



## ELIZABETH TOWNSHIP LAWRENCE COUNTY

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## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

Elizabeth Township Lawrence County 47119 State Route 93 Ironton, Ohio 45638

To the Board of Trustees:

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

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

We have audited the financial statements of the Elizabeth Township, Lawrence County, Ohio (the Township), which comprises the cash balances, receipts and disbursements for each governmental fund type combined total as of and for the years ended December 31, 2023 and 2022, 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 combined total as of and for the years ended December 31, 2023 and 2022, and the related notes to the financial statements, in accordance with the financial reporting provisions which Ohio Revised Code Section 117.38 and Ohio Administrative Code Section 117-2-03(C) permit, described in Note 2.

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

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

Elizabeth Township Lawrence County Independent Auditor's Report Page 3

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 7, 2024, on our consideration of the Township's internal control over financial reporting and our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts and grant agreements and other matters. The purpose of that report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the Township's internal control over financial reporting or on compliance. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with Government Auditing Standards in considering the Township's internal control over financial reporting and compliance.

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Keith Faber Auditor of State Columbus, Ohio August 7, 2024

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# **Elizabeth Township**

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

	General	Special Revenue	Totals (Memorandum Only)
Cash Receipts			
Property and Other Local Taxes	\$33,760	\$48,469	\$82,229
Intergovernmental	22,932	188,149	211,081
Earnings on Investments	10	45	55
Miscellaneous	5,555		5,555
Total Cash Receipts	62,257	236,663	298,920
Cash Disbursements			
Current:			
General Government	70,775	86,005	156,780
Public Safety		74,122	74,122
Public Works	1,730	72,096	73,826
Other		751	751
Debt Service:			
Principal Retirement		16,468	16,468
Interest and Fiscal Charges		1,275	1,275
Total Cash Disbursements	72,505	250,717	323,222
Excess of Receipts Over (Under) Disbursements	(10,248)	(14,054)	(24,302)
Fund Cash Balances, January 1	13,238	251,237	264,475
Fund Cash Balances, December 31	\$2,990	\$237,183	\$240,173

See accompanying notes to the basic financial statements

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## Note 1 – Reporting Entity

The constitution and laws of the State of Ohio establish the rights and privileges of the Elizabeth Township, Lawrence County, (the Township) as a body corporate and politic. A publicly elected three-member Board of Trustees directs the Township. The Township provides road and bridge maintenance and cemetery maintenance. The Township contracts with the Aid Volunteer Fire Department to provide fire services.

## Public Entity Risk Pool

The Township participates in a public entity risk pool. This organization is the Ohio Township Association Risk Management Authority (OTARMA). This is a risk sharing pool available to all townships for property and casualty insurance coverage. Note 6 to the financial statements provides additional information for this entity.

The Township's management believes these financial statements present all activities for which the Township is financially accountable.

## Note 2 – Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

## **Basis of Presentation**

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

## Fund Accounting

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

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

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

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

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

*Fire Fund* The fire district fund receives property tax monies and homestead and rollback monies restricted for fire protection within the Township.

*American Rescue Plan Act Fund* The American Rescue Plan Act fund is restricted by governmental guidelines to assist the Township through a pandemic.

## **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**

Ohio Revised Code requires that each fund be budgeted annually.

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

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

*Encumbrances* The Ohio Revised Code requires the Township to reserve (encumber) appropriations when individual commitments are made. Encumbrances outstanding at year end are carried over and need not be reappropriated.

A summary of 2023 budgetary activity appears in Note 3.

## Deposits

The Township maintains its deposit pool in an interest-bearing checking account with a local commercial bank.

## 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.

## 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 11.

## Note 3 – Budgetary Activity

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

2023 Budgeted vs. Actual Receipts				
Budgeted Actual				
Fund Type	Receipts	Receipts	Variance	
General	\$259,000	\$62,257	(\$196,743)	
Special Revenue	259,746	236,663	(23,083)	
Total	\$518,746	\$298,920	(\$219,826)	

# **Elizabeth Township**

## Lawrence County Notes to the Financial Statements For the Year Ended December 31, 2023

2023 Budgeted vs. Actual Budgetary Basis Expenditures					
	Appropriation Budgetary				
Fund Type	Authority	Expenditures	Variance		
General	\$250,704	\$72,505	\$178,199		
Special Revenue	444,790	250,717	194,073		
Total	\$695,494	\$323,222	\$372,272		

## Note 4 – Deposits

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

	2023
Demand deposits	\$240,173

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 \$21,848 in unremitted employee 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. If the property owner elects to pay semiannually, the first half is due December 31. The second half payment is due the following June 20.

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

## Note 6 – Risk Management

## **Risk Pool Membership**

Risk Pool Membership

# **Elizabeth Township**

Lawrence County Notes to the Financial Statements For the Year Ended December 31, 2023

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 policy. The Pool covers the following risks:

- General liability and casualty
- Public official's liability
- Cyber
- Law enforcement liability
- Automobile liability
- Vehicles
- Property
- Equipment breakdown

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

	2023
Cash and investments	\$ 33,494,457
Actuarial liabilities	\$ 10,885,549

## Note 7 – Defined Benefit Pension Plans

## **Ohio Public Employees Retirement System**

All 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.

## Note 8 – Postemployment Benefits

OPERS offers a cost-sharing, multiple-employer defined benefit postemployment plan. OPERS offers a health reimbursement arrangement (HRA) allowance to benefit recipients meeting certain age and service credit requirements. The HRA is an account funded by OPERS that provides tax-free reimbursement for qualified medical expenses such as monthly post-tax insurance premiums, deductibles, co-insurance, and co-pays incurred by eligible benefit recipients and their dependents.

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:

	Principal	Interest Rate
Backhoe Loan	\$17,093	3.80%
Total	\$17,093	

In 2019, the Township financed the purchase of a Case 580SN Loader Backhoe for township road maintenance.

#### Amortization

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

Year Ending	
December 31:	Backhoe Loan
2024	\$17,743
Total	\$17,743

## Note 10 – Contingent Liabilities

#### Grants

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.

#### Litigation

The Township is not currently party to legal proceedings.

#### Note 11 – Fund Balances

Included in fund balance are amounts the Township cannot spend, including the balance of unclaimed monies, which cannot be spent for five years and the unexpendable corpus of the permanent funds. 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	0	0	0
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0

The fund balance of special revenue funds is either restricted or committed. The fund balance of debt service funds and capital projects funds are restricted, committed, or assigned. The fund balance of

# **Elizabeth Township**

Lawrence County Notes to the Financial Statements For the Year Ended December 31, 2023

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

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# **Elizabeth Township**

Lawrence County, Ohio Combined Statement of Receipts, Disbursements and Changes in Fund Balances (Regulatory Cash Basis) All Governmental Fund Types For the Year Ended December 31, 2022

	General	Special Revenue	Capital Projects	Totals (Memorandum Only)
Cash Receipts				
Property and Other Local Taxes	\$29,980	\$46,970		\$76,950
Intergovernmental