



OHIO AUDITOR OF STATE  
**KEITH FABER**



FLORENCE TOWNSHIP  
ERIE COUNTY

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## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

Florence Township  
Erie County  
11011 Chapel Street  
Wakeman, Ohio 44889-8359

To the Board of Trustees:

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

#### ***Unmodified and Adverse Opinions***

We have audited the financial statements of Florence Township, Erie 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, 2024 and 2023, and the related notes to the financial statements.

#### ***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 each governmental fund type 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 which Ohio Revised Code Section 117.38 and Ohio Administrative Code Section 117-2-03(C) permit, 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 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, 2024 and 2023, or the 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 (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.

***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 *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 January 5, 2026, 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  
Ohio Auditor of State



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

January 5, 2026

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

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	General	Special Revenue	Capital Projects	Combined Total
<b>Cash Receipts</b>				
Property and Other Local Taxes	\$134,823	\$176,221	\$70,712	\$381,756
Charges for Services	50,000			50,000
Licenses, Permits and Fees	32,610			32,610
Intergovernmental	57,366	325,585	8,924	391,875
Miscellaneous	514	13,049		13,563
<i>Total Cash Receipts</i>	<i>275,313</i>	<i>514,855</i>	<i>79,636</i>	<i>869,804</i>
<b>Cash Disbursements</b>				
Current:				
General Government	181,503	2,126		183,629
Public Safety	28,284	179,925	8,846	217,055
Public Works	20,485	166,626		187,111
Health	24,434	200		24,634
Capital Outlay		303,829		303,829
Debt Service:				
Principal Retirement		6,397	43,327	49,724
Interest and Fiscal Charges		131	4,736	4,867
<i>Total Cash Disbursements</i>	<i>254,706</i>	<i>659,234</i>	<i>56,909</i>	<i>970,849</i>
<i>Net Change in Fund Cash Balances</i>	<i>20,607</i>	<i>(144,379)</i>	<i>22,727</i>	<i>(101,045)</i>
<i>Fund Cash Balances, January 1</i>	<i>335,588</i>	<i>339,093</i>	<i>162,396</i>	<i>837,077</i>
<i>Fund Cash Balances, December 31</i>	<i>\$356,195</i>	<i>\$194,714</i>	<i>\$185,123</i>	<i>\$736,032</i>

*See accompanying notes to the financial statements*

**Florence Township**  
*Erie County*  
*Notes to the Financial Statements*  
*For the Year Ended December 31, 2024*

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**Note 1 - Reporting Entity**

The constitution and laws of the State of Ohio establish the rights and privileges of Florence Township, Erie County, Ohio (the Township) as a body corporate and politic. A publicly elected three-member Board of Trustees directs the Township. The Township provides general government services, road and bridge maintenance, cemetery maintenance, and fire protection.

***Jointly Governed Organizations and Public Entity Risk Pool***

The Township participates in two jointly governed organizations and one public entity risk. Notes 6 and 11 to the financial statements provide additional information for these entities.

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 is 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 capital projects. The Township had the following significant Special Revenue Funds:

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

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

***Capital Projects 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 Projects Fund:

***Miscellaneous Capital Projects Fund*** This fund receives property tax money for fire protection equipment.

**Florence Township**  
*Erie County*  
*Notes to the Financial Statements*  
*For the Year Ended December 31, 2024*

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***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 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).

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 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 3.

***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.

***Accumulated Leave***

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

***Leases***

The Township is the lessee in various leases (as defined by GASB 87) related to vehicles, and other equipment under noncancelable leases. Lease disbursements are recognized when they are paid.

**Florence Township**  
*Erie County*  
*Notes to the Financial Statements*  
*For the Year Ended December 31, 2024*

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**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. 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.

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**Florence Township**  
*Erie County*  
*Notes to the Financial Statements*  
*For the Year Ended December 31, 2024*

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**Note 3 - Budgetary Activity**

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

2024 Budgeted vs. Actual Receipts			
Fund Type	Budgeted Receipts	Actual Receipts	Variance
General	\$387,438	\$275,313	(\$112,125)
Special Revenue	383,948	514,855	130,907
Capital Projects	86,885	79,636	(7,249)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$858,271</b>	<b>\$869,804</b>	<b>\$11,533</b>

2024 Budgeted vs. Actual Budgetary Basis Expenditures			
Fund Type	Appropriation Authority	Budgetary Expenditures	Variance
General	\$373,167	\$258,443	\$114,724
Special Revenue	721,296	667,592	53,704
Capital Projects	103,461	56,909	46,552
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,197,924</b>	<b>\$982,944</b>	<b>\$214,980</b>

**Note 4 - Deposits**

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

2024	
<b><i>Cash Management Pool:</i></b>	
Demand deposits	<b>\$736,032</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 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 - 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.

