



OHIO AUDITOR OF STATE  
KEITH FABER





**HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP  
DEFIANCE COUNTY**

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## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

Highland Township  
Defiance County  
15772 Hill Road  
Defiance, Ohio 43512-8926

To the Board of Trustees:

### **Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements**

#### ***Adverse, Qualified, and Unmodified Opinions***

We have audited the financial statements of Highland Township, Defiance County, Ohio (the Township), which comprises the cash balances, receipts and disbursements for each governmental fund type as of and for the years ended December 31, 2023 and 2022, and the related notes to the financial statements.

#### ***Adverse Opinion on U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles***

In our opinion, because of the significance of the matter discussed in the *Basis for Adverse Opinion on U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles* section of our report, the accompanying financial statements do not present fairly, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, the financial position of the Township, as of December 31, 2023 and 2022, or the changes in financial position thereof for the years then ended.

#### ***Additional Opinion Qualification***

In our opinion, except for the possible effects of the matter described in the *Basis for Additional Opinion Qualification* section of our report, the accompanying financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the cash balances, receipts and disbursements for the General and Special Revenue Funds as of and for the years ended December 31, 2023 and 2022, and the related notes of Highland Township, Defiance County, Ohio in accordance with the financial reporting provisions Ohio Revised Code § 117.38 and Ohio Administrative Code § 117-2-03(C) permit, described in Note 2.

#### ***Unmodified Opinion on Regulatory Basis of Accounting***

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the cash balances, receipts and disbursements for the Capital Projects and Permanent Funds as of and for the years ended December 31, 2023 and 2022, and the related notes to the financial statements, in accordance with the financial reporting provisions which Ohio Revised Code Section 117.38 and Ohio Administrative Code Section 117-2-03(C) permit, described in Note 2.

***Basis for Opinions***

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS) and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of our report. We are required to be independent of the Township, and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinions.

***Basis for Adverse Opinion on U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles***

As described in Note 2 of the financial statements, the financial statements are prepared by the Township on the basis of the financial reporting provisions of Ohio Revised Code Section 117.38 and Ohio Administrative Code Section 117-2-03(C), which is an accounting basis other than accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAP), to satisfy these requirements. The effects on the financial statements of the variances between the regulatory basis of accounting described in Note 2 and accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, although not reasonably determinable, are presumed to be material and pervasive.

***Basis for Additional Opinion Qualification***

During a previous audit period, the Township expended \$62,947 from the Special Revenue Fund to pay trustees' salaries. Ohio Rev. § 505.24(C) restricts the use of the Special Revenue Fund to pay salaries unless proper certifications are provided. Had this amount been properly expended from the General Fund, the effect on the Special Revenue Fund would be an increase in the fund cash balances to \$758,368 and \$875,407 for the years ended December 31, 2023 and 2022, respectively. The effect on the General Fund would be a decrease in fund cash balances to (\$35,766) and (\$33,884) for the years ended December 31, 2023 and 2022, respectively.

***Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements***

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with the financial reporting provisions Ohio Revised Code Section 117.38 and Ohio Administrative Code Section 117-2-03(C) permit. Management is also responsible for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Township's ability to continue as a going concern for twelve months beyond the financial statement date, including any currently known information that may raise substantial doubt shortly thereafter.

***Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements***

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinions. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS and the financial audit standards in the Comptroller General of the United States' *Government Auditing Standards* will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with GAAS and *Government Auditing Standards*, we

- exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Township's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Township's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.

***Other Reporting Required by Government Auditing Standards***

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we have also issued our report dated November 12, 2024, on our consideration of the Township's internal control over financial reporting and our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts and grant agreements and other matters. The purpose of that report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the Township's internal control over financial reporting or on compliance. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the Township's internal control over financial reporting and compliance.



Keith Faber  
Auditor of State  
Columbus, Ohio

November 12, 2024

**HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP  
DEFIANCE COUNTY**

**COMBINED STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS, DISBURSEMENTS  
AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES (REGULATORY CASH BASIS)  
ALL GOVERNMENTAL FUND TYPES  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023**

	General	Special Revenue	Capital Projects	Permanent	Totals (Memorandum Only)
<b>Cash Receipts</b>					
Property and Other Local Taxes	\$24,600	\$247,454			\$272,054
Charges for Services		22,338			22,338
Licenses, Permits and Fees	2,409	6,601			9,010
Intergovernmental	44,964	219,117	\$47,565		311,646
Earnings on Investments	65				65
Miscellaneous	238	21,578			21,816
<i>Total Cash Receipts</i>	<i>72,276</i>	<i>517,088</i>	<i>47,565</i>		<i>636,929</i>
<b>Cash Disbursements</b>					
Current:					
General Government	74,158	32,305			106,463
Public Safety		319,837			319,837
Public Works		128,128	47,565		175,693
Health		10,285			10,285
Human Services		1,410			1,410
Capital Outlay		59,173			59,173
Debt Service:					
Principal Retirement		75,792			75,792
Interest and Fiscal Charges		7,197			7,197
<i>Total Cash Disbursements</i>	<i>74,158</i>	<i>634,127</i>	<i>\$47,565</i>		<i>755,850</i>
<i>Net Change in Fund Cash Balances</i>	<i>(1,882)</i>	<i>(117,039)</i>			<i>(118,921)</i>
<i>Fund Cash Balances, January 1</i>	<i>29,063</i>	<i>812,460</i>		<i>\$8,994</i>	<i>850,517</i>
<i>Fund Cash Balances, December 31</i>	<i>\$27,181</i>	<i>\$695,421</i>		<i>\$8,994</i>	<i>\$731,596</i>

