

COMPLIANCE AUDIT

City of Reading Officers and Employees Pension Plan

Berks County, Pennsylvania

For the Period

January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2023

April 2025



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General

Timothy L. DeFoor • Auditor General



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**TIMOTHY L. DEFOOR
AUDITOR GENERAL**

The Honorable Mayor and City Council
City of Reading
Berks County
Reading, PA 19601

We have conducted a compliance audit of the City of Reading Officers and Employees Pension Plan for the period January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2023. We also evaluated compliance with some requirements subsequent to that period when possible. The audit was conducted pursuant to authority derived from the Municipal Pension Plan Funding Standard and Recovery Act (Act 205 of 1984, as amended, 53 P.S. § 895.402(j)), which requires the Auditor General, as deemed necessary, to audit every municipality which receives general municipal pension system state aid and every municipal pension plan and fund in which general municipal pension system state aid is deposited. The audit was not conducted, nor was it required to be, in accordance with Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. We planned and performed the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our conclusions based on our audit objectives.

The objectives of the audit were:

1. To determine if municipal officials took appropriate corrective action to address the findings contained in our prior report; and
2. To determine if the pension plan was administered in compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances and policies.

Our audit was limited to the areas related to the objectives identified above. To determine if municipal officials took appropriate corrective action to address the findings contained in our prior report, we inquired of plan officials and evaluated supporting documentation provided by officials evidencing that the suggested corrective action has been appropriately taken. To determine whether the pension plan was administered in compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances and policies, our methodology included the following:

- We determined whether state aid was properly determined and deposited in accordance with Act 205 requirements by verifying the annual deposit date of state aid and determining whether deposits were made within 30 days of receipt for all years within the period under audit.
- We determined whether annual employer contributions were calculated and deposited in accordance with the plan's governing document and applicable laws and regulations by examining the municipality's calculation of the plan's annual financial requirements and minimum municipal obligation (MMO) and comparing these calculated amounts to amounts actually budgeted and deposited into the pension plan as evidenced by supporting documentation.
- We determined whether annual employee contributions were calculated, deducted, and deposited into the pension plan in accordance with the plan's governing document and applicable laws and regulations by testing total members' contributions on an annual basis using the rates obtained from the plan's governing document in effect for all years within the period under audit and examining documents evidencing the deposit of these employee contributions into the pension plan.
- We determined whether retirement benefits calculated for plan members who retired or elected to vest during the current audit period, and through the completion of our fieldwork procedures, represent payments to all (and only) those entitled to receive them and were properly determined and disbursed in accordance with the plan's governing document, applicable laws, and regulations by recalculating the amount of the monthly pension benefits due to the retired individuals and comparing these amounts to supporting documentation evidencing amounts determined and actually paid or payable to the recipients.
- We determined whether the January 1, 2023 actuarial valuation report was prepared and submitted by March 31, 2024 in accordance with Act 205 and whether selected information provided on this report is accurate, complete, and in accordance with plan provisions to ensure compliance for participation in the state aid program by comparing selected information to supporting source documentation.
- We determined whether the terms and methodologies of the issuance of pension obligation bonds by the municipality, and any restrictions, were in compliance with plan provisions and Act 205 through inquiry of plan officials and examination of supporting documentation.

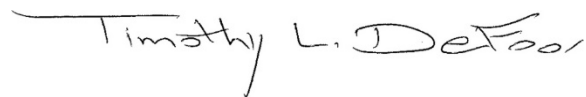
The City of Reading contracted with an independent certified public accounting firm for annual audits of its basic financial statements which are available at the city's offices. Those financial statements were not audited by us and, accordingly, we express no opinion or other form of assurance on them.

City officials are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the City of Reading Officers and Employees Pension Plan is administered in compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances and policies. As previously described, we tested transactions, interviewed selected officials, and performed procedures to the extent necessary to provide reasonable assurance of detecting instances of noncompliance with legal and regulatory requirements or noncompliance with provisions of contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances and policies that are significant within the context of the audit objectives.