**Florence Township**  
*Erie County*  
*Notes to the Financial Statements*  
*For the Year Ended December 31, 2024*

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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 6 - Risk Management**

### ***Risk Pool Membership***

The Township belongs to the Ohio Plan Risk Management, Inc. (OPRM) (the Plan), an 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 remained the same through October 31, 2022. Effective November 1, 2022, the property loss corridor was eliminated. OPRM had 847 members as of December 31, 2024.

The Plan'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, 2024. 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, 2024.

Assets	\$ 24,456,615
Liabilities	(16,692,162)
Members' Equity	<u>\$ 7,764,453</u>

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

## **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.

**Florence Township**  
*Erie County*  
*Notes to the Financial Statements*  
*For the Year Ended December 31, 2024*

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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.

***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, 2024.

***Note 8 - Postemployment Benefits***

OPERS offers cost-sharing, multiple-employer defined benefit postemployment plans. 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. Accounts that retirees use to be reimbursed for health care expenses. 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 9 - Debt***

Debt outstanding at December 31, 2024, was as follows:

	<u>Principal</u>	<u>Interest Rate</u>
2018 Pierce Fire Truck Lease-Purchase	<u>\$91,713</u>	3.81%

***Leases***

In a prior audit period the Township entered into a lease-purchase agreement with PNC Equipment. This agreement was to finance the purchase of a Pierce Fire Truck. This is a ten-year lease with annual payments of \$48,062 ending in 2026.

**Florence Township**  
*Erie County*  
*Notes to the Financial Statements*  
*For the Year Ended December 31, 2024*

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***Amortization***

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

Year Ending December 31:	Lease- Purchases
2025	\$48,062
2026	48,062
Total	<u><u>\$96,124</u></u>

**Note 10 - 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 11 - Jointly Governed Organizations**

***Vermilion River Ambulance District***

A four-member Board of Trustees governs Vermilion River Ambulance District (the Ambulance District). Each political subdivision within the Ambulance District appoints one member. Those subdivisions are the Village of Wakeman, Florence Township, Townsend Township, and Wakeman Township. The Ambulance District provides ambulance service within the Ambulance District by contracting with Citizens Ambulance Service. Financial information can be obtained from the Fiscal Officer, 2511 Wells Road, Collins, Ohio 44826.

***Northern Ohio Rural Water***

Northern Ohio Rural Water (the District), a regional water district, is a political subdivision of the State of Ohio, organized pursuant to Ohio Rev. Code Section 6119 and is directed by a Board of Trustees. The District was incorporated for the purpose of providing a water supply for domestic, industrial, and public use to users within and outside the District. Each member has one representative to the District and is entitled to one vote on items under consideration. The District is administered by a 24 member board of trustees elected by the members of the District of governments. The board exercises total control over the District's operation including budgeting, appropriating, contracting and designating management.

**Note 12 - Fund Balances**

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	General	Special Revenue	Total
Outstanding Encumbrances	<u><u>\$3,737</u></u>	<u><u>\$8,358</u></u>	<u><u>\$12,095</u></u>

**Florence Township**  
*Erie County*  
*Notes to the Financial Statements*  
*For the Year Ended December 31, 2024*

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The fund balance of Special Revenue funds is either restricted or committed. The fund balance of Capital Projects funds is restricted, committed, or assigned. These restricted, committed, and assigned amounts in the Special Revenue and Capital Projects funds would include the outstanding encumbrances. In the General Fund, outstanding encumbrances are considered assigned.

**Note 13 - Compliance**

Contrary to Ohio law, the Township did comply with competitive bidding requirements.

