ATTESTATION ENGAGEMENT

Municipality of Penn Hills

Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 02-113

Liquid Fuels Tax Fund
For the Period
January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2021

November 2022



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General

Timothy L. DeFoor • Auditor General



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
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TIMOTHY L. DEFOOR AUDITOR GENERAL

Independent Auditor's Report

The Honorable Yassmin Gramian, P.E. Secretary
Department of Transportation
Harrisburg, PA 17120

We examined the accompanying Forms MS-965 With Adjustments for the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund of the Municipality of Penn Hills, Allegheny County, for the period January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2021. 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 whether due to fraud or error. We believe that the evidence we obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a reasonable basis for our opinion.

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.

In our opinion, 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 Municipality of Penn Hills, Allegheny County, for the period January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2021, in accordance with the criteria described in the Background section of this report and the Department of Transportation's *Publication 9*.

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

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; and 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 over reporting on the Forms MS-965 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 would not necessarily identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies. 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.

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the Forms MS-965 are free from material misstatement, we performed tests of Municipality of Penn Hills, 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 the following instance of noncompliance that is required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*:

• Liquid Fuels Money Erroneously Deposited Into The Master Account.

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

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 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 Municipality of Penn Hills, 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. Detool Timothy L. DeFoor

Auditor General

October 12, 2022

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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:

2018	2019	2020	2021
#10.000.00	#11.100.00	#11 200 00	¢11.500.00
\$10,900.00	\$11,100.00	\$11,300.00	\$11,500.00

• 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:

2018	2019	2020	2021
\$10,900.00	\$11,100.00	\$11,300.00	\$11,500.00

• 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 Form 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.

MUNICIPALITY OF PENN HILLS ALLEGHENY COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2020 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		247,891.40		-		247,891.40
Traffic control devices		51,976.56		-		51,976.56
Street lighting		602,160.84		-		602,160.84
Storm sewers and drains		-		-		-
Repairs of tools and machinery		-		-		-
Maintenance and repair of						
roads and bridges		-		-		-
Highway construction and						
rebuilding projects		-		-		-
Miscellaneous				25.00		25.00
Total (To Section 2, Line 5)	\$	902,028.80	\$	25.00	\$	902,053.80

MUNICIPALITY OF PENN HILLS ALLEGHENY COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2020 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 2 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Fund Balance	Reported	Adjustments	Adjusted Amount	
1. Balance, January 1, 2020	\$ 201,911.35	\$ (20.00)	\$ 201,891.35	
Receipts: 2. State allocation	1,233,425.53		1 233 425 53	
2a. Turnback allocation	40.00	_	1,233,425.53 40.00	
2b. Interest on investments	328.91	-	328.91	
2c. Miscellaneous	-			
3. Total receipts	1,233,794.44		1,233,794.44	
4. Total funds available	1,435,705.79	(20.00)	1,435,685.79	
5. Expenditures (Section 1)	902,028.80	25.00	902,053.80	
6. Balance, December 31, 2020	\$ 533,676.99	\$ (45.00)	\$ 533,631.99	

MUNICIPALITY OF PENN HILLS ALLEGHENY COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2020 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 3 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Equipment Balance	Reported		Adjustments		,	Adjusted Amount
1. Prior year equipment balance	\$	201,911.35	\$	(20.00)	\$	201,891.35
2. Add: Current year equipment allocation (20% of Lines 2 + 2a, Section 2)		246,693.11		-		246,693.11
3. PENNDOT approved adjustments						
4. Total funds available for equipment acquisition		448,604.46		(20.00)		448,584.46
5. Less: Major equipment expenditures						-
6. Remainder		448,604.46		(20.00)		448,584.46
7. Equipment balance available for subsequent year (Lesser of Line 6 or Section 2 balance, but not less than zero)	\$	448,604.46	\$	(20.00)	\$	448,584.46

MUNICIPALITY OF PENN HILLS ALLEGHENY COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2021 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	54	11,737.54		-		541,737.54
Traffic control devices		-		-		-
Street lighting	62	21,808.93		-		621,808.93
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)	\$ 1,16	63,546.47	\$		\$ 1	,163,546.47

MUNICIPALITY OF PENN HILLS ALLEGHENY COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2021 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 2 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Fund Balance	Reported	Adjustments	Adjusted Amount	
1. Balance, January 1, 2021	\$ 533,656.99	\$ (25.00)	\$ 533,631.99	
Receipts: 2. State allocation	1,143,806.25	_	1,143,806.25	
2a. Turnback allocation	40.00	-	40.00	
2b. Interest on investments	70.07	-	70.07	
2c. Miscellaneous		45.00	45.00	
3. Total receipts	1,143,916.32	45.00	1,143,961.32	
4. Total funds available	1,677,573.31	20.00	1,677,593.31	
5. Expenditures (Section 1)	1,163,546.47		1,163,546.47	
6. Balance, December 31, 2021	\$ 514,026.84	\$ 20.00	\$ 514,046.84	

MUNICIPALITY OF PENN HILLS ALLEGHENY COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND 2021 FORM MS-965 – SECTION 3 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

Equipment Balance	Reported		orted Adjustments		 Adjusted Amount
1. Prior year equipment balance	\$	448,584.46	\$	-	\$ 448,584.46
2. Add: Current year equipment allocation (20% of Lines 2 + 2a, Section 2)		228,769.25		-	228,769.25
3. PENNDOT approved adjustments					
4. Total funds available for equipment acquisition		677,353.71		-	677,353.71
5. Less: Major equipment expenditures					 <u>-</u>
6. Remainder		677,353.71			 677,353.71
7. Equipment balance available for subsequent year (Lesser of Line 6 or Section 2 balance, but not less than zero)	\$	514,026.84	\$	20.00	\$ 514,046.84

MUNICIPALITY OF PENN HILLS ALLEGHENY COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND

AUDITOR DESCRIPTION OF SELECT TRANSACTIONS FOR THE PERIOD

JANUARY 1, 2020 TO DECEMBER 31, 2021

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

Adjustments

2020 - Section 1

An adjustment of \$25.00 was made to "Miscellaneous" because bank service charges were not reported.