*The notes to the financial statements are an integral part of this statement.*

**HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP  
DEFIANCE COUNTY**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023**

**Note 1 – Reporting Entity**

The constitution and laws of the State of Ohio establish the rights and privileges of Highland Township, Defiance County, Ohio (the Township) as a body corporate and politic. A publicly elected three-member Board of Trustees directs the Township. The Township provides road and bridge maintenance, cemetery maintenance, fire protection, and emergency medical services. The Township appropriates Fire Fund money to support a volunteer fire department.

***Public Entity Risk Pool***

The Township participates in a public entity risk pool, the Ohio Plan Risk Management, Inc. (OPRM). Note 5 to the financial statements provides additional information for this entity. The Township's management believes these financial statements present all activities for which the Township is financially accountable.

**Note 2 – Summary of Significant Accounting Policies**

***Basis of Presentation***

The Township's financial statements consist of a combined statement of receipts, disbursements and changes in fund balances (regulatory cash basis) for all governmental fund types which are all organized on a fund type basis.

***Fund Accounting***

The Township uses funds to maintain its financial records during the year. A fund is defined as a fiscal and accounting entity with a self-balancing set of accounts. The funds of the Township are presented below:

**General Fund** The General Fund accounts for and reports all financial resources not accounted for and reported in another fund. The General Fund balance is available to the Township for any purpose provided it is expended or transferred according to the general laws of Ohio.

**Special Revenue Funds** These funds account for and report the proceeds of specific revenue sources that are restricted or committed to expenditure for specified purposes other than debt service or capital projects. The Township had the following significant Special Revenue Funds:

**Fire Fund** This fund receives property tax money for the purpose of providing fire protection services to Township residents.

**Coronavirus Relief Fund** This fund accounts for and reports Local Fiscal Recovery and American Rescue Plan grant activity.

**Capital Project Funds** These funds account for and report financial resources that are restricted, committed, or assigned to expenditure for capital outlays, including the acquisition or construction of capital facilities and other capital assets. The Township had the following significant Capital Project Fund:

**Public Works Commission Project Fund** The Township received a grant from the State of Ohio and administered by the County Engineer to maintain and repair Township roads.

**Permanent Funds** These funds account for and report resources that are restricted to the extent that only earnings, and not principal, may be used for purposes that support the reporting government's programs (for the benefit of the government or its citizenry). The Township had the following significant Permanent Funds:

**HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP  
DEFIANCE COUNTY**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023  
(CONTINUED)**

**Myers Cemetery Bequest Fund** This fund accounts for and reports interest earned on the nonexpendable corpus from a trust agreement restricted for the general maintenance and upkeep of the Myers Cemetery.

**Hall Cemetery Bequest Fund** This fund accounts for and reports interest earned on the nonexpendable corpus from a trust agreement restricted for the general maintenance and upkeep of the Hall Cemetery.

**General Cemetery Bequest Fund** This fund accounts for and reports interest earned on the nonexpendable corpus from trust agreements restricted for the general maintenance and upkeep of the Township cemeteries.

***Basis of Accounting***

These financial statements follow the accounting basis permitted by the financial reporting provisions of Ohio Revised Code Section 117.38 and Ohio Administrative Code Section 117-2-03(C). This basis is similar to the cash receipts and disbursements accounting basis. The Board recognizes receipts when received in cash rather than when earned, and recognizes disbursements when paid rather than when a liability is incurred. Budgetary presentations report budgetary expenditures when a commitment is made (i.e., when an encumbrance is approved).

These statements include adequate disclosure of material matters, as the financial reporting provisions of Ohio Revised Code Section 117.38 and Ohio Administrative Code Section 117-2-03(C) permit.

***Budgetary Process***

The Ohio Revised Code requires that each fund be budgeted annually.

**Appropriations** Budgetary expenditures (that is, disbursements and encumbrances) may not exceed appropriations at the fund, function or object level of control, and appropriations may not exceed estimated resources. The Board of Trustees must annually approve appropriation measures and subsequent amendments. Appropriations lapse at year end.

**Estimated Resources** Estimated resources include estimates of cash to be received (budgeted receipts) plus cash as of January 1. The County Budget Commission must approve estimated resources.

**Encumbrances** The Ohio Revised Code requires the Township to reserve (encumber) appropriations when individual commitments are made. Encumbrances outstanding at year end are canceled, and reappropriated in the subsequent year.

A summary of 2023 budgetary activity appears in Note 3.

***Deposits and Investments***

The Township's accounting basis includes investments as assets. This basis does not record disbursements for investment purchases or receipts for investment sales. This basis records gains or losses at the time of sale as receipts or disbursements, respectively.

***Capital Assets***

The Township records disbursements for acquisitions of property, plant, and equipment when paid. The accompanying financial statements do not report these items as assets.

**HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP  
DEFIANCE COUNTY**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023  
(CONTINUED)**

***Fund Balance***

Fund balance is divided into five classifications based primarily on the extent to which the Township must observe constraints imposed upon the use of its governmental-fund resources. The classifications are as follows:

***Nonspendable*** The Township classifies assets as *nonspendable* when legally or contractually required to maintain the amounts intact.