**Florence Township**  
**Erie 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	Combined Total
<b>Cash Receipts</b>				
Property and Other Local Taxes	\$133,465	\$174,469	\$70,039	\$377,973
Charges for Services	50,000			50,000
Licenses, Permits and Fees	29,339			29,339
Intergovernmental	56,215	327,045	126,727	509,987
Miscellaneous	10,177	29,954		40,131
<i>Total Cash Receipts</i>	<u>279,196</u>	<u>531,468</u>	<u>196,766</u>	<u>1,007,430</u>
<b>Cash Disbursements</b>				
Current:				
General Government	186,537	2,921		189,458
Public Safety	31,227	80,591	127,421	239,239
Public Works	27,779	235,617		263,396
Health	25,051	3,240		28,291
Capital Outlay	18,752	286,916		305,668
Debt Service:				
Principal Retirement		12,411	41,721	54,132
Interest and Fiscal Charges		645	6,341	6,986
<i>Total Cash Disbursements</i>	<u>289,346</u>	<u>622,341</u>	<u>175,483</u>	<u>1,087,170</u>
<i>Excess of Receipts Over (Under) Disbursements</i>	<u>(10,150)</u>	<u>(90,873)</u>	<u>21,283</u>	<u>(79,740)</u>
<b>Other Financing Receipts (Disbursements)</b>				
Transfers In		25,548		25,548
Transfers Out	(25,548)			(25,548)
<i>Total Other Financing Receipts (Disbursements)</i>	<u>(25,548)</u>	<u>25,548</u>		
<i>Net Change in Fund Cash Balances</i>	<u>(35,698)</u>	<u>(65,325)</u>	<u>21,283</u>	<u>(79,740)</u>
<i>Fund Cash Balances, January 1</i>	<u>371,286</u>	<u>404,418</u>	<u>141,113</u>	<u>916,817</u>
<i>Fund Cash Balances, December 31</i>	<u>\$335,588</u>	<u>\$339,093</u>	<u>\$162,396</u>	<u>\$837,077</u>

*See accompanying notes to the financial statements*

**Florence Township**  
*Erie County*  
*Notes to the Financial Statements*  
*For the Year Ended December 31, 2023*

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**Note 1 - Reporting Entity**

The constitution and laws of the State of Ohio establish the rights and privileges of Florence Township, Erie County, Ohio (the Township) as a body corporate and politic. A publicly elected three-member Board of Trustees directs the Township. The Township provides general government services, road and bridge maintenance, cemetery maintenance, and fire protection.

***Jointly Governed Organizations and Public Entity Risk Pool***

The Township participates in two jointly governed organizations and one public entity risk. Notes 6 and 11 to the financial statements provide additional information for these entities.

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 is 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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***Miscellaneous Capital Projects Fund*** This fund receives property tax money for fire protection equipment.

**Florence Township**  
*Erie County*  
*Notes to the Financial Statements*  
*For the Year Ended December 31, 2023*

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***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 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).

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 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 2023 budgetary activity appears in Note 3.

***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.

***Accumulated Leave***

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

***Leases***

The Township is the lessee in various leases (as defined by GASB 87) related to vehicles, and other equipment under noncancelable leases. Lease disbursements are recognized when they are paid.

**Florence Township**  
*Erie County*  
*Notes to the Financial Statements*  
*For the Year Ended December 31, 2023*

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**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. 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.

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**Florence Township**  
*Erie County*  
*Notes to the Financial Statements*  
*For the Year Ended December 31, 2023*

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**Note 3 - Budgetary Activity**

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

2023 Budgeted vs. Actual Receipts			
Fund Type	Budgeted Receipts	Actual Receipts	Variance
General	\$396,488	\$279,196	(\$117,292)
Special Revenue	381,806	557,016	175,210
Capital Projects	179,210	196,766	17,556
Total	<u><u>\$957,504</u></u>	<u><u>\$1,032,978</u></u>	<u><u>\$75,474</u></u>

2023 Budgeted vs. Actual Budgetary Basis Expenditures			
Fund Type	Appropriation Authority	Budgetary Expenditures	Variance
General	\$373,237	\$319,449	\$53,788
Special Revenue	817,969	741,367	76,602
Capital Projects	260,550	179,144	81,406
Total	<u><u>\$1,451,756</u></u>	<u><u>\$1,239,960</u></u>	<u><u>\$211,796</u></u>

**Note 4 - Deposits**

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

2023	
<i>Cash Management Pool:</i>	
Demand deposits	<u><u>\$837,077</u></u>

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 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 - 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.

**Florence Township**  
*Erie County*  
*Notes to the Financial Statements*  
*For the Year Ended December 31, 2023*

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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 6 - Risk Management**

### ***Risk Pool Membership***

The Township belongs to the Ohio Plan Risk Management, Inc. (OPRM) (the Plan), an 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 Plan'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](http://www.ohioplan.org).

## **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.

**Florence Township**  
*Erie County*  
*Notes to the Financial Statements*  
*For the Year Ended December 31, 2023*

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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.

