

**BENNINGTON TOWNSHIP
LICKING COUNTY, OHIO**

REGULAR AUDIT

**FOR THE YEARS ENDED
DECEMBER 31, 2024 & 2023**



65 East State Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
ContactUs@ohioauditor.gov
800-282-0370

Board of Trustees
Bennington Township
6219 Quick Lane Rd NW
Centerburg, OH 43011

We have reviewed the *Independent Auditor's Report* of Bennington Township, Licking County, prepared by Julian & Grube, Inc., for the audit period January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2024. Based upon this review, we have accepted these reports in lieu of the audit required by Section 117.11, Revised Code. The Auditor of State did not audit the accompanying financial statements and, accordingly, we are unable to express, and do not express an opinion on them.

Our review was made in reference to the applicable sections of legislative criteria, as reflected by the Ohio Constitution, and the Revised Code, policies, procedures and guidelines of the Auditor of State, regulations and grant requirements. Bennington Township is responsible for compliance with these laws and regulations.

KEITH FABER
Ohio Auditor of State

Tiffany L. Ridenbaugh, CPA, CFE, CGFM
Chief Deputy Auditor

August 08, 2025

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**BENNINGTON TOWNSHIP
LICKING COUNTY, OHIO**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
Independent Auditor's Report	1 - 3
Financial Statements:	
Combined Statement of Receipts, Disbursements and Changes in Fund Balances (Regulatory Cash Basis) - All Governmental Fund Types For the Year Ended December 31, 2024	4
Notes to the Financial Statement – For the Year Ended December 31, 2024	5 - 11
Combined Statement of Receipts, Disbursements and Changes in Fund Balances (Regulatory Cash Basis) – All Governmental Fund Types For the Year Ended December 31, 2023	12
Notes to the Financial Statement – For the Year Ended December 31, 2023	13 - 20
Independent Auditor's Report on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting and on Compliance and Other Matters Based on an Audit of Financial Statements Performed in Accordance With <i>Government Auditing Standards</i>	21 - 22
Schedule of Findings and Responses.....	23

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Independent Auditor's Report

Bennington Township
Licking County
6219 Quick Lane Rd NW
Centerburg, OH 43011

To the Members of the Board of Trustees:

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

Opinions

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Bennington Township, Licking County, Ohio, which comprises the cash balances, receipts, and disbursements for each governmental fund type as of and for the years ended December 31, 2024 and 2023, and the related notes to the financial statements.

Unmodified Opinions 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 each governmental fund type of Bennington Township as of and for the years ended December 31, 2024 and 2023, and the related notes to the financial statements, in accordance with the financial reporting provisions of Ohio Revised Code Section 117.38 and Ohio Administrative Code Section 117-2-03(C) as described in Note 2.

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 referred to above do not present fairly, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, the financial position of Bennington Township as of December 31, 2024 and 2023, or changes in financial position, thereof for the years then ended.

Basis for Opinions

We conducted our audit 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. 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 Bennington 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 Bennington 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 a basis of accounting 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 GAAP, although not reasonably determinable, are presumed to be material and pervasive.

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with the financial reporting provisions of Ohio Revised Code Section 117.38 and Ohio Administrative Code Section 117-2-03(C). 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 misstatements, 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 Bennington 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 generally accepted auditing standards and *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 generally accepted auditing standards 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 Bennington 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 Bennington Township's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

Bennington Township
Licking County
Independent Auditor's Report

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 April 18, 2025 on our consideration of Bennington Township's internal control over financial reporting and on 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 Bennington 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 Bennington Township's internal control over financial reporting and compliance.

Julian & Grube, Inc.

