




Lehigh County
Pennsylvania

OFFICE OF THE CONTROLLER

Mark Pinsley, MBA
COUNTY CONTROLLER

Nanton John, CFE
DEPUTY CONTROLLER

TO: Final Report Distribution
FROM: Mark Pinsley, County Controller 
DATE: April 17, 2024
RE: Compliance Audit – 2023 Pension Payments Processing

We have completed an audit of pension payment processing activity for the calendar year ending December 31, 2023. The Office of Fiscal Affairs' management is responsible for the preparation of county payments as described in the County of Lehigh Home Rule Charter and Administrative Code (as amended) and in the County Pension Law-Pennsylvania State Act Number 96 of 1971. The county's external auditors are responsible for auditing the County of Lehigh Employee's Retirement Plan. The Office of the Controller is responsible for auditing county disbursements and reviewing warrants for the expenditure of county monies as described in Section 503 of the County of Lehigh Home Rule Charter and Section 502 of the Administrative Code. Our audit was limited to the pension payment processing function performed by the Office of Fiscal Affairs' personnel. Our report number 24-13 is attached.

The results of our audit are:

- Approximately 23,434 pension payments amounting to \$44.3 million were issued by the Office of Fiscal Affairs during calendar year ending December 31, 2023.
- In our opinion, the Office of Fiscal Affairs' management complied, in all material respects, with the compliance requirements referred to above that are applicable to pension payments for the calendar year ending December 31, 2023.

Attachment

AUDITS/PENSION PAYMENTS



COUNTY OF LEHIGH, PENNSYLVANIA

Independent Auditor's Report
Compliance Audit of Pension Payments Processing

For the Calendar Year Ending December 31, 2023

REPORT NO. 24-13

COUNTY OF LEHIGH, PENNSYLVANIA
COMPLIANCE AUDIT OF PENSION PAYMENTS PROCESSING

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COUNTY OF LEHIGH, PENNSYLVANIA

PENSION PAYMENTS

Background:

The County of Lehigh Employees' Retirement Fund ("Plan"), a single-employer plan, was established in 1942 and is a contributory defined benefit pension plan. Plan benefits and obligations are under the authority of Pennsylvania State Act Number 96 of 1971 and can be amended by Act of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. All County employees with the expectation of working over 1,000 hours per year are required to participate in the Plan. Elected officials have the option to participate, while other full-time employees must participate.

Upon retirement, demands for pension payments are received, reviewed and approved by the pensioner, and then verified and recalculated by third-party actuaries. Once authorized for payment, the approved demand is forwarded to the Office of Fiscal Affairs where the following is performed in compliance with the *County of Lehigh Administrative Code (as amended)*:

When demands are reviewed, audited and approved for payment by the Office of Fiscal Affairs, the Controller's Office, in compliance with the County's Home Rule Charter and Administrative Code noted below, performs a final review prior to payment.

Lehigh County Home Rule Charter (as amended):

§ 503: The Controller shall examine the records, files, and procedures pertaining to the receipt and expenditures of County funds by all officers, agents, and employees of the County and all agencies thereof, to determine if they are in accordance with law, and the provisions of this Charter...

County of Lehigh Administrative Code (as amended):

Section 502: The Office of the Controller shall have and exercise all powers and duties stated in Article V, Section 503 of the Charter. The duties of the office shall be organized to perform the following functions:

- (b) Review all warrants for the expenditures of County monies and review the bidding, contract and other documents constituting the basis for the expenditures and if satisfied that such expenditures are within the budget allotment pertaining thereto and otherwise conform to the applicable legal requirements, shall sign said warrant before it is paid.



OFFICE OF THE CONTROLLER

Mark Pinsley, MBA Nanton John, CFE
COUNTY CONTROLLER DEPUTY CONTROLLER

Timothy Reeves, Chief Fiscal Officer
Office of Fiscal Affairs
Lehigh County Government Center
17 South Seventh Street
Allentown, PA 18101-2400

Compliance

We have audited the Office of Fiscal Affairs' management compliance with the County of Lehigh Home Rule Charter and the Administrative Code (as amended) requirements for pension payments processing for the calendar year ending December 31, 2023. The Office of Fiscal Affairs' management is responsible for the preparation of pension payments. The financial statements of County of Lehigh Employees' Retirement Plan are audited by the county's external auditors and a separate independent auditors' report is issued annually. The Office of the Controller, County of Lehigh, is responsible for auditing county disbursements and reviewing warrants for the expenditure of county monies. We did not audit nor do we express an opinion on the financial statements of the County of Lehigh Employees' Retirement Plan nor on compliance to the requirements of Pennsylvania State Act Number 96 of 1971. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the pension payment processing functions performed by the Office of Fiscal Affairs' personnel as to compliance with the Home Rule Charter and the Administrative Code (as amended) for the calendar year ending December 31, 2023.

We conducted our audit of compliance in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. The responsibility of the Office of the Controller is further described in the County of Lehigh Home Rule Charter Article V, Section 503, and County of Lehigh Administrative Code Article V, Section 502, paragraphs 1.a. and 1.b. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether noncompliance with the compliance requirements referred to above that could have a material effect on pension payment activity. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence about the Office of Fiscal Affairs' management compliance with those requirements and performing such other procedures as we consider necessary in the circumstances. We believe our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion. Our audit does not provide a legal determination of the Office of Fiscal Affairs' management compliance with the Lehigh County Home Rule Charter, the County of Lehigh Administrative Code, or the Pennsylvania State Act Number 96 of 1971.

In our opinion, the Office of Fiscal Affairs' management complied, in all material respects, with the compliance requirements referred to above that are applicable to County of Lehigh Home Rule Charter and the Administrative Code (as amended) for the calendar year ending December 31, 2023.



Internal Control Over Compliance

Management of the Office of Fiscal Affairs is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal control over compliance with the compliance requirements referred to above. In planning and performing our audit, we considered the Office of Fiscal Affairs' management internal control over compliance to determine the auditing procedures for the purposes of expressing an opinion on compliance, but not for the purposes of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control over compliance. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of the Office of Fiscal Affairs' management internal control over compliance.

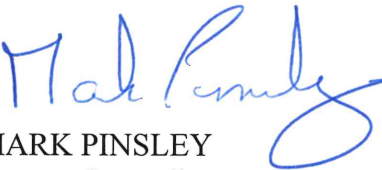
A deficiency in internal control over compliance exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent or detect noncompliance on a timely basis. A material weakness in internal control over compliance is a deficiency or combination of deficiencies in internal control over compliance, such that there is reasonable possibility that a material noncompliance with a compliance requirement will not be prevented or detected and corrected on a timely basis.

Our consideration of internal control over compliance was for the limited purpose described in the first paragraph of this section and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be deficiencies or material weaknesses in internal control over compliance. We did not identify any deficiencies in internal control over compliance that we consider to be material weaknesses, as defined above.

Management's Response to the Audit

If provided, the Office of Fiscal Affairs' response to our audit is included in this report. We did not audit the Office of Fiscal Affairs' response and, accordingly, we do not express an opinion on it.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of management; Phillips Armstrong, County Executive; Edward Hozza, Director of Administration, Board of Commissioners; and others within the county and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties. However, this report is a matter of public record and its distribution is not limited.


MARK PINSLEY
County Controller

Audited by: Allan Vavra

April 16, 2024
Allentown, Pennsylvania

xc: Phillips Armstrong, County Executive
Board of Commissioners
Edward Hozza, Director of Administration
Mary Prutzman, Accounting Supervisor