***Note 8 - Postemployment Benefits***

OPERS offers cost-sharing, multiple-employer defined benefit postemployment plans. 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. Accounts that retirees use to be reimbursed for health care expenses. 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 9 - Debt***

Debt outstanding at December 31, 2023 was as follows:

	<u>Principal</u>	<u>Interest Rate</u>
2018 Pierce Fire Truck Lease-Purchase	\$135,043	3.81%
2019 Excavator Lease-Purchase	6,394	4.10%
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>\$141,437</u></b>	

***Leases***

In a prior audit period the Township entered into a lease-purchase agreement with PNC Equipment. This agreement was to finance the purchase of a Pierce Fire Truck. This is a ten-year lease with annual payments of \$48,062 ending in 2026.

In a prior audit period the Township entered into a lease-purchase agreement with Huntington. This agreement was to finance the purchase of an excavator. This is a five-year lease with annual payments of \$13,056 ending in 2024.

**Florence Township**  
*Erie County*  
*Notes to the Financial Statements*  
*For the Year Ended December 31, 2023*

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***Amortization***

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

Year Ending December 31:	Lease- Purchases
2024	\$54,590
2025	48,062
2026	48,062
Total	<u><u>\$150,714</u></u>

**Note 10 - 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 11 - Jointly Governed Organizations**

***Vermilion River Ambulance District***

A four-member Board of Trustees governs Vermilion River Ambulance District (the Ambulance District). Each political subdivision within the Ambulance District appoints one member. Those subdivisions are the Village of Wakeman, Florence Township, Townsend Township, and Wakeman Township. The Ambulance District provides ambulance service within the Ambulance District by contracting with Citizens Ambulance Service. Financial information can be obtained the Fiscal Officer, 2511 Wells Road, Collins, Ohio 44826.

***Northern Ohio Rural Water***

Northern Ohio Rural Water (the District), a regional water district, is a political subdivision of the State of Ohio, organized pursuant to Ohio Rev. Code Section 6119 and is directed by a Board of Trustees. The District was incorporated for the purpose of providing a water supply for domestic, industrial, and public use to users within and outside the District. Each member has one representative to the District and is entitled to one vote on items under consideration. The District is administered by a 24 member board of trustees elected by the members of the District of governments. The board exercises total control over the District's operation including budgeting, appropriating, contracting and designating management.

**Note 12 - Fund Balances**

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	General	Special Revenue	Capital Projects	Total
Outstanding Encumbrances	<u><u>\$4,555</u></u>	<u><u>\$119,026</u></u>	<u><u>\$3,661</u></u>	<u><u>\$127,242</u></u>

**Florence Township**  
*Erie County*  
*Notes to the Financial Statements*  
*For the Year Ended December 31, 2023*

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The fund balance of Special Revenue funds is either restricted or committed. The fund balance of Capital Projects funds is restricted, committed, or assigned. These restricted, committed, and assigned amounts in the Special Revenue and Capital Projects funds would include the outstanding encumbrances. In the General Fund, outstanding encumbrances are considered assigned.

**Note 13 - Compliance**

Contrary to Ohio law, the Township did comply with competitive bidding requirements.



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**

Florence Township  
Erie County  
11011 Chapel Street  
Wakeman, Ohio 44889-8359

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*, the financial statements of 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 of Florence Township, Erie County, Ohio (the Township) and have issued our report thereon dated January 5, 2026, wherein we noted the Township followed financial reporting provisions Ohio Rev. Code § 117.38 and Ohio Admin. Code 117-2-03(C) permit.

***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 2024-001 and 2024-002 that we consider to be material weaknesses.

Florence Township  
Erie 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 instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards* and which are described in the accompanying schedule of findings as items 2024-002 through 2024-004.

***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  
Ohio Auditor of State



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

January 5, 2026

**FLORENCE TOWNSHIP  
ERIE COUNTY**

**SCHEDULE OF FINDINGS  
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 - 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 requiring adjustment to the financial statements and notes to the financial statements were identified:

- In 2024, General Fund and Special Revenue Fund Type appropriation authority were decreased and increased, respectively, in the amount of \$95,000 in order to bring the amounts reported in the Budgetary Activity note to the financial statements in line with the authorized budget amounts;
- In 2023, General Fund and Special Revenue Fund Type appropriation authority were decreased and increased, respectively, in the amount of \$151,000 in order to bring the amounts reported in the Budgetary Activity note to the financial statements in line with the authorized budget amounts;
- In 2023, Capital Projects Fund Type budgeted receipts were decreased in the amount of \$17,556 in order to bring the amount reported in the Budgetary Activity note to the financial statements in line with the authorized budget amount; and
- In 2023, Capital Projects Fund Type intergovernmental receipts in the amount of \$19,800 were incorrectly classified as other financing sources.