Julian & Grube, Inc.
April 18, 2025

Bennington Township
Licking County, Ohio
*Combined Statement of Receipts, Disbursements
and Changes in Fund Balances (Regulatory Cash Basis)*
All Governmental Fund Types
For the Year Ended December 31, 2024

	Governmental Fund Types			Totals (Memorandum Only)	
	General	Special Revenue	Permanent		
Cash Receipts					
Property and Other Local Taxes	\$ 151,745	\$ 705,348	\$ -	\$ 857,093	
Licenses, Permits and Fees	3,829	1,500	-	5,329	
Intergovernmental	46,406	199,504	-	245,910	
Earnings on Investments	29,819	7,268	-	37,087	
Miscellaneous	-	36,896	-	36,896	
<i>Total Cash Receipts</i>	<u>231,799</u>	<u>950,516</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,182,315</u>	
Cash Disbursements					
Current:					
General Government	126,147	-	-	126,147	
Public Safety	-	443,929	-	443,929	
Public Works	-	503,798	-	503,798	
Health	4,883	2,870	-	7,753	
Capital Outlay	600	9,300	-	9,900	
Debt Service:					
Principal Retirement	-	6,329	-	6,329	
<i>Total Cash Disbursements</i>	<u>131,630</u>	<u>966,226</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,097,856</u>	
<i>Excess of Receipts Over (Under) Disbursements</i>	<u>100,169</u>	<u>(15,710)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>84,459</u>	
Other Financing Receipts (Disbursements)					
Other Financing Sources	1,225	-	-	1,225	
<i>Total Other Financing Receipts (Disbursements)</i>	<u>1,225</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,225</u>	
<i>Net Change in Fund Cash Balances</i>	101,394	(15,710)	-	85,684	
<i>Fund Cash Balances, January 1</i>	360,367	827,074	2,842	1,190,283	
<i>Fund Cash Balances, December 31</i>	<u>\$ 461,761</u>	<u>\$ 811,364</u>	<u>\$ 2,842</u>	<u>\$ 1,275,967</u>	

See accompanying notes to the financial statement

Bennington Township
Licking County
Notes to the Financial Statement
For the Year Ended December 31, 2024

Note 1 – Reporting Entity

The constitution and laws of the State of Ohio establish the rights and privileges of Bennington Township, Licking County (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 and cemetery maintenance. The Township contracted with the Homer Fire District, Homer, Ohio, to provide fire services and emergency medical services. The Township appropriates fire fund money to support the fire department. Police protection is provided by the Licking County Sheriff Department.

Public Entity Risk Pool

The Township participates in the Ohio Plan Risk Management, Inc. (OPRM), formerly known as the Ohio Risk Management Plan, (the “Plan”). Note 7 to the financial statement provides additional information for the entity. The township’s management believes the financial statement presents all activities for which the Township is financially accountable.

Note 2 – Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

Basis of Presentation

The Township’s financial statement consists of a combined statement of receipts, disbursements and changes in fund balances (regulatory cash basis) for all governmental fund types which are 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:

Gas Tax Fund The gas tax fund accounts for and reports that portion of the State gasoline tax restricted for maintenance and repair of roads within the Township.

Motor Vehicle License Tax Fund The motor vehicle license tax fund accounts for and reports that portion of motor vehicle license registration fees restricted for maintenance and repair of roads within the Township.

Permissive Motor Vehicle License Tax Fund The permissive motor vehicle license tax fund accounts for and reports that portion of permissive motor vehicle registration fees restricted for maintenance and repair of roads within the township.

Bennington Township
Licking County
Notes to the Financial Statement
For the Year Ended December 31, 2024

Road and Bridge Fund This fund receives property tax money for constructing, maintaining, and repairing Township roads and bridges.

Fire Levy Fund This fund receives property tax money levied for the funding of the contracted fire and emergency medical services.

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 permanent fund:

Smith Bequest Fund The Township's permanent fund is for the benefit of William Smith. This is to be used for the upkeep of his tombstone as needed.

Basis of Accounting

The financial statement follows 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 Township 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).

The statement includes 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. Unencumbered appropriations lapse at year-end.

Estimated Resources

Estimated resources include estimates of cash to be received (budgeted receipts) plus unencumbered 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 carried over, and need not be reappropriated.

A summary of 2024 budgetary activity appears in Note 4.

Bennington Township
Licking County
Notes to the Financial Statement
For the Year Ended December 31, 2024

Capital Assets

The Township records disbursements for acquisitions of property, plan and equipment when paid. The accompanying financial statement does not report these items as assets.