The results of our procedures indicated that, in all significant respects, the City of Reading Officers and Employees Pension Plan was administered in compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, administrative procedures, and local ordinances and policies.

The accompanying supplementary information is presented for purposes of additional analysis. We did not audit the information or conclude on it and, accordingly, express no form of assurance on it.

The contents of this report were discussed with officials of the City of Reading and, where appropriate, their responses have been included in the report. We would like to thank city officials for the cooperation extended to us during the conduct of the audit.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy L. DeFoor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line extending from the left side of the first name.

Timothy L. DeFoor
Auditor General
March 28, 2025

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BACKGROUND

On December 18, 1984, the Pennsylvania Legislature adopted the Municipal Pension Plan Funding Standard and Recovery Act (P.L. 1005, No. 205, as amended, 53 P.S. § 895.101 et seq.). The Act established mandatory actuarial reporting and funding requirements and a uniform basis for the distribution of state aid to Pennsylvania's public pension plans.

Annual state aid allocations are provided from a two percent foreign (out-of-state) casualty insurance premium tax, a portion of the foreign (out-of-state) fire insurance tax designated for paid firefighters and any investment income earned on the collection of these taxes. Generally, municipal pension plans established prior to December 18, 1984, are eligible for state aid. For municipal pension plans established after that date, the sponsoring municipality must fund the plan for three plan years before it becomes eligible for state aid. In accordance with Act 205, a municipality's annual state aid allocation cannot exceed its actual pension costs.

In addition to Act 205, the City of Reading Officers and Employees Pension Plan is also governed by implementing regulations published at Title 16, Part IV of the Pennsylvania Code and applicable provisions of various other state statutes including, but not limited to, the following:

Act 362 - The Third Class City Code, Act of May 23, 1945 (P.L. 903, No. 362),
Article XLIII-A, Optional Retirement System for Officers and Employees,
as amended, 53 P.S. § 42001 et seq.

The City of Reading Officers and Employees Pension Plan is a single-employer defined benefit pension plan locally controlled by the provisions of Article No. 181 of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Reading, as amended, adopted pursuant to Act 362. The plan is also affected by the provisions of collective bargaining agreements between the city and its non-uniformed employees. The plan was established October 9, 1946. Active members are required to contribute 3 percent of compensation to the plan. As of December 31, 2023, the plan had 202 active members, 34 terminated members eligible for vested benefits in the future, and 268 retirees receiving pension benefits from the plan.

CITY OF READING OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES PENSION PLAN
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDINGS

Compliance With Prior Recommendations

The City of Reading has complied with the prior recommendation concerning the following:

- Incorrect Data On Certification Form AG 385 Resulting In An Overpayment Of State Aid

In March 2023, the city reimbursed \$15,230 to the Commonwealth for the overpayments of state aid received in 2021 and 2022.

- Failure To Implement Mandatory Provisions Of Act 205

In January 2025, the city established procedures that adhere to the professional services contract provisions of Act 205.

CITY OF READING OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES PENSION PLAN
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
(UNAUDITED)

SCHEDULE OF FUNDING PROGRESS

Historical trend information about the plan is presented herewith as supplementary information. It is intended to help users assess the plan's funding status on a going-concern basis, assess progress made in accumulating assets to pay benefits when due, and make comparisons with other state and local government retirement systems.

