all (and only) those entitled to receive them and were properly determined and disbursed in accordance with the plan's governing document, applicable laws and regulations by recalculating the amount of the monthly pension benefit due to retired individuals and comparing these amounts to supporting documentation evidencing amounts determined and actually paid to recipients.
- We determined whether the January 1, 2015 and January 1, 2017 actuarial valuation reports were prepared and submitted by March 31, 2016 and 2018, 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.
- We determined whether all annual special ad hoc postretirement reimbursements received by the municipality were authorized and appropriately deposited in accordance with Act 147 by tracing information to supporting documentation maintained by plan officials.

Whitehall Borough contracted with an independent certified public accounting firm for annual audits of its basic financial statements which are available at the borough's offices. Those financial statements were not audited by us and, accordingly, we express no opinion or other form of assurance on them.

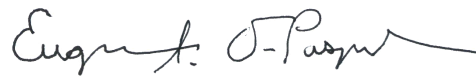
Borough officials are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the Whitehall Borough Police Pension Plan is administered in compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances and policies. In conducting our audit, we obtained an understanding of the borough's internal controls as they relate to the borough's compliance with those requirements and that we considered to be significant within the context of our audit objective, and assessed whether those significant controls were properly designed and implemented. Additionally and as previously described, we tested transactions, assessed official actions, performed analytical procedures, and interviewed selected officials 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 Whitehall Borough Police Pension Plan was administered in compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances and policies.

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 Whitehall 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.

November 18, 2019

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eugene A. DePasquale". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE
Auditor General

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Background.....	1
Supplementary Information	3
Report Distribution List	10

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. Section 402(j) of Act 205 specifically requires the Auditor General, as deemed necessary, to make an audit of every municipality which receives general municipal pension system state aid and of every municipal pension plan and fund in which general municipal pension system state aid is deposited.

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 Whitehall Borough Police Pension Plan is also governed by implementing regulations adopted by the former Public Employee Retirement Commission 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 147 - Special Ad Hoc Municipal Police and Firefighter Postretirement Adjustment Act, Act of December 14, 1988 (P.L. 1192, No. 147), as amended, 53 P.S. § 896.101 et seq.

Act 600 - Police Pension Fund Act, Act of May 29, 1956 (P.L. 1804, No. 600), as amended, 53 P.S. § 767 et seq.

The Whitehall Borough Police Pension Plan is a single-employer defined benefit pension plan locally controlled by the provisions of Ordinance No. 1036, as amended, adopted pursuant to Act 600. The plan is also affected by the provisions of collective bargaining agreements between the borough and its police officers. The plan was established June 1, 1949. Active members are required to contribute 5 percent of compensation to the plan. As of December 31, 2018, the plan had 22 active members, no terminated members eligible for vested benefits in the future, and 23 retirees receiving pension benefits from the plan.

BACKGROUND – (Continued)

As of December 31, 2018, selected plan benefit provisions are as follows:

Eligibility Requirements:

Normal Retirement Age 55 and 25 years of service.

Early Retirement 20 years of service.

Vesting 100% after 12 years of service.

Retirement Benefit:

If hired prior to January 24, 2001, 60% of gross pay averaged over the last 36 months employment plus a monthly service increment of \$60 for each year of service in excess of 25 years, up to a maximum of \$300 per month.

If hired after January 24, 2001, 50% of final 36 months average salary, plus a monthly service increment of \$60 per month for each year of service in excess of 25 years, up to a maximum of \$300 per month.

Survivor Benefit:

Before Retirement Eligibility Refund of member contributions plus interest.

After Retirement Eligibility A monthly benefit equal to 75% of the pension the participant was receiving or was entitled to receive on the day of the death, until the date the participant would have reached age 65 or, if earlier, until 120 payments to the spouse, after that, the survivor benefit drops to 50%.

Service Related Disability Benefit:

Benefit equals 50% of the member's salary at the time the disability was incurred, offset by Social Security disability benefits received for the same injury.

WHITEHALL BOROUGH POLICE PENSION PLAN
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
(UNAUDITED)

The supplementary information contained on Pages 3 through 6 reflects the implementation of GASB Statement No. 67, *Financial Reporting for Pension Plans*. The objective of this statement is to improve financial reporting by state and local governmental pension plans.

SCHEDULE OF CHANGES IN THE NET PENSION
LIABILITY AND RELATED RATIOS
FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2014 AND 2015

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>
Total Pension Liability		
Service cost	\$ 269,203	\$ 298,261
Interest	1,124,223	1,177,457
Difference between expected and actual experience	-	96,674
Benefit payments, including refunds of member contributions *	<u>(766,150)</u>	<u>(847,123)</u>
Net Change in Total Pension Liability	627,276	725,269
Total Pension Liability – Beginning	<u>15,096,585</u>	<u>15,723,861</u>
Total Pension Liability – Ending (a)	<u>\$ 15,723,861</u>	<u>\$ 16,449,130</u>
Plan Fiduciary Net Position		
Contributions – employer	\$ 607,068	\$ 619,576
Contributions – member	94,218	114,589
Net investment income	1,040,600	(6,215)
Benefit payments, including refunds of member contributions **	(768,511)	(847,123)
Administrative expense	<u>(62,584)</u>	<u>(66,771)</u>
Net Change in Plan Fiduciary Net Position	910,791	(185,944)
Plan Fiduciary Net Position – Beginning	<u>13,066,582</u>	<u>13,977,373</u>
Plan Fiduciary Net Position – Ending (b)	<u>\$ 13,977,373</u>	<u>\$ 13,791,429</u>
Net Pension Liability – Ending (a-b)	<u>\$ 1,746,488</u>	<u>\$ 2,657,701</u>
Plan Fiduciary Net Position as a Percentage of the Total Pension Liability	88.89%	83.84%
Estimated Covered Employee Payroll	\$ 2,123,178	\$ 2,184,937
Net Pension Liability as a Percentage of Covered Employee Payroll	82.26%	121.64%

Note: Benefit payment amounts for 2014 determined by * actuary, ** borough.