Accumulated Leave

Township employees earn sick and vacation time that can be used for time off. In certain circumstances, such as upon leaving employment, employees are entitled to cash payments for unused leave. The financial statement does not include a liability for unpaid leave.

Fund Balance

Fund balance is divided into five classification 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:

Non-spendable-The Township classifies assets as *nonspendable* when legally or contractually required to maintain the amounts intact. For regulatory purposes, nonspendable fund balance includes unclaimed monies that are required to be held for five years before they may be utilized by the Township and the nonspendable portion of the corpus in permanent funds

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*. For regulatory purposes, assigned fund balance in the general fund is limited to encumbrances outstanding at year end.

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 12.

Bennington Township
Licking County
Notes to the Financial Statement
For the Year Ended December 31, 2024

Note 3 – Compliance

The Township was in noncompliance with Ohio Revised Code Sections 5705.40 and 5705.41(B) for expenditures plus current year encumbrances exceeding appropriations plus prior year encumbrances at the legal level of control and for various interfund appropriation transfers not being Board approved.

Note 4 – Budgetary Activity

Budgetary activity for the year ending December 31, 2024 follows:

2024 Budgeted vs. Actual Receipts			
Fund Type	Budgeted Receipts	Actual Receipts	Variance
General	\$259,583	\$233,024	(\$26,559)
Special Revenue	941,076	950,516	9,440
Permanent	-	-	-
Total	\$1,200,659	\$1,183,540	(\$17,119)

2024 Budgeted vs. Actual Budgetary Basis Expenditures			
Fund Type	Appropriation Authority	Budgetary Expenditures	Variance
General	\$619,949	\$146,683	\$473,266
Special Revenue	1,768,150	1,080,271	687,879
Permanent	842	-	842
Total	\$2,388,941	\$1,226,954	\$1,161,987

Note 5 – 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 deposits are as follows:

	2024
Demand deposits	\$1,273,967
Certificates of deposit	2,000
Total deposits	1,275,967

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.

Bennington Township
Licking County
Notes to the Financial Statement
For the Year Ended December 31, 2024

The Township does not use a separate payroll clearing account. The disbursements included in the accompanying financial statement reflects net payroll plus all remitted payroll withholdings. At December 31, 2024, the Township is holding \$0 in unremitted employee payroll withholdings.

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 statement includes 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.

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

Note 7 – Risk Management

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.

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% and 75%. In 2018, the casualty loss corridor was eliminated and the property corridor was adjusted to losses paid between 65% and 70%. Effective November 1, 2019, the property loss corridor was adjusted to losses between 60% and 67.5% and has remain unchanged. OPRM had 801 members as of December 31, 2023.

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 (latest available).

Bennington Township
Licking County
Notes to the Financial Statement
For the Year Ended December 31, 2024

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.

Note 8 – Defined Benefit Pension Plan

Ohio Public Employees Retirement System

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 healthcare 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, 2024.

Note 9 – Postemployment Benefits

OPERS offers cost-sharing, multiple-employer defined benefit postemployment plans, and a 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 2024, the portion of OPERS 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 2024, the portion of employer contributions OPERS 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 10 – Debt

Debt outstanding at December 31, 2024, was as follows: These are 2 Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) Projects.

	Principal	Interest Rate
OPWC Remainder for Drury Rd North CQ11S	\$3,605	0.00%
OPWC Remainder for Quick Lane CQ20Y	<u>31,401</u>	<u>0.00%</u>
Total ending December 31, 2024 of Debt owed	<u><u>\$35,006</u></u>	

Amortization of the above debt is scheduled as follows: For 2 OPWC Projects

Bennington Township
Licking County
Notes to the Financial Statement
For the Year Ended December 31, 2024

Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 2024:	2016	2023	
	Drury Rd. N CQ11S	Quick Lane CQ20Y	Total
2025	\$2,404	\$3,925	\$6,329
2026	1,201	3,925	\$5,126
2027	-	3,925	\$3,925
2028	-	3,925	\$3,925
2029	-	3,925	\$3,925
2030-2032	-	11,776	\$11,776
Total	<u>\$3,605</u>	<u>\$31,401</u>	<u>\$35,006</u>

Note 11 – Contingent Liabilities

Amounts grantor agencies pay to the township are subject to audit and adjustment by the grantor, principally the federal government. The grantor may require refunding any disallowed costs. Management cannot presently determine amounts grantors may disallow. However, based on prior experience, management believes any refunds would be immaterial.