2020 - Section 2

An adjustment of \$(20.00) was made to "Balance, January 1, 2020" because of a prior report adjustment that was not carried forward in the fund balance.

2020 - Section 3

An adjustment of \$(20.00) was made to "Prior year equipment balance" because adjustments made in the prior report were not carried forward.

2021 - Section 2

An adjustment of \$(25.00) was made to "Balance, January 1, 2021" because an incorrect fund balance was carried forward.

An adjustment of \$45.00 was made to "Miscellaneous" because a refund of bank service charges was not reported.

Miscellaneous Receipts

On January 7, 2021, the municipality deposited \$45.00 into its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund which was received from a financial institution for a refund of bank service charges.

Miscellaneous Expenditures

On August 3, 2020, the municipality expended \$25.00 from the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund for bank service charges.

<u>Finding No. 1 – Reimbursement For Liquid Fuels Tax Fund Expenditures</u> Deposited Into The Master Account

Our examination disclosed that during 2020, the municipality expended \$49,166.56 in construction costs and \$2,810.00 in engineering fees from the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund for the municipality's Green Light Go Program. The municipality also expended \$4,189.93 for engineering fees and \$65.00 for advertising from the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund during the prior examination period for the costs associated with the program. The Green Light Go Program is a competitive state grant program designed by the Department of Transportation to improve the efficiency and operation of existing traffic signals throughout the Commonwealth.

The total amount expended from the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund for the Green Light Go Program was \$56,231.49. As per the terms of the agreement, The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation reimbursed the municipality for 80 percent of the total costs or \$44,985.19, and the municipality is responsible for the other 20 percent or \$11,246.30. The municipality deposited the Green Light Go reimbursement from the Department of Transportation of \$44,985.19 into the Master Account on July 14, 2021. Because the Green Light Go expenditures were made from the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund, the municipality should have deposited the reimbursement into its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund.

The practice of depositing liquid fuels money into any account other than the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund account is contrary to the Act of June 1, 1956, P.L. (1955) 1944, 72 P.S. § 2615.5, known as the Liquid Fuels Tax Municipal Allocation Law, which states:

...each city, borough, town and township, shall ... Establish and maintain a special fund into which the moneys [liquid fuels tax funds] ... shall be deposited and into which no other moneys may be deposited or commingled ...

The Finance Director stated that this condition occurred because the municipality was unaware that the Green Light Go reimbursement should have been deposited into the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund.

The risk that Liquid Fuels Tax Fund money may be used for unauthorized purposes increases when liquid fuels money is commingled with other funds.

The failure to follow the Liquid Fuels Tax Municipal Allocation Law as noted above could result in the municipality having to reimburse \$44,985.19 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund.

<u>Finding No. 1 – Reimbursement For Liquid Fuels Tax Fund Expenditures</u> <u>Deposited Into The Master Account (Continued)</u>

Recommendations

We recommend that the municipality reimburse \$44,985.19 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund upon official notification by the Department of Transportation.

We also recommend that, in the future, the municipality deposit all reimbursements for expenditures made from the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund into the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund.

Management's Response

The Finance Director stated:

I was not aware that any reimbursements from the Green Light Go projects had to be deposited into the Liquid Fuels fund. I will make note of this for any future reimbursements.

Auditor's Conclusion

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

Finding No. 2 - Late Receipt Of Allocation

Our examination disclosed that the 2020 Liquid Fuels Tax Fund allocation of \$1,233,425.53, 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 1, 2020, 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 31st and the Survey of Financial Condition by March 15th.
- 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 failed to file documents and information timely as noted above, the municipality did not have use of the 2020 allocation for 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.

The municipality received its 2021 Liquid Fuels Tax Fund allocation on time.

Finding - Late Receipt Of Allocation (Continued)

Recommendation

We recommend that, in the future, the municipality continues to 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 Finance Director stated:

In 2020, the report was completed late because the previous finance director had retired, and I was not aware of the deadline with my first report.

Auditor's Conclusion

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

MUNICIPALITY OF PENN HILLS ALLEGHENY COUNTY LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND SUMMARY OF EXIT CONFERENCE FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2020 TO DECEMBER 31, 2021

An exit conference was held September 19, 2022. Those participating were:

MUNICIPALITY OF PENN HILLS

Mrs. Sheree A. Strayer, Finance Director

DEPARTMENT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

Ms. Lizann Tokarski, Auditor

The results of the examination were presented and discussed in their entirety.

This report was initially distributed to:

The Honorable Yassmin Gramian, P.E.

Secretary
Department of Transportation

Municipality of Penn Hills

Allegheny County 102 Duff Road Pittsburgh, PA 15235

The Honorable Pauline Calabrese Mayor

Mrs. Sheree A. Strayer 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.