WHITEHALL BOROUGH POLICE PENSION PLAN
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
(UNAUDITED)

SCHEDULE OF CHANGES IN THE NET PENSION
LIABILITY AND RELATED RATIOS
FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2016 AND 2017

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
Total Pension Liability		
Service cost	\$ 289,310	\$ 366,981
Interest	1,224,983	1,344,004
Difference between expected and actual experience	-	4,810
Changes of assumptions	-	1,498,961
Benefit payments, including refunds of member contributions	(824,663)	(959,852)
Net Change in Total Pension Liability	<u>689,630</u>	<u>2,254,904</u>
Total Pension Liability – Beginning	16,449,130	17,138,760
Total Pension Liability – Ending (a)	<u>\$ 17,138,760</u>	<u>\$ 19,393,664</u>
Plan Fiduciary Net Position		
Contributions – employer	\$ 591,636	\$ 612,530
Contributions – member	115,833	123,124
Net investment income	1,010,625	1,829,293
Benefit payments, including refunds of member contributions	(824,663)	(959,852)
Administrative expense	(56,149)	(4,524)
Net Change in Plan Fiduciary Net Position	<u>837,282</u>	<u>1,600,571</u>
Plan Fiduciary Net Position – Beginning	13,791,429	14,628,711
Plan Fiduciary Net Position – Ending (b)	<u>\$ 14,628,711</u>	<u>\$ 16,229,282</u>
Net Pension Liability – Ending (a-b)	<u>\$ 2,510,049</u>	<u>\$ 3,164,382</u>
Plan Fiduciary Net Position as a Percentage of the Total Pension Liability	85.35%	83.68%
Estimated Covered Employee Payroll	\$ 2,328,694	\$ 2,381,269
Net Pension Liability as a Percentage of Covered Employee Payroll	107.79%	132.89%

WHITEHALL BOROUGH POLICE PENSION PLAN
 SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
 (UNAUDITED)

Sensitivity Of The Net Pension Liability To Changes In The Discount Rate

The following presents the net pension liability of the borough as of December 31, 2015 and 2016, calculated using the discount rate of 7.50%, as well as what the borough's net pension liability would be if it were calculated using a discount rate that is 1 percentage-point lower or 1 percentage-point higher than the current rate:

	<u>1% Decrease (6.50%)</u>	<u>Current Discount Rate (7.50%)</u>	<u>1% Increase (8.50%)</u>
Net Pension Liability – 12/31/15	\$ 4,550,228	\$ 2,657,701	\$ 1,062,150
Net Pension Liability – 12/31/16	\$ 4,448,894	\$ 2,510,049	\$ 873,239

In addition, the following presents the net pension liability of the borough as of December 31, 2017, calculated using the discount rate of 7.25%, as well as what the borough's net pension liability would be if it were calculated using a discount rate that is 1 percentage-point lower or 1 percentage-point higher than the current rate:

	<u>1% Decrease (6.25%)</u>	<u>Current Discount Rate (7.25%)</u>	<u>1% Increase (8.25%)</u>
Net Pension Liability – 12/31/17	\$ 5,522,139	\$ 3,164,382	\$ 1,194,266

WHITEHALL BOROUGH POLICE PENSION PLAN
 SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
 (UNAUDITED)

SCHEDULE OF CONTRIBUTIONS

Year Ended December 31	Actuarially Determined Contribution	Actual Contributions	Contribution Deficiency (Excess)	Covered- Employee Payroll	Contributions as a Percentage of Covered- Employee Payroll
2014	\$ 607,068	\$ 607,068	\$ -	\$2,123,178	28.59%
2015	619,576	619,576	-	2,184,937	28.36%
2016	591,636	591,636	-	2,328,694	25.41%
2017	612,530	612,530	-	2,381,269	25.72%
2018	607,121	607,121	-	*	

* Due to the timing of this audit, covered-employee payroll for 2018 was not provided in this schedule.

SCHEDULE OF INVESTMENT RETURNS

Annual Money-Weighted Rate of Return, Net of Investment Expense:

2017	13.25%
2016	7.48%
2015	(0.07%)
2014	8.01%

WHITEHALL 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, 2013, 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)
01-01-13	\$ 11,180,905	\$14,515,228	\$ 3,334,323	77.0%
01-01-15	13,305,387	15,820,535	2,515,148	84.1%
01-01-17	15,134,194	18,641,634	3,507,440	81.2%

Note: The market values of the plan’s assets at 01-01-13, 01-01-15, and 01-01-17 have been adjusted to reflect the smoothing of gains and/or losses over a four-year averaging period. 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.

WHITEHALL 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.

WHITEHALL 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, 2017
Actuarial cost method	Entry age normal
Amortization method	Level dollar, closed
Remaining amortization period	10 years
Asset valuation method	Fair value, 4-year smoothing
Actuarial assumptions:	
Investment rate of return	7.25%
Projected salary increases *	4.50%

* Includes inflation at 2.75%

WHITEHALL BOROUGH POLICE PENSION PLAN
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

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The Honorable James Nowalk
Mayor

Mr. Bill Veith
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Mr. Glenn Nagy
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Mr. Vincent G. Yevins
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