Note 12 – Fund Balances

Included in fund balance are amounts the Township cannot spend, including the unexpendable corpus of the permanent fund. Encumbrances are commitments related to unperformed contracts for goods or services. Encumbrance accounting is utilized to the extent necessary to assure effective budgetary control and accountability and to facilitate effective cash planning and control. At year end the balances of these amounts were as follows:

Fund Balances	Special			Total
	General	Revenue	Permanent	
Nonspendable:				
Corpus	\$0	\$0	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
Outstanding Encumbrances	<u>15,053</u>	<u>114,045</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>129,098</u>
Total	<u>\$ 15,053</u>	<u>\$ 114,045</u>	<u>\$ 2,000</u>	<u>\$ 131,098</u>

The fund balance of special revenue funds is either restricted or committed. The fund balance of permanent fund that is not part of the nonspendable corpus is either restricted or committed. These restricted and committed amounts in the special revenue and permanent fund would include the outstanding encumbrances. In the general fund, outstanding encumbrances are considered assigned.

Note 13 – COVID-19

The United States and the State of Ohio declared a state of emergency in March of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ohio's state of emergency ended in June 2021 while the national state of emergency ended in April 2023. During 2024, Bennington Township received COVID-19 funding. The Township will continue to spend available COVID-19 funding consistent with the applicable program guidelines.

Bennington Township
Licking County, Ohio
*Combined Statement of Receipts, Disbursements
and Changes in Fund Balances (Regulatory Cash Basis)*
All Governmental Fund Types
For the Year Ended December 31, 2023

	Governmental Fund Types			Totals (Memorandum Only)	
	General	Special Revenue	Permanent		
Cash Receipts					
Property and Other Local Taxes	\$ 118,321	\$ 646,054	\$ -	\$ 764,375	
Licenses, Permits and Fees	1,051	1,000	-	2,051	
Intergovernmental	42,704	195,110	-	237,814	
Earnings on Investments	29,082	6,906	-	35,988	
Miscellaneous	-	3,000	-	3,000	
<i>Total Cash Receipts</i>	<u>191,158</u>	<u>852,070</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,043,228</u>	
Cash Disbursements					
Current:					
General Government	122,323	-	-	122,323	
Public Safety		448,939	-	448,939	
Public Works	2,342	481,819	-	484,161	
Health	9,100	1,000	-	10,100	
Human Services	-	26,371	-	26,371	
Capital Outlay	-	1,950	-	1,950	
Debt Service:					
Principal Retirement	-	7,848	-	7,848	
<i>Total Cash Disbursements</i>	<u>133,765</u>	<u>967,927</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,101,692</u>	
<i>Excess of Receipts Over (Under) Disbursements</i>	<u>57,393</u>	<u>(115,857)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(58,464)</u>	
Other Financing Receipts (Disbursements)					
Other Financing Sources	1,842	-	-	1,842	
<i>Total Other Financing Receipts (Disbursements)</i>	<u>1,842</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,842</u>	
<i>Net Change in Fund Cash Balances</i>	<u>59,235</u>	<u>(115,857)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(56,622)</u>	
<i>Fund Cash Balances, January 1, Restated</i>	<u>301,132</u>	<u>942,931</u>	<u>2,842</u>	<u>1,246,905</u>	
<i>Fund Cash Balances, December 31</i>	<u><u>\$ 360,367</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 827,074</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 2,842</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 1,190,283</u></u>	

See accompanying notes to the financial statement

Bennington Township
Licking County
Notes to the Financial Statement
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 Bennington Township, Licking County (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 and cemetery maintenance. The Township contracted with the Hartford Township Fire Department, Croton, Ohio, to provide fire services and emergency medical services. The Township appropriates fire fund money to support the fire department. Police protection is provided by the Licking County Sheriff Department.