The actuarial information is required by Act 205 biennially. The historical information, beginning as of January 1, 2019, is as follows:

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Actuarial Valuation Date	Actuarial Value of Assets (a)	Actuarial Accrued Liability (AAL) - Entry Age (b)	Unfunded (Assets in Excess of) Actuarial Accrued Liability (b) - (a)	Funded Ratio (a)/(b)
01-01-19	\$ 60,608,302	\$76,301,546	\$ 15,693,244	79.4%
01-01-21	67,677,814	78,988,308	11,310,494	85.7%
01-01-23	75,697,365	81,511,865	5,814,500	92.9%

Note: The market values of the plan's assets at 01-01-19, 01-01-21, and 01-01-23 have been adjusted to reflect the smoothing of gains and/or losses over a 4-year averaging period, which will be limited to a maximum of 120 percent and minimum of 80 percent of the fair market value of the assets. This method will lower contributions in years of less than expected returns and increase contributions in years of greater than expected returns. The net effect over long periods of time is to have less variance in contribution levels from year to year.

CITY OF READING OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES PENSION PLAN
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
(UNAUDITED)

The comparability of trend information is affected by changes in actuarial assumptions, benefit provisions, actuarial funding methods, accounting policies, and other changes. Those changes usually affect trends in contribution requirements and in ratios that use the actuarial accrued liability as a factor.

Analysis of the dollar amount of the actuarial value of assets, actuarial accrued liability, and unfunded (assets in excess of) actuarial accrued liability in isolation can be misleading. Expressing the actuarial value of assets as a percentage of the actuarial accrued liability (Column 4) provides one indication of the plan's funding status on a going-concern basis. Analysis of this percentage, over time, indicates whether the system is becoming financially stronger or weaker. Generally, the greater this percentage, the stronger the plan.

CITY OF READING OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES PENSION PLAN
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
(UNAUDITED)

SCHEDULE OF CONTRIBUTIONS

<u>Year Ended December 31</u>	<u>Actuarially Determined Contribution</u>	<u>Actual Contributions</u>	<u>Contribution Deficiency (Excess)</u>	<u>Covered- Employee Payroll</u>	<u>Contributions as a Percentage of Covered- Employee Payroll</u>
2014	\$ 2,769,963	\$ 2,780,193	\$ (10,230)	\$14,233,277	19.53%
2015	3,173,811	3,179,616	(5,805)	14,403,603	22.08%
2016	3,005,282	3,005,282	-	14,240,701	21.10%
2017	3,033,047	3,135,808	(102,761)	13,832,568	22.67%
2018	3,532,555	3,532,555	-	13,931,821	25.36%
2019	3,446,705	3,476,030	(29,325)	12,522,275	27.76%
2020	3,500,466	3,500,466	-	13,284,117	26.35%
2021	3,353,417	3,353,417	-	13,318,635	25.18%
2022	3,364,313	3,364,313	-	12,586,805	26.73%
2023	3,262,068	3,262,068	-	12,173,544	26.80%

CITY OF READING OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES PENSION PLAN
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
NOTES TO SUPPLEMENTARY SCHEDULES
(UNAUDITED)

The information presented in the supplementary schedules was determined as part of the actuarial valuation at the date indicated. Additional information as of the latest actuarial valuation date follows:

Actuarial valuation date	January 1, 2023
Actuarial cost method	Entry age normal
Amortization method	Level dollar
Remaining amortization period	4 years
Asset valuation method	4-year smoothing – the actuarial value of assets will be limited to a maximum of 120% and a minimum of 80% of the fair market value of assets.
Actuarial assumptions:	
Investment rate of return	7.25%
Projected salary increases	4.75%
Cost-of-living adjustments	None assumed

CITY OF READING OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES PENSION PLAN
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Joshua D. Shapiro
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

The Honorable Eddie Moran
Mayor

Ms. Donna Reed
City Council President

Mr. Jack Gombach
Managing Director

Mr. Jamar L. Kelly
Director of Finance

Ms. Maria M. Rodriguez
City Auditor

Mr. Michael Oppenheimer
Controller

Ms. Deborah Twigg
Human Resource Director

Ms. Lilliana Castillo
Pension Coordinator

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at www.PaAuditor.gov. Media questions about the report can be directed to the Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General, Office of Communications, 229 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120; via email to: news@PaAuditor.gov.