***Restricted*** Fund balance is *restricted* when constraints placed on the use of resources are either externally imposed by creditors (such as through debt covenants), grantors, contributors, or laws or regulations of other governments; or is imposed by law through constitutional provisions.

***Committed*** Trustees can *commit* amounts via formal action (resolution). The Township must adhere to these commitments unless the Trustees amend the resolution. Committed fund balance also incorporates contractual obligations to the extent that existing resources in the fund have been specifically committed to satisfy contractual requirements.

***Assigned*** Assigned fund balances are intended for specific purposes but do not meet the criteria to be classified as *restricted* or *committed*.

***Unassigned*** Unassigned fund balance is the residual classification for the General Fund and includes amounts not included in the other classifications. In other governmental funds, the unassigned classification is used only to report a deficit balance.

The Township applies restricted resources first when expenditures are incurred for purposes for which either restricted or unrestricted (committed, assigned, and unassigned) amounts are available. Similarly, within unrestricted fund balance, committed amounts are reduced first followed by assigned, and then unassigned amounts when expenditures are incurred for purposes for which amounts in any of the unrestricted fund balance classifications could be used.

For regulatory purposes, limited disclosure related to fund balance is included in Note 10.

**Note 3 – Budgetary Activity**

Budgetary activity for the year ending December 31, 2023 follows:

2023 Budgeted vs. Actual Receipts			
Fund Type	Budgeted Receipts	Actual Receipts	Variance
General	\$59,489	\$72,276	\$12,787
Special Revenue	473,327	517,088	43,761
Capital Projects	47,565	47,565	
Permanent	6		(6)
Total	<u><u>\$580,387</u></u>	<u><u>\$636,929</u></u>	<u><u>\$56,542</u></u>

**HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP  
DEFIANCE COUNTY**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023  
(CONTINUED)**

**2023 Budgeted vs. Actual Budgetary Basis Expenditures**

Fund Type	Appropriation Authority	Budgetary Expenditures	Variance
General	\$88,852	\$74,158	\$14,694
Special Revenue	1,289,786	634,127	655,659
Capital Projects	47,565	47,565	
Permanent	309		309
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,426,512</b>	<b>\$755,850</b>	<b>\$670,662</b>

**Note 4 – Deposits**

To improve cash management, cash received by the Township is pooled. Monies for all funds are maintained in this pool. The Ohio Revised Code prescribes allowable deposits and investments. A summary of the Township's deposit accounts are as follows:

	2023
Demand deposits	\$512,422
Certificates of deposit	8,690
Other time deposits (savings account)	210,484
<b>Total deposits</b>	<b>\$731,596</b>

The Township does not use a separate payroll clearing account. The expenditures included in the accompanying financial statements reflect net payroll plus all remitted payroll withholdings.

**Deposits**

Deposits are insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or collateralized through the Ohio Pooled Collateral System (OPCS), a collateral pool of eligible securities deposited with a qualified trustee and pledged to the Treasurer of State to secure the repayment of all public monies deposited in the financial institution.

**Note 5 – Risk Management**

**Risk Pool Membership**

The Township belongs to the Ohio Plan Risk Management, Inc. (OPRM) (the Plan), a unincorporated non-profit association providing a formalized, jointly administered self-insurance risk management programs and other administrative services to Ohio governments (Members). The Plan is legally separate from its member governments.

Pursuant to Section 2744.081 of the Ohio Revised Code, the plan provides property, liability, errors and omissions, law enforcement, automobile, excess liability, crime, surety and bond, inland marine and other coverages to its members sold through fourteen appointed independent agents in the State of Ohio.

Effective November 1, 2016, the OPRM elected to participate in a property loss corridor deductible. The property corridor includes losses paid between 70 percent and 75 percent. In 2018, the casualty loss corridor was eliminated and the property corridor was adjusted to losses paid between 65 percent and 70 percent. Effective November 1, 2019, the property loss corridor was adjusted to losses between 60 percent and 67.5 percent and has remain unchanged. OPRM had 801 members as of December 31, 2023.

**HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP  
DEFIANCE COUNTY**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023  
(CONTINUED)**

The Pool's audited financial statements conform with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, with the exception of a qualified opinion related to recording premiums and membership fees earned in full as of December 31, 2023. Those premiums and fees should be earned pro-rata over the individual coverage and membership periods of each policy. The financial statements reported the following assets, liabilities and equity at December 31, 2023.

Assets	\$ 23,113,696
Liabilities	( 16,078,587)
Members' Equity	<u>\$ 7,035,109</u>

You can read the complete audited financial statements for OPRM at the Plan's website, [www.ohioplan.org](http://www.ohioplan.org).

***Workers' Compensation***

Workers' Compensation coverage is provided by the State of Ohio. The Township pays the State Workers' Compensation System a premium based on a rate per \$100 of salaries. This rate is calculated based on accident history and administrative costs.

**Note 6 – Property Taxes**

Real property taxes become a lien on January 1 preceding the October 1 date for which the Trustees adopted tax rates. The State Board of Tax Equalization adjusts these rates for inflation. Property taxes are also reduced for applicable non-business, owner occupancy, and homestead exemption credits and/or homestead and rollback deductions. The financial statements include these credits and/or deduction amounts the State pays as Intergovernmental Receipts. Payments are due to the County by December 31. If the property owner elects to pay semiannually, the first half is due December 31. The second half payment is due the following June 20.

