

GROTON TOWNSHIP

ERIE COUNTY, OHIO

REGULAR AUDIT

FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2024 AND 2023





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Columbus, Ohio 43215
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Board of Trustees
Groton Township
9414 Portland Road
Castalia, OH 44824

We have reviewed the *Independent Auditor's Report* of the Groton Township, Erie County, prepared by Charles E. Harris & Associates, 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. The Groton 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

January 05, 2026

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Groton Township
Erie County
For the Years Ended December 31, 2024 and 2023

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Charles E. Harris & Associates, Inc.

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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

Groton Township
Erie County
9414 Portland Road
Castalia, OH 44824

To the Board of Trustees:

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

Unmodified and Adverse Opinions

We have audited the financial statements of Groton Township, Erie County, Ohio (the Township), which comprise 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 the financial audit standards in the Comptroller General of the United States' *Government Auditing Standards* will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

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

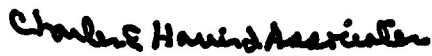
- exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining,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

- conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Township's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

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

Other Reporting Required by Government Auditing Standards

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we have also issued our report dated August 21, 2025, 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.



Charles E. Harris & Associates, Inc.

August 21, 2025

Groton 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

	Governmental Fund Types		Totals
	General	Special Revenue	(Memorandum Only)
Cash Receipts:			
Property and Other Local Taxes	\$ 157,283	\$ 161,986	\$ 319,269
Charges for Services	-	31,906	31,906
Licenses, Permits, and Fees	2,222	119,050	121,272
Intergovernmental	108,885	277,771	386,656
Earnings on Investments	22,089	18,856	40,945
Miscellaneous	2,910	25,097	28,007
<i>Total Cash Receipts</i>	293,389	634,666	928,055
Cash Disbursements:			
Current:			
General Government	181,482	53,470	234,952
Public Safety	256	234,531	234,787
Public Works	127,930	274,604	402,534
Health	1,191	873	2,064
Capital Outlay	1,887	-	1,887
<i>Total Cash Disbursements</i>	312,746	563,478	876,224
<i>Net Change in Fund Cash Balances</i>	(19,357)	71,188	51,831
<i>Fund Cash Balances, January 1</i>	386,202	1,032,194	1,418,396
<i>Fund Cash Balances, December 31</i>	\$ 366,845	\$ 1,103,382	\$ 1,470,227

Groton Township
Erie County
Notes to the Financial Statements
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 the Groton Township, Erie 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, cemetery maintenance, fire protection and emergency medical services. The Township contracts with North Central EMS – Fisher Titus to provide fire services to provide medical transport services.

Jointly Governed Organizations and Public Entity Risk Pools

The Township participates in jointly governed organizations and a public entity risk pool. Notes 10 and 6 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 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.

Fire Department Fire Levy Fund The Fire Department Fire Levy fund accounts for and reports the receipt of property tax monies for the general operation of the Township Fire Department.

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

Note 2 – Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

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 that each 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.

Deposits and Investments

The Township's accounting basis includes investments as assets. This basis does not record disbursements for investment purchases or receipts for investment sales. This basis records gains or losses at the time of sale as receipts or disbursements, respectively. During 2024 the Township had one Certificate of Deposit that is held by First National Bank and matures February 2025.

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.

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

Note 2 – Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

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.

SBITAs

The Township has entered into noncancelable Subscription-Based Information Technology Arrangements (SBITA) contracts (as defined by GASB 96) for several types of software including contracts related to financial systems and various other software. Subscription disbursements are recognized when they are paid.

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.

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.

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

Note 2 – Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

For regulatory purposes, limited disclosure related to fund balance is included in Note 11.

Note 3 – Budgetary Activity

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

2024 Budgeted vs. Actual Receipts			
Fund Type	Budgeted	Actual Receipts	Variance
	Receipts		
General	\$ 284,193	\$ 293,389	\$ 9,196
Special Revenue	562,278	634,666	72,388

2024 Budgeted vs. Actual Budgetary Basis Disbursements			
Fund Type	Appropriation	Budgetary	Variance
	Authority	Disbursements	
General	\$ -	\$ 313,796	\$ (313,796)
Special Revenue	-	564,580	(564,580)

Contrary to the Ohio Revised Code Section 5705.41(D), 28% of the Township’s tested “Then and Now” purchase orders were above \$3,000 without Trustee approval. Contrary to the Ohio Revised Code Section 5705.38(A), the Township did not approve appropriations via annual appropriation measure. This caused all funds expenditures to exceed appropriations contrary to the Ohio Revised Code Section 5705.41(B).