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The Township participates in the Ohio Plan Risk Management, Inc. (OPRM), formerly known as the Ohio Risk Management Plan, (the “Plan”). Note 7 to the financial statement provides additional information for the entity. The township’s management believes the financial statement presents all activities for which the Township is financially accountable.

Note 2 – Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

Basis of Presentation

The Township’s financial statement consists of a combined statement of receipts, disbursements and changes in fund balances (regulatory cash basis) for all governmental fund types which are 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:

Gas Tax Fund The gas tax fund accounts for and reports that portion of the State gasoline tax restricted for maintenance and repair of roads within the Township.

Motor Vehicle License Tax Fund The motor vehicle license tax fund accounts for and reports that portion of motor vehicle license registration fees restricted for maintenance and repair of roads within the Township.

Permissive Motor Vehicle License Tax Fund The permissive motor vehicle license tax fund accounts for and reports that portion of permissive motor vehicle registration fees restricted for maintenance and repair of roads within the township.

Bennington Township
Licking County
Notes to the Financial Statement
For the Year Ended December 31, 2023

Road and Bridge Fund This fund receives property tax money for constructing, maintaining, and repairing Township roads and bridges.

Fire Levy Fund This fund receives property tax money levied for the funding of the contracted fire and emergency medical services.

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 permanent fund:

Smith Bequest Fund The Township's permanent fund is for the benefit of William Smith. This is to be used for the upkeep of his tombstone as needed.

Basis of Accounting

The financial statement follows 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 Township 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).

The statement includes 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. Unencumbered appropriations lapse at year-end.

Estimated Resources

Estimated resources include estimates of cash to be received (budgeted receipts) plus unencumbered 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 4.

Bennington Township
Licking County
Notes to the Financial Statement
For the Year Ended December 31, 2023

Capital Assets

The Township records disbursements for acquisitions of property, plan and equipment when paid. The accompanying financial statement does not report these items as assets.

Accumulated Leave

Township employees earn sick and vacation time that can be used for time off. In certain circumstances, such as upon leaving employment, employees are entitled to cash payments for unused leave. The financial statement does not include a liability for unpaid leave.

Fund Balance

Fund balance is divided into five classification 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:

Non-spendable-The Township classifies assets as *non-spendable* when legally or contractually required to maintain the amounts intact. For regulatory purposes, nonspendable fund balance includes unclaimed monies that are required to be held for five years before they may be utilized by the Township and the nonspendable portion of the corpus in permanent funds.

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*. For regulatory purposes, assigned fund balance in the general fund is limited to encumbrances outstanding at year end.

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 12.

Bennington Township
Licking County
Notes to the Financial Statement
For the Year Ended December 31, 2023

Note 3 – Compliance

The Township was in noncompliance with Ohio Revised Code Sections 5705.40 and 5705.41(B) for expenditures plus current year encumbrances exceeding appropriations plus prior year encumbrances at the legal level of control and for various interfund appropriation transfers not being Board approved.

Note 4 – 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	\$192,664	\$193,000	\$336
Special Revenue	852,720	852,070	(650)
Permanent	-	-	-
Total	\$1,045,384	\$1,045,070	(\$314)

2023 Budgeted vs. Actual Budgetary Basis Expenditures			
Fund Type	Appropriation Authority	Budgetary Expenditures	Variance
General	\$471,970	\$133,765	\$338,205
Special Revenue	1,767,260	967,927	799,333
Permanent	842	-	842
Total	\$2,240,072	\$1,101,692	\$1,138,380

Note 5 – 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 deposits are as follows:

	2023
Demand deposits	\$1,188,283
Certificates of deposit	2,000
Total deposits	1,190,283

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.

The Township does not use a separate payroll clearing account. The disbursements included in the accompanying financial statement reflects net payroll plus all remitted payroll withholdings. At December 31, 2023, the Township is holding \$0 in unremitted employee payroll withholdings.