Public utilities are also taxed on personal and real property located within the Township.

The County is responsible for assessing property and for billing, collecting, and distributing all property taxes on behalf of the Township.

**Note 7 – Defined Benefit Pension Plans**

***Ohio Public Employees Retirement System***

Some Township employees belong to the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS). OPERS is a cost-sharing, multiple-employer plan. The Ohio Revised Code prescribes this plan's benefits, which include postretirement health care and survivor and disability benefits.

The Ohio Revised Code also prescribes contribution rates. OPERS members contributed 10 percent of their gross salaries, and the Township contributed an amount equaling 14 percent of participants' gross salaries. The Township has paid all contributions required through December 31, 2023.

***Social Security***

Other Township employees contributed to Social Security. This plan provides retirement benefits, including survivor and disability benefits to participants.

Employees contributed 6.2 percent of their gross salaries. The Township contributed an amount equal to 6.2 percent of participants' gross salaries. The Township has paid all contributions required through December 31, 2023.

**HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP  
DEFIANCE COUNTY**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023  
(CONTINUED)**

**Note 8 – Postemployment Benefits**

OPERS offers a cost-sharing, multiple-employer defined benefit postemployment plan. OPERS offers a health reimbursement arrangement (HRA) allowance to benefit recipients meeting certain age and service credit requirements. The HRA is an account funded by OPERS that provides tax-free reimbursement for qualified medical expenses such as monthly post-tax insurance premiums, deductibles, co-insurance, and co-pays incurred by eligible benefit recipients and their dependents. For calendar year 2023, the portion of employer contributions allocated to health care was 0 percent for members in the traditional pension plan and 2 percent for members in the combined plan. For 2023, the portion of employer contributions allocated to health care for members in the member-directed plan was 4.0 percent; however, a portion of the health care rate was funded with reserves.

**Note 9 – Debt**

Debt outstanding at December 31, 2023, was as follows:

	Principal	Interest Rate
Fire Truck and Ambulance Loan	<u><u>\$245,629</u></u>	2.11%

Contrary to Ohio law, the Township refinanced a loan for the purchase of a fire truck and ambulance for \$370,000 on August 24, 2021. Annual payments will be made for 4 years, with a final payment due in year 5.

***Amortization***

Amortization of the above debt, including interest, is scheduled as follows:

Year Ending December 31:	Loan
2024	\$41,494
2025	41,494
2026	176,078
Total	<u><u>\$259,066</u></u>

**Note 10 – Fund Balances**

The fund balance of Special Revenue Funds is restricted. The fund balance of Permanent Funds that is not part of the nonspendable corpus is either restricted or committed.

**HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP  
DEFIANCE COUNTY**

**COMBINED STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS, DISBURSEMENTS  
AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES (REGULATORY CASH BASIS)  
ALL GOVERNMENTAL FUND TYPES  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022**

	General	Special Revenue	Capital Projects	Permanent	Totals (Memorandum Only)
<b>Cash Receipts</b>					
Property and Other Local Taxes	\$24,395	\$244,889			\$269,284
Charges for Services		19,320			19,320
Licenses, Permits and Fees	1,356	5,400			6,756
Intergovernmental	44,690	323,582	\$1,135		369,407
Earnings on Investments	87	46		\$37	170
Miscellaneous	578	9,398			9,976
<i>Total Cash Receipts</i>	<i>71,106</i>	<i>602,635</i>	<i>1,135</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>674,913</i>
<b>Cash Disbursements</b>					
Current:					
General Government	79,229	31,027			110,256
Public Safety		117,108			117,108
Public Works	92,562		1,135		93,697
Health		13,162			13,162
Human Services		1,338			1,338
Capital Outlay		1,975			1,975
Debt Service:					
Principal Retirement		48,579			48,579
Interest and Fiscal Charges		7,915			7,915
<i>Total Cash Disbursements</i>	<i>79,229</i>	<i>313,666</i>	<i>\$1,135</i>		<i>394,030</i>
<i>Net Change in Fund Cash Balances</i>	<i>(8,123)</i>	<i>288,969</i>		<i>37</i>	<i>280,883</i>
<i>Fund Cash Balances, January 1</i>	<i>37,186</i>	<i>523,491</i>		<i>8,957</i>	<i>569,634</i>
<i>Fund Cash Balances, December 31</i>	<i>\$29,063</i>	<i>\$812,460</i>		<i>\$8,994</i>	<i>\$850,517</i>

*The notes to the financial statements are an integral part of this statement.*

**HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP  
DEFIANCE COUNTY**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022**

**Note 1 – Reporting Entity**

The constitution and laws of the State of Ohio establish the rights and privileges of Highland Township, Defiance County, Ohio (the Township) as a body corporate and politic. A publicly elected three-member Board of Trustees directs the Township. The Township provides road and bridge maintenance, cemetery maintenance, fire protection, and emergency medical services. The Township appropriates Fire Fund money to support a volunteer fire department.

***Public Entity Risk Pool***

The Township participates in a public entity risk pool, the Ohio Plan Risk Management, Inc. (OPRM). Note 5 to the financial statements provides additional information for this entity. The Township's management believes these financial statements present all activities for which the Township is financially accountable.