Note 4 – Deposits and Investments

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 are as follows:

	2024
<i>Cash Management Pool:</i>	
Demand deposits	\$ 1,273,003
Certificates of deposit	197,224
Total deposits	<u>\$ 1,470,227</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. At December 31, 2024, the Township is holding \$1,449 in unremitted employee payroll withholdings.

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

Note 4 – Deposits and Investments (continued)

Deposits

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

Note 5 – Property Taxes

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

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

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

Note 6 – 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 is a member of the Ohio Township Association Risk Management Authority (The Pool). The Pool assumes the risk of loss up to the limits of the Township's policy. The Pool covers the following risks:

- General liability
- Automobile Liability
- Automobile Physical Damage
- Public Officials Liability
- Property and Inland Marine
- Law enforcement liability
- Fidelity and Crime
- Employment Practices Liability
- Cyber Breach and Liability

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

Note 6 – Risk Management (continued)

The Pool reported the following summary of actuarially-measured liabilities and assets available to pay those liabilities as of December 31:

	<u>2024</u>
Cash and investments	\$ 32,822,076
Actuarial liabilities	12,568,762

Note 7 – Defined Benefit Pension Plans

Ohio Public Employees Retirement System

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

The Ohio Revised Code also prescribes contribution rates. OPERS members contributed 10 percent of their gross salaries, and the Township contributed an amount equaling 14 percent of participants' gross salaries. The Township has paid all contributions required through December 31, 2024.

Social Security

Some 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 a 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.

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

Note 9 – Contingent Liabilities

The Township may be a defendant in lawsuits. Although management cannot presently determine the outcome of these suits, management believes that the resolution of these matters will not materially adversely affect the Township's financial condition.

Note 10 – Jointly Governed Organizations

Erie, Margaretta, Oxford, and Perkins Townships each appoint a member of the Board of Sandhill Cemetery Association. The Cemetery Association provides ground maintenance, opening and closing of graves and the sale of lots. Each Township contributed for fiscal year 2024 an amount of \$4,000 to the Cemetery Association.

Note 11 – 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:

	Special		
<u>Fund Balances</u>	<u>General</u>	<u>Revenue</u>	<u>Total</u>
Outstanding Encumbrances	\$ 1,050	\$ 1,102	\$ 2,152

The fund balance of special revenue funds is either restricted or committed. These restricted or committed amounts in the special revenue fund include the outstanding encumbrances. In the general fund, outstanding encumbrances are considered assigned.

Note 12 – 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, the Township did not receive COVID-19 funding. The Township will continue to spend available COVID-19 funding consistent with the applicable program guidelines.

Groton 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

	Governmental Fund Types		Totals
	General	Special Revenue	(Memorandum Only)
Cash Receipts:			
Property and Other Local Taxes	\$ 163,138	\$ 163,452	\$ 326,590
Charges for Services	-	30,386	30,386
Licenses, Permits, and Fees	1,750	103,610	105,360
Intergovernmental	62,789	284,437	347,226
Earnings on Investments	22,003	4,321	26,324
Miscellaneous	2,645	43,340	45,985
<i>Total Cash Receipts</i>	252,325	629,546	881,871
Cash Disbursements:			
Current:			
General Government	187,333	165,996	353,329
Public Safety	1,170	182,816	183,986
Public Works	20,823	335,734	356,557
Health	1,843	150	1,993
<i>Total Cash Disbursements</i>	211,169	684,696	895,865
<i>Net Change in Fund Cash Balances</i>	41,156	(55,150)	(13,994)
<i>Fund Cash Balances, January 1, Restated</i>	345,046	1,087,344	1,432,390
<i>Fund Cash Balances, December 31</i>	\$ 386,202	\$ 1,032,194	\$ 1,418,396

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

Note 1 – Reporting Entity

The constitution and laws of the State of Ohio establish the rights and privileges of the Groton Township, Erie 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, cemetery maintenance, fire protection and emergency medical services. The Township contracts with North Central EMS – Fisher Titus to provide fire services to provide medical transport services.

Jointly Governed Organizations and Public Entity Risk Pools

The Township participates in jointly governed organizations and a public entity risk pool. Notes 10 and 6 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

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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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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.

Fire Department Fire Levy Fund The Fire Department Fire Levy fund accounts for and reports the receipt of property tax monies for the general operation of the Township Fire Department.