These errors were not identified and corrected prior to the Township preparing its financial statements and notes to the financial statements due to deficiencies in the Township's internal controls over financial statement monitoring. The failure to adequately monitor the financial statements and notes to the financial statements could allow for misstatements to occur and go undetected. The accompanying financial statements, notes to the financial statements, and accounting records, where appropriate, have been adjusted to correct these errors. In addition to the adjustments noted above, we also identified misstatements ranging from \$378 to \$15,490 that 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 Board of Trustees, to help identify and correct errors and omissions.

**FINDING NUMBER 2024-002**

**Noncompliance Citation and Material Weakness**

**Ohio Rev. Code § 5705.10(D)** provides in part that all revenue derived from a source other than the general property tax and which the law prescribes shall be used for a particular purpose, shall be paid into a special fund for such purpose.

The Township inappropriately recorded \$121,211 of Erie County grant receipts and \$112,087 in related capital outlay disbursements in the General Fund in 2024. Additionally, the Township inappropriately recorded \$136,120 of Erie County grant receipts and corresponding capital outlay disbursements in 2023. Given the source of the revenue, these should have been recorded in the Road and Bridge Fund. Audit adjustments are reflected in the financial statements and in the accounting records correcting the misstatements.

The lack of controls over the posting of financial transactions decreases the reliability of financial data at year-end and can result in undetected errors and irregularities. The Township should implement controls to help ensure all transactions are reviewed to help ensure posting to the proper funds.

**FINDING NUMBER 2024-003**

**Noncompliance Citation**

**Ohio Rev. Code § 5549.21** states in part that the board of township trustees may purchase or lease such machinery and tools as are necessary for use in constructing, reconstructing, maintaining, and repairing roads and culverts within the township, and shall provide suitable places for housing and storing machinery and tools owned by the township. Except as otherwise provided in sections 505.08, 505.101 and 5513.01 of the Revised Code, all purchases of materials, machinery, and tools shall, if the amount involved exceeds \$50,000 through October 2, 2023 and the amount specified in section 9.17 of the Revised Code (\$75,000) for the period of October 3, 2023 through December 31, 2023, be made from the lowest responsible bidder after advertisement, as provided in section 5575.01 of the Revised Code.

During 2023 the Township purchased a loader from Wellington Implement in the amount of \$87,235. This purchase exceeds the competitive bidding threshold; however, due to deficiencies in the Township's internal controls over competitive bidding, no competitive bidding procedures were performed. Failure to comply with the competitive bidding process and/or exemptions and establishing procurement procedures could result in the Township paying more for purchases and not receiving the lowest and best bids.

The Township should competitively bid contract projects expected to exceed the threshold outlined in section 9.17 of the Revised Code through competitive bidding procedures. In the event a purchase meets one or more of the competitive bidding exceptions, documentation supporting the exemption should be obtained and retained for audit.

**FINDING NUMBER 2024-004**

**Noncompliance Citation**

**Ohio Rev. Code § 505.37(A)** states in part when the estimated cost to purchase fire apparatus, mechanical resuscitators, underwater rescue and recovery equipment, or other fire equipment, appliances, materials, fire hydrants, buildings, or fire-alarm communications equipment or services exceeds the amount specified in section 9.17 of the Revised Code, the contract shall be let by competitive bidding.

During 2024 and 2023, the Township purchased fire radios from Cleveland Communications in the amounts of \$84,049 and \$87,235, respectively. These purchases exceed the competitive bidding threshold; however, due to deficiencies in the Township's internal controls over competitive bidding, no competitive bidding procedures were performed. Failure to comply with the competitive bidding process and/or exemptions and establishing procurement procedures could result in the Township paying more for purchases and not receiving the lowest and best bids.

The Township should competitively bid purchases expected to exceed the threshold outlined in section 9.17 of the Revised Code through competitive bidding procedures. In the event a purchase meets one or more of the competitive bidding exceptions, documentation supporting the exemption should be obtained and retained for audit.

**Officials' Response:**

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



FLORENCE TOWNSHIP  
11011 Chapel Street  
Wakeman, Ohio 44889  
440-965-5331

**SUMMARY SCHEDULE OF PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS  
DECEMBER 31, 2024 AND 2023**

Finding Number	Finding Summary	Status	Additional Information
2022-001	Material weakness for errors in financial reporting.	Not corrected and reissued as Finding 2024-001 in this report.	This matter was not corrected due to deficiencies in the Township's internal controls over financial reporting. The Fiscal Officer will work to ensure proper recording and reporting.
2022-002	Finding for recovery related to Trustee compensation.	Fully corrected.	

# OHIO AUDITOR OF STATE KEITH FABER



FLORENCE TOWNSHIP

ERIE 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 1/22/2026

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)