**Note 2 – Summary of Significant Accounting Policies**

***Basis of Presentation***

The Township's financial statements consist of a combined statement of receipts, disbursements and changes in fund balances (regulatory cash basis) for all governmental fund types which are all organized on a fund type basis.

***Fund Accounting***

The Township uses funds to maintain its financial records during the year. A fund is defined as a fiscal and accounting entity with a self-balancing set of accounts. The funds of the Township are presented below:

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**Public Works Commission Project Fund** The Township received a grant from the State of Ohio and administered by the County Engineer to maintain and repair Township roads.

**Permanent Funds** These funds account for and report resources that are restricted to the extent that only earnings, and not principal, may be used for purposes that support the reporting government's programs (for the benefit of the government or its citizenry). The Township had the following significant Permanent Funds:

**Myers Cemetery Bequest Fund** This fund accounts for and reports interest earned on the nonexpendable corpus from a trust agreement restricted for the general maintenance and upkeep of the Myers Cemetery.

**HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP  
DEFIANCE COUNTY**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022  
(CONTINUED)**

**Hall Cemetery Bequest Fund** This fund accounts for and reports interest earned on the nonexpendable corpus from a trust agreement restricted for the general maintenance and upkeep of the Hall Cemetery.

**General Cemetery Bequest Fund** This fund accounts for and reports interest earned on the nonexpendable corpus from trust agreements restricted for the general maintenance and upkeep of the Township cemeteries.

***Basis of Accounting***

These financial statements follow the accounting basis permitted by the financial reporting provisions of Ohio Revised Code Section 117.38 and Ohio Administrative Code Section 117-2-03(C). This basis is similar to the cash receipts and disbursements accounting basis. The Board recognizes receipts when received in cash rather than when earned, and recognizes disbursements when paid rather than when a liability is incurred. Budgetary presentations report budgetary expenditures when a commitment is made (i.e., when an encumbrance is approved).

These statements include adequate disclosure of material matters, as the financial reporting provisions of Ohio Revised Code Section 117.38 and Ohio Administrative Code Section 117-2-03(C) permit.

***Budgetary Process***

The Ohio Revised Code requires that each fund be budgeted annually.

**Appropriations** Budgetary expenditures (that is, disbursements and encumbrances) may not exceed appropriations at the fund, function or object level of control, and appropriations may not exceed estimated resources. The Board of Trustees must annually approve appropriation measures and subsequent amendments. Appropriations lapse at year end.

**Estimated Resources** Estimated resources include estimates of cash to be received (budgeted receipts) plus cash as of January 1. The County Budget Commission must approve estimated resources.

**Encumbrances** The Ohio Revised Code requires the Township to reserve (encumber) appropriations when individual commitments are made. Encumbrances outstanding at year end are canceled, and reappropriated in the subsequent year.

A summary of 2022 budgetary activity appears in Note 3.

***Deposits and Investments***

The Township's accounting basis includes investments as assets. This basis does not record disbursements for investment purchases or receipts for investment sales. This basis records gains or losses at the time of sale as receipts or disbursements, respectively.

***Capital Assets***

The Township records disbursements for acquisitions of property, plant, and equipment when paid. The accompanying financial statements do not report these items as assets.

**HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP  
DEFIANCE COUNTY**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022  
(CONTINUED)**

***Fund Balance***

Fund balance is divided into five classifications based primarily on the extent to which the Township must observe constraints imposed upon the use of its governmental-fund resources. The classifications are as follows:

***Nonspendable*** The Township classifies assets as *nonspendable* when legally or contractually required to maintain the amounts intact.

***Restricted*** Fund balance is *restricted* when constraints placed on the use of resources are either externally imposed by creditors (such as through debt covenants), grantors, contributors, or laws or regulations of other governments; or is imposed by law through constitutional provisions.

***Committed*** Trustees can *commit* amounts via formal action (resolution). The Township must adhere to these commitments unless the Trustees amend the resolution. Committed fund balance also incorporates contractual obligations to the extent that existing resources in the fund have been specifically committed to satisfy contractual requirements.

***Assigned*** Assigned fund balances are intended for specific purposes but do not meet the criteria to be classified as *restricted* or *committed*.

***Unassigned*** Unassigned fund balance is the residual classification for the General Fund and includes amounts not included in the other classifications. In other governmental funds, the unassigned classification is used only to report a deficit balance.

The Township applies restricted resources first when expenditures are incurred for purposes for which either restricted or unrestricted (committed, assigned, and unassigned) amounts are available. Similarly, within unrestricted fund balance, committed amounts are reduced first followed by assigned, and then unassigned amounts when expenditures are incurred for purposes for which amounts in any of the unrestricted fund balance classifications could be used.

For regulatory purposes, limited disclosure related to fund balance is included in Note 10.