Bennington Township
Licking County
Notes to the Financial Statement
For the Year Ended December 31, 2023

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 statement includes 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.

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

Note 7 – Risk Management

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.

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% and 75%. In 2018, the casualty loss corridor was eliminated and the property corridor was adjusted to losses paid between 65% and 70%. Effective November 1, 2019, the property loss corridor was adjusted to losses between 60% and 67.5% and has remain unchanged. OPRM had 801 members as of December 31, 2023.

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	(<u>16,078,587</u>)
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.

Bennington Township
Licking County
Notes to the Financial Statement
For the Year Ended December 31, 2023

Note 8 – Defined Benefit Pension Plan

Ohio Public Employees Retirement System

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 healthcare 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.

Note 9 – Postemployment Benefits

OPERS offers cost-sharing, multiple-employer defined benefit postemployment plans, and a 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 OPERS 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 OPERS 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 10 – Debt

Debt outstanding at December 31, 2023, was as follows: These are 2 Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) Projects.

	Principal	Interest Rate
OPWC Remainder for Drury Rd North CQ11S	\$6,009	0.00%
OPWC Remainder for Quick Lane CQ20Y	35,326	0.00%
Total ending December 31, 2023 of Debt owed	<u>\$41,335</u>	

Amortization of the above debt is scheduled as follows: For 2 OPWC Projects

Bennington Township
Licking County
Notes to the Financial Statement
For the Year Ended December 31, 2023

Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 2023:	2016	2023	
	Drury Rd. N CQ11S	Quick Lane CQ20Y	Total
2024	\$2,404	\$3,925	\$6,329
2025	2,404	3,925	\$6,329
2026	1,201	3,925	\$5,126
2027	-	3,925	\$3,925
2028	-	3,925	\$3,925
2029-2032	-	15,701	\$15,701
	<u>\$6,009</u>	<u>\$35,326</u>	<u>\$41,335</u>

Note 11 – Contingent Liabilities

Amounts grantor agencies pay to the township are subject to audit and adjustment by the grantor, principally the federal government. The grantor may require refunding any disallowed costs. Management cannot presently determine amounts grantors may disallow. However, based on prior experience, management believes any refunds would be immaterial.

Note 12 – Fund Balances

Included in fund balance are amounts the Township cannot spend, including the unexpendable corpus of the permanent fund. Encumbrances are commitments related to unperformed contracts for goods or services. Encumbrance accounting is utilized to the extent necessary to assure effective budgetary control and accountability and to facilitate effective cash planning and control. The Township had no outstanding encumbrances at December 31, 2023. At year end the balances of these amounts were as follows:

Fund Balances	General	Special Revenue	Permanent	Total
Nonspendable:				
Corpus	\$0	\$0	\$2,000	\$2,000
Total	\$0	\$0	\$2,000	\$2,000

The fund balance of special revenue funds is either restricted or committed. The fund balance of permanent fund that is not part of the nonspendable corpus is either restricted or committed. These restricted, committed, and assigned amounts in the special revenue and permanent fund would include the outstanding encumbrances. In the general fund, outstanding encumbrances are considered assigned.

Note 13 – COVID-19

The United States and the State of Ohio declared a state of emergency in March of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ohio's state of emergency ended in June 2021 while the national state of emergency ended in April 2023. During 2023, Bennington Township received COVID-19 funding. The Township will continue to spend available COVID-19 funding consistent with the applicable program guidelines.

Bennington Township
Licking County
Notes to the Financial Statement
For the Year Ended December 31, 2023

Note 14 – Restatement of Fund Cash Balance

The Township increased/decreased their beginning fund cash position at January 1, 2023 in the General Fund due to \$374 in receipts being mistakenly recorded twice in the prior year and a bank error where the bank incorrectly cleared a check for an amount that was \$18 less than the amount for which it was written. The effect of these error corrections on beginning fund cash balance is reflected in the chart below.