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

Note 2 – Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

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 that each 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 4.

Deposits and Investments

The Township's accounting basis includes investments as assets. This basis does not record disbursements for investment purchases or receipts for investment sales. This basis records gains or losses at the time of sale as receipts or disbursements, respectively. During 2023 the Township had one Certificate of Deposit that is held by First National Bank and matures February 2025.

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.

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

Note 2 – Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

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.

SBITAs

The Township has entered into noncancelable Subscription-Based Information Technology Arrangements (SBITA) contracts (as defined by GASB 96) for several types of software including contracts related to financial systems and various other software. Subscription disbursements are recognized when they are paid.

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.

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.

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

Note 2 – Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

For regulatory purposes, limited disclosure related to fund balance is included in Note 11.

Note 3 – Budgetary Activity

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

2023 Budgeted vs. Actual Receipts			
Fund Type	Budgeted	Actual Receipts	Variance
	Receipts		
General	\$ 284,934	\$ 252,325	\$ (32,609)
Special Revenue	663,477	629,546	(33,931)

2023 Budgeted vs. Actual Budgetary Basis Disbursements			
Fund Type	Appropriation	Budgetary	Variance
	Authority	Disbursements	
General	\$ -	\$ 212,413	\$ (212,413)
Special Revenue	-	686,114	(686,114)

Contrary to the Ohio Revised Code Section 5705.41(D), 13% of the Township's tested "Then and Now" purchase orders were above \$3,000 without Trustee approval. Contrary to the Ohio Revised Code Section 5705.38(A), the Township did not approve appropriations via annual appropriation measure. This caused all funds expenditures to exceed appropriations contrary to the Ohio Revised Code Section 5705.41(B).

Note 4 – Deposits and Investments

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 are as follows:

	2023
<i>Cash Management Pool:</i>	
Demand deposits	\$ 13,934,655
Certificates of deposit	183,741
Total deposits	<u>\$ 14,118,396</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. At December 31, 2023, the Township is holding \$2,262 in unremitted employee payroll withholdings.

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

Note 4 – Deposits and Investments (continued)

Deposits

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

Note 5 – Property Taxes

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

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

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

Note 6 – 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 is a member of the Ohio Township Association Risk Management Authority (The Pool). The Pool assumes the risk of loss up to the limits of the Township's policy. The Pool covers the following risks:

- General liability
- Automobile Liability
- Automobile Physical Damage
- Public Officials Liability
- Property and Inland Marine
- Law enforcement liability
- Fidelity and Crime
- Employment Practices Liability
- Cyber Breach and Liability

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

Note 6 – Risk Management (continued)

The Pool reported the following summary of actuarially-measured liabilities and assets available to pay those liabilities as of December 31:

	<u>2023</u>
Cash and investments	\$ 33,494,457
Actuarial liabilities	10,885,549

Note 7 – Defined Benefit Pension Plans

Ohio Public Employees Retirement System

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

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

Social Security

Some 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 a 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. 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.

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

Note 9 – Contingent Liabilities

The Township may be a defendant in lawsuits. Although management cannot presently determine the outcome of these suits, management believes that the resolution of these matters will not materially adversely affect the Township's financial condition.

Note 10 – Jointly Governed Organizations

Erie, Margaretta, Oxford, and Perkins Townships each appoint a member of the Board of Sandhill Cemetery Association. The Cemetery Association provides ground maintenance, opening and closing of graves and the sale of lots. Each Township contributed for fiscal year 2023 an amount of \$4,000 to the Cemetery Association.

Note 11 – 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:

<u>Fund Balances</u>	<u>General</u>	<u>Special Revenue</u>	<u>Total</u>
Outstanding Encumbrances	\$ 1,244	\$ 1,418	\$ 2,662

The fund balance of special revenue funds is either restricted or committed. These restricted or committed amounts in the special revenue fund include the outstanding encumbrances. In the general fund, outstanding encumbrances are considered assigned.

Note 12 – 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, the Township did not receive COVID-19 funding. The Township will continue to spend available COVID-19 funding consistent with the applicable program guidelines.

Note 13 – Restatement of Fund Cash Balance

The Township increased their beginning fund cash position at January 1, 2023 in the General and Special Revenue fund due to \$2,483 in voided checks from prior years. The effect of the adjustment on beginning fund cash balances are reflected in the chart below.