**Note 3 – Budgetary Activity**

Budgetary activity for the year ending December 31, 2022 follows:

2022 Budgeted vs. Actual Receipts			
Fund Type	Budgeted Receipts	Actual Receipts	Variance
General	\$59,226	\$71,106	\$11,880
Special Revenue	568,932	602,635	33,703
Capital Projects	48,700	1,135	(47,565)
Permanent	9	37	28
Total	<u>\$676,867</u>	<u>\$674,913</u>	<u>(\$1,954)</u>

**HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP  
DEFIANCE COUNTY**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022  
(CONTINUED)**

**2022 Budgeted vs. Actual Budgetary Basis Expenditures**

Fund Type	Appropriation Authority	Budgetary Expenditures	Variance
General	\$96,412	\$79,229	\$17,183
Special Revenue	1,092,425	313,666	778,759
Capital Projects	48,700	1,135	47,565
Permanent	1,439		1,439
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,238,976</b>	<b>\$394,030</b>	<b>\$844,946</b>

**Note 4 – Deposits**

To improve cash management, cash received by the Township is pooled. Monies for all funds are maintained in this pool. The Ohio Revised Code prescribes allowable deposits and investments. A summary of the Township's deposit accounts are as follows:

	2022
Demand deposits	\$631,343
Certificates of deposit	8,690
Other time deposits (savings account)	210,484
<b>Total deposits</b>	<b>\$850,517</b>

The Township does not use a separate payroll clearing account. The expenditures included in the accompanying financial statements reflect net payroll plus all remitted payroll withholdings.

***Deposits***

Deposits are insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or collateralized through the Ohio Pooled Collateral System (OPCS), a collateral pool of eligible securities deposited with a qualified trustee and pledged to the Treasurer of State to secure the repayment of all public monies deposited in the financial institution.

**Note 5 – Risk Management**

***Risk Pool Membership***

The Township belongs to the Ohio Plan Risk Management, Inc. (OPRM) (the Plan), a non-assessable, unincorporated non-profit association providing a formalized, jointly administered self-insurance risk management program and other administrative services to Ohio governments (Members). The Plan is legally separate from its member governments.

Pursuant to Section 2744.081 of the Ohio Revised Code, the plan provides property, liability, errors and omissions, law enforcement, automobile, excess liability, crime, surety and bond, inland marine and other coverages to its members sold through fourteen appointed independent agents in the State of Ohio.

Effective November 1, 2016, the OPRM elected to participate in a property loss corridor deductible. The property corridor includes losses paid between 70 percent and 75 percent. In 2018, the casualty loss corridor was eliminated and the property corridor was adjusted to losses paid between 65 percent and 70 percent. Effective November 1, 2019, the property loss corridor was adjusted to losses between 60 percent and 67.5 percent and has remain unchanged. OPRM had 773 members as of December 31, 2022.

**HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP  
DEFIANCE COUNTY**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022  
(CONTINUED)**

The Pool's audited financial statements conform with generally accepted accounting principles, and reported the following assets, liabilities and equity at December 31, 2022.

Assets	\$ 21,662,291
Liabilities	(18,158,351)
Members' Equity	<u>\$ 3,503,940</u>

You can read the complete audited financial statements for OPRM at the Plan's website, [www.ohioplan.org](http://www.ohioplan.org).

***Workers' Compensation***

Workers' Compensation coverage is provided by the State of Ohio. The Township pays the State Workers' Compensation System a premium based on a rate per \$100 of salaries. This rate is calculated based on accident history and administrative costs.

**Note 6 – Property Taxes**

Real property taxes become a lien on January 1 preceding the October 1 date for which the Trustees adopted tax rates. The State Board of Tax Equalization adjusts these rates for inflation. Property taxes are also reduced for applicable non-business, owner occupancy, and homestead exemption credits and/or homestead and rollback deductions. The financial statements include these credits and/or deduction amounts the State pays as Intergovernmental Receipts. Payments are due to the County by December 31. If the property owner elects to pay semiannually, the first half is due December 31. The second half payment is due the following June 20.

Public utilities are also taxed on personal and real property located within the Township.

The County is responsible for assessing property and for billing, collecting, and distributing all property taxes on behalf of the Township.

**Note 7 – Defined Benefit Pension Plans**

***Ohio Public Employees Retirement System***

Some Township employees belong to the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS). OPERS is a cost-sharing, multiple-employer plan. The Ohio Revised Code prescribes this plan's benefits, which include postretirement health care and survivor and disability benefits.

The Ohio Revised Code also prescribes contribution rates. OPERS members contributed 10 percent of their gross salaries, and the Township contributed an amount equaling 14 percent of participants' gross salaries. The Township has paid all contributions required through December 31, 2022.

***Social Security***

Other Township employees contributed to Social Security. This plan provides retirement benefits, including survivor and disability benefits to participants.

Employees contributed 6.2 percent of their gross salaries. The Township contributed an amount equal to 6.2 percent of participants' gross salaries. The Township has paid all contributions required through December 31, 2022.

**HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP  
DEFIANCE COUNTY**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022  
(CONTINUED)**

**Note 8 – Postemployment Benefits**

OPERS offers a cost-sharing, multiple-employer defined benefit postemployment plan, which includes multiple health care plans including medical coverage, prescription drug coverage, deposits to a Health Reimbursement Arrangement, and Medicare Part B premium reimbursements, to qualifying benefit recipients. The portion of employer contributions allocated to health care for OPERS members in the Traditional Pension Plan and Combined Plan was 0 percent during calendar year 2022. The portion of employer contributions allocated to health care for OPERS members in the Member-Directed Plan was 4.0 percent during calendar year 2022.