	Error Corrections				
	12/31/2022	As Previously Reported	1/1/2023 Correction 1	Correction 2	As Restated
Governmental Funds					
General Fund	\$301,488	(\$374)	\$18	<u>\$301,132</u>	
Total Governmental Funds	<u>\$301,488</u>	<u>(\$374)</u>	<u>\$18</u>	<u>\$301,132</u>	

**Independent Auditor's Report on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting and on Compliance and Other
Matters Based on an Audit of Financial Statements Performed in Accordance With
*Government Auditing Standards***

Bennington Township
Licking County
6219 Quick Lane Rd NW
Centerburg, OH 43011

To the Members of 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, the financial statements of the cash balances, receipts, and disbursements for each governmental fund type of Bennington Township, Licking County, Ohio, as of and for the years ended December 31, 2024, and 2023 and the related notes to the financial statements and have issued our report thereon dated April 18, 2025, wherein we noted Bennington Township followed financial reporting provisions Ohio Revised Code Section 117.38 and Ohio Administrative Code Section 117-2-03(C) permit.

Report on Internal Control over Financial Reporting

In planning and performing our audit of the financial statements, we considered Bennington 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 Bennington Township's internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of Bennington 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 Bennington 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 a certain deficiency in internal control, described in the accompanying schedule of findings and responses as item 2024-001 that we consider to be a material weakness.

Report on Compliance and Other Matters

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether Bennington 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 matter that is required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards* and which is described in the accompanying schedule of findings and responses and as item 2024-001.

Bennington Township
Licking County
Independent Auditor's Report on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting and on Compliance and Other Matters
Based on an Audit of Financial Statements Performed in Accordance With *Government Auditing Standards*

Bennington Township's Response to Finding

Government Auditing Standards requires the auditor to perform limited procedures on Bennington Township's response to the finding identified in our audit and described in the accompanying schedule of findings and responses. Bennington Township's response was not subjected to the other auditing procedures applied in the audit of the financial statements and, accordingly, we express no opinion on this response.

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 Bennington 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 Bennington Township's internal control and compliance. Accordingly, this communication is not suitable for any other purpose.

Julian & Grube, Inc.

Julian & Grube, Inc.
April 18, 2025

BENNINGTON TOWNSHIP
LICKING COUNTY, OHIO

SCHEDULE OF FINDINGS AND RESPONSES
DECEMBER 31, 2024 AND 2023

FINDINGS RELATED TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS REQUIRED TO BE REPORTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH GAGAS	
Finding Number	2024-001

Material Weakness/Noncompliance - Amended and Supplemental Appropriations

Ohio Revised Code Section 5705.41(B) requires that no subdivision is to expend money unless it has been appropriated. In addition, Ohio Revised Code Section 5705.40 outlines the requirements for amending and supplementing appropriations. This section states that any amendments to an appropriation measure be made by Board resolution and comply with the same provisions of the law as used in making the original appropriations.

The Township had various legal level of control noncompliance where expenditures plus current year encumbrances exceeded appropriations plus prior year encumbrances. Additionally, the Board did not approve various interfund appropriation transfers that were made within the legal level of control that should have required Board approval.

By not timely and properly modifying the Township's appropriations, the Township is not adequately monitoring appropriations versus disbursements. With disbursements exceeding appropriations, overspending may occur which may result in a negative fund balance.

We recommend the Township comply with Ohio Revised Code by monitoring disbursements, so they do not exceed lawful appropriations. This may be achieved by monitoring the budget more closely on a continual basis and making appropriation amendments as necessary, subsequent to the passage of permanent appropriations.

Officials' Response: The Fiscal Officer was approved by the Board of Trustees to make amendments at the account code level but only between account codes within the same classification of personal services or other. The Township was not aware that though the Trustees had approved that the Fiscal Officer could make these amendments that the Fiscal Officer actually making these amendments resulted in a violation of the Ohio Revised Code due to the Trustees approving appropriations to the account code level rather than just to the personal services and other level making the account code level the Township's legal level of control rather than personal services and other level being their legal level of control. The Township plan to correct this in 2025.

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OHIO AUDITOR OF STATE KEITH FABER



BENNINGTON TOWNSHIP

LICKING 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 8/21/2025

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