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

Note 13 – Restatement of Fund Cash Balance (continued)

	12/31/2022 As <u>Previously Reported</u>	<u>Voided Checks</u>	1/1/2023 As <u>Restated</u>
Governmental Funds			
General Fund	\$ 344,547	\$ 499	\$ 345,046
Special Revenue Fund	1,085,360	1,984	1,087,344

Charles E. Harris & Associates, Inc.
Certified Public Accountants

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

Groton Township
Erie County
9414 Portland Road
Castalia, OH 44824

To the Board of Trustees:

We have audited, 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 the Comptroller General of the United States, 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 Groton Township, Erie County, (the Township) and have issued our report thereon dated August 21, 2025, 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 purposes of expressing our opinions 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. Therefore, unidentified material weaknesses or significant deficiencies may exist. We did identify a deficiency in internal control, described in the accompanying Schedule of Findings as item 2024-003 that we consider a material weakness.

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*, which are described in the accompanying Schedule of Findings as items 2024-001 and 2024-002.


We also noted certain matters not requiring inclusion in this report that we reported to the Township's management in a separate letter dated August 21, 2025.

Township's Responses to Findings

Government Auditing Standards requires the auditor to perform limited procedures on the Township's responses to the findings identified in our audit and described in the accompanying Corrective Action Plan. The Township's responses were not subjected to the other auditing procedures applied in the audit of the financial statements and accordingly, we express no opinion on the responses.

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.



Charles E. Harris & Associates, Inc.
August 21, 2025

**GROTON 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
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Finding Number: 2024-001- Noncompliance

Certification of Expenditures

Ohio Rev. Code Section 5705.41(D)(1) prohibits a subdivision or taxing entity from making a contract or ordering any expenditure of money unless a certificate signed by a fiscal officer is attached thereto. The fiscal officer must certify that the amount required to meet any such contract or expenditure has been lawfully appropriated and is in the treasury, or is in the process of collection to the credit of an appropriate fund free from any previous encumbrance.

There are several exceptions to the standard requirement stated above that a fiscal officer's certificate must be obtained prior to a subdivision or taxing authority entering into a contract or order involving expenditure of money. The main exceptions are: "then and now" certificates, blanket certificates, and super blanket certificates, which are provided for in sections 5705.41(D)(1) and 5705.41(D)(3), respectively, of the Ohio Revised Code.

1. "Then and Now Certificates" – If the fiscal officer can certify that both at the time that contract or order was made ("then") and at the time that the fiscal officer was completing the certification ("now"), that sufficient funds were available or in the process of collection, to credit of a proper fund, properly appropriated and free from any previous encumbrance, the Township can authorize the drawing of a warrant for payment of the amount due. The Township has thirty days from the receipt of the "then and now" certificate to approve payment by resolution.

Amounts of less than \$3,000 may be paid by the fiscal officer without a resolution upon completion of the "then and now" certificate, provided that the expenditure is otherwise lawful. This does not eliminate any otherwise applicable requirement for approval of expenditures by the Township.

2. Blanket Certificates - Fiscal officers may prepare "blanket" certificates for a certain sum of money not in excess of an amount established by resolution adopted by a majority of members of the legislative authority against any specific line item amount over a period not running beyond the end of the current fiscal year. The blanket certificates may, but need not, be limited to a specific vendor. Only one blanket certificate may be outstanding at one particular time for any one particular line item appropriation.
3. Super Blanket Certificates – The Township may also make expenditures and contracts for any amount for a specific line-item appropriation account in a specified fund upon certification of the fiscal officer for most profession services, fuel, oil, food items, and any other specific recurring and reasonably predictable operating expense. This certification is not to extend beyond the current year. More than one super blanket certificate may be outstanding at a particular time for any line item appropriation.

In 2024, the Township used "Then and Now Certificates" on 87% of the tested transactions, of which 28% were over \$3,000 but were not approved by the Township Trustees.

**GROTON TOWNSHIP
ERIE COUNTY
SCHEDULE OF FINDINGS (continued)
December 31, 2024 and 2023**

FINDINGS RELATED TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS REQUIRED TO BE REPORTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH GAGAS (continued)
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Finding Number: 2024-001- Noncompliance (continued)

In 2023, the Township used “Then and Now Certificates” on 37% of the tested transactions, of which 13% were over \$3,000 but were not approved by the Township Trustees.

Unless the exceptions noted above are used, prior certification is not only required by statute but is a key control in the disbursement process to assure that purchase commitments receive prior approval. To improve controls over disbursements and to help reduce the possibility of the Township’s expenditures exceeding budgetary spending limitations, we recommend that the Township certify expenditures prior to incurring the liability. The Township may use then and now certificates and blanket purchase orders to assist with compliance with the above requirements, but should limit the usage and also, have the trustees approve certificates over \$3,000.