Effective January 1, 2022, OPERS discontinued the group plans currently offered to non-Medicare retirees and re-employed retirees. Instead, eligible non-Medicare retirees will select an individual medical plan. OPERS will provide a subsidy or allowance via an HRA allowance to those retirees who meet health care eligibility requirements. Retirees will be able to seek reimbursement for plan premiums and other qualified medical expenses.

**Note 9 – Debt**

Debt outstanding at December 31, 2022, was as follows:

	<u>Principal</u>	<u>Interest Rate</u>
Fire Truck and Ambulance Loan	<u>\$321,421</u>	2.11%

Contrary to Ohio law, the Township refinanced a loan for the purchase of a fire truck and ambulance for \$370,000 on August 24, 2021. Annual payments will be made for 4 years, with a final payment due in year 5.

***Amortization***

Amortization of the above debt, including interest, is scheduled as follows:

<u>Year Ending</u>	
<u>December 31:</u>	<u>Loan</u>
2023	\$82,989
2024	41,494
2025	41,494
2026	176,078
Total	<u><u>\$342,055</u></u>

**Note 10 – Fund Balances**

The fund balance of Special Revenue Funds is restricted. The fund balance of Permanent Funds that is not part of the nonspendable corpus is either restricted or committed.

# OHIO AUDITOR OF STATE KEITH FABER



65 East State Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215  
[ContactUs@ohioauditor.gov](mailto:ContactUs@ohioauditor.gov)  
800-282-0370

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT ON INTERNAL CONTROL OVER FINANCIAL REPORTING AND ON COMPLIANCE AND OTHER MATTERS REQUIRED BY GOVERNMENT AUDITING STANDARDS

Highland Township  
Defiance County  
15772 Hill Road  
Defiance, Ohio 43512-8926

To the Board of Trustees:

We have audited, in accordance with the 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 (*Government Auditing Standards*), the financial statements of the cash balances, receipts, and disbursements for each governmental fund type as of and for the years ended December 31, 2023 and 2022 and the related notes to the financial statements of Highland Township, Defiance County, Ohio (the Township) and have issued our report thereon dated November 12, 2024, wherein we noted the Township followed financial reporting provisions Ohio Rev. Code § 117.38 and Ohio Admin. Code 117-2-03(C) permit. We also qualified our opinion on the General and Special Revenue Funds since the Township did not record prior audit adjustments.

### ***Report on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting***

In planning and performing our audit of the financial statements, we considered the Township's internal control over financial reporting (internal control) as a basis for designing audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances for the purpose of expressing our opinions on the financial statements, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Township's internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of the Township's internal control.

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 a combination of deficiencies, in internal control, such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the Township's financial statements 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 described in the first paragraph of this section 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 identified certain deficiencies in internal control, described in the accompanying schedule of findings as items 2023-001 and 2023-002 that we consider to be material weaknesses.

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Efficient • Effective • Transparent

Highland Township  
Defiance County  
Independent Auditor's Report on Internal Control Over  
Financial Reporting and on Compliance and Other Matters  
Required by *Government Auditing Standards*  
Page 2

***Report on Compliance and Other Matters***

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the Township's financial statements are free from material misstatement, we performed tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements, noncompliance with which could have a direct and material effect on the financial statements. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our audit and accordingly, we do not express such an opinion. The results of our tests disclosed an instance of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards* and which is described in the accompanying schedule of findings as item 2023-003.

***Purpose of This Report***

The purpose of this report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the Township's internal control or on compliance. This report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the Township's internal control and compliance. Accordingly, this communication is not suitable for any other purpose.



Keith Faber  
Auditor of State  
Columbus, Ohio

November 12, 2024

**HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP  
DEFIANCE COUNTY**

**SCHEDULE OF FINDINGS  
DECEMBER 31, 2023 AND 2022**

**FINDINGS RELATED TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
REQUIRED TO BE REPORTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH GAGAS**

**FINDING NUMBER 2023-001**

**Material Weakness – Prior Year Finding for Adjustment**

In the prior year, a finding for adjustment was issued for Trustees' compensation not properly allocated to the General Fund per **Ohio Rev. Code § 505.24(C)**. However, the Township never recorded the adjustment and as a result the fund balances reported by the Township at December 31, 2023 and 2022 were misstated.

As of December 31, 2021, the General Fund owed the Gasoline Tax Fund \$62,947 due to errors. As a result, the General Fund still owes the Gasoline Tax Fund \$62,947 as of December 31, 2023.

The Township should record the adjustment to the Township's accounting records for the amount listed above.

**FINDING NUMBER 2023-002**

**Material Weakness – Financial Reporting**

In our audit engagement letter, as required by AU-C Section 210, *Terms of Engagement*, paragraph .06, management acknowledged its responsibility for the preparation and fair presentation of their financial statements; this responsibility includes designing, implementing and maintaining internal control relevant to preparing and fairly presenting financial statements free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error as discussed in AU-C Section 210 paragraphs .A14 & .A16.

The following errors were identified in the accompanying financial statements and notes to the financial statements:

- In 2023 and 2022, Ohio Public Works Commission on-behalf of grant activity was not posted to the accounting system by the Township, which resulted in understating intergovernmental receipts and public works in the Capital Projects Fund in the amounts of \$47,565 and \$1,135, respectively.
- In 2023, budgeted receipts in the budgetary activity note to the financial statements did not agree to amounts certified by the County Budget Commission. Budgeted receipts were understated in the Capital Projects Fund in the amount of \$47,565.
- In 2023, appropriation authority in the budgetary activity note to the financial statements did not agree to amounts approved by the Board. Appropriation authority was understated in the General and Capital Projects Funds in the amounts of \$7,000 and \$47,565, respectively.
- In 2022, budgeted receipts in the budgetary activity note to the financial statements did not agree to amounts certified by the County Budget Commission. Budgeted receipts were understated in the General, Special Revenue, and Capital Projects Funds in the amounts of \$59,226, \$568,932, and \$48,700, respectively.
- In 2022, actual receipts in the budgetary activity note to the financial statements were understated in the General and Special Revenue Funds in the amounts of \$71,106 and \$602,635, respectively.
- In 2022, appropriation authority in the budgetary activity note to the financial statements did not agree to amounts approved by the Board. Appropriation authority was understated in the Capital Projects and Permanent Funds in the amounts of \$48,700 and \$1,439, respectively.

These errors were the result of inadequate policies and procedures in reviewing the financial statements and notes to the financial statements. Failure to complete accurate financial statements and notes to the financial statements could lead to the Board making misinformed decisions. The accompanying financial statements and notes to the financial statements have been adjusted to correct these and other immaterial errors ranging from \$9 to \$4,007. In addition to the adjustments noted above, we also identified an additional misstatement in the amount of \$96 which we have brought to the Township's attention.

The Township should adopt policies and procedures, including a final review of the financial statements and notes to the financial statements by the Fiscal Officer and the Board, to help identify and correct errors and omissions.

#### **FINDING NUMBER 2023-003**

##### **Noncompliance**

**Ohio Rev. Code Chapter 133** authorizes certain methods by which subdivisions may incur debt.

**Ohio Rev. Code § 133.22**, a subdivision may issue anticipatory-securities if it meets the requirements outlined in the statute.

**Ohio Rev. Code § 133.10**, permits a subdivision to issue anticipation securities in anticipation of current property tax revenues or in anticipation of current revenues in and for any fiscal year from any source or combination of sources, including distributions of any federal or state monies, other than the proceeds of property taxes levied by the subdivision.

**Ohio Rev. Code § 133.15**, a subdivision is authorized to issue securities for the purpose of paying all or any portion of the costs of any permanent improvement that the subdivision is authorized, alone or in cooperation with other persons, to acquire, improve, or construct.

**Ohio Rev. Code § 133.18**, the taxing authority of a subdivision, may by legislation submit to the electors of the subdivision the question of issuing any general obligation bonds, for one purpose, that the subdivision has power or authority to issue.

During 2023 and 2022, the Township made principal payments on an outstanding commercial bank loan in the amounts of \$75,792 and \$48,579, respectively. The loan was used by the Township to purchase an ambulance and retire a previously issued commercial loan.

This type of debt is not authorized in Ohio Rev. Code Chapter 133. The Township had no statutory authority to incur debt through either installment loans or promissory notes with any banking institutions. Inadequate policies and procedures related to debt issuance can result in illegal expenditures by the Township.

The Township should consult with legal counsel before incurring debt to determine if the debt is authorized by statute.

##### **Officials' Response:**

We did not receive a response from Officials to the findings reported above.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP**  
**Thomas C. Wolfrum, Fiscal Officer**  
**15772 Hill Rd. Defiance, Ohio 43512**

**Ph: (419) 395-2256 - Fax: (419) 395-2412**  
**Trustees: Steven Flory, Ken Zachrich, Barry Froelich**

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**SUMMARY SCHEDULE OF PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS**  
**DECEMBER 31, 2023 AND 2022**

<b>Finding Number</b>	<b>Finding Summary</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Additional Information</b>
2021-001	This finding was first reported in 2018. Material weakness and noncompliance with Ohio Rev. Code § 505.24(C) for findings for adjustments to post monies owed to the Gasoline Tax Fund.	Not corrected and reissued as Finding 2023-001 in this report.	The Township is aware of this error and will correct once funds are available in the General Fund.
2021-002	This finding was first reported in 2018. Material weakness for lack of monitoring of financial transactions resulting in errors in the financial statements.	Not corrected and reissued as Finding 2023-002 in this report.	This finding reoccurred due to errors in the financial statements and notes to the financial statements. The Fiscal Officer will review the errors and take them into consideration for future audits.
2021-003	This finding was first reported in 2020. Material weakness and noncompliance with Ohio Rev. Code § 5705.10(F) for posting proceeds from the sale of various assets in the wrong funds.	Fully corrected.	
2021-004	This finding was first reported in 2018. Ohio Rev. Code Chapter 133 and 505 for incurring debt through methods not authorized for a Township.	Not corrected and reissued as Finding 2023-003 in this report.	Additional errors occurred and were not detected. The Fiscal Officer will make an effort to fully correct this finding.

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# OHIO AUDITOR OF STATE KEITH FABER



HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP

DEFIANCE COUNTY

## AUDITOR OF STATE OF OHIO CERTIFICATION

This is a true and correct copy of the report, which is required to be filed pursuant to Section 117.26, Revised Code, and which is filed in the Office of the Ohio Auditor of State in Columbus, Ohio.



Certified for Release 11/26/2024

65 East State Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215  
Phone: 614-466-4514 or 800-282-0370

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at  
[www.ohioauditor.gov](http://www.ohioauditor.gov)