Officials’ Response:

See Corrective Action Plan

Finding Number: 2024-002 – Noncompliance

Budgetary Law Violations

Ohio Rev. Code § 5705.38(A) requires that on or about the first day of each fiscal year, an appropriation measure is to be passed. If the taxing authority wants to postpone the passage of the annual appropriation measure until an amended certificate is received from the county budget commission based upon the actual year end balances, it may pass a temporary appropriation measure for meeting the ordinary expenses until no later than April 1. The Township Trustees did not approve Permanent Appropriations through Board action in 2024 or 2023.

As a result of violations of the budgetary law referenced in the preceding paragraph, the Township expended monies in excess of appropriation authority for all funds in 2024 and 2023, in violation of Ohio Revised Code 5705.41(B).

We recommend that the Township Trustees and Fiscal Officer establish procedures to ensure that required appropriations are approved by the Township Trustees by the required date.

Officials Response:

See Corrective Action Plan.

**GROTON TOWNSHIP
ERIE COUNTY
SCHEDULE OF FINDINGS (continued)
December 31, 2024 and 2023**

FINDINGS RELATED TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS REQUIRED TO BE REPORTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH GAGAS (continued)
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Finding Number 2024-003 - Material Weakness

Audit Adjustments and Reclassifications:

The Township erroneously recorded several transactions during 2024 and 2023. The adjustments and reclassifications are as follows:

- In 2023 and 2024, the Road and Bridge and Gas Tax funds had grant receipts in Miscellaneous receipts of \$72,400 and \$109,631, respectively, that were reclassified as Intergovernmental receipts.
- In 2023 and 2024, the Singular Tower Rental Fund had grant receipts in Other Financing Sources of \$38,850 and \$5,220, respectively that were reclassified as Intergovernmental receipts.
- In 2023 and 2024, the General Fund had homestead and rollback receipts in Property Taxes of \$14,130 and \$13,945, respectively, that were reclassified as Intergovernmental receipts.
- In 2023 and 2024, the Road and Bridge and Fire Levy Funds had homestead and rollback receipts in Property Taxes of \$12,727 and \$12,565, respectively, that were reclassified as Intergovernmental receipts.
- In 2023, the Fire Levy Fund had grant receipts in Miscellaneous receipts of \$1,725 that were reclassified as Intergovernmental receipts.
- In 2023 and 2024, the Permissive Motor Vehicle License Tax, Road and Bridge, and Fire Levy Funds had permissive motor vehicle tax receipts in Miscellaneous receipts of \$6,162 and \$1,568, respectively, that were reclassified as Intergovernmental receipts.
- The Township did not properly post the previous audit adjustments into their accounting system.

The accompanying financial statements and Township records have been adjusted to properly reflect these transactions.

Failure to report transactions correctly results in the financial statements not being accurately presented. We recommend that the Fiscal Officer refer to the Ohio Township Handbook, Uniform Accounting Network (UAN) manual and other Auditor of State guidance to properly classify its transactions. In addition, we recommend the Fiscal Officer review all financial reports compiled by UAN to ensure their accuracy.

Officials' Response:

See Corrective Action Plan

**GROTON TOWNSHIP
ERIE COUNTY**

**SCHEDULE OF PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS
For the Years Ended December 31, 2024 and 2023
Prepared by Management**

Finding Number	Finding Summary	Status	Additional Information
2022-001	Material Weakness- Audit Adjustments	Not Corrected	
2022-002	Material Non-Compliance – Certification of Expenditures	Not Corrected	

**GROTON TOWNSHIP
ERIE COUNTY**

**CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN
For the Years Ended December 31, 2024 and 2023
Prepared by Management**

Finding Number	Planned Corrective Action	Anticipated Completion Date	Responsible Contact Person
2024-001	Speak with the trustees and look to create PO's in advance and seek approval of "Then and Now" PO's over \$3,000.	ASAP	Nancy Funni, Fiscal Officer
2024-002	Will look to pass appropriations via the minutes each year by the required date.	ASAP	Nancy Funni, Fiscal Officer
2024-003	Will closely monitor spending and receipting of money. Will use resources available to properly post al transactions.	ASAP	Nancy Funni, Fiscal Officer

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OHIO AUDITOR OF STATE KEITH FABER



GROTON 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 1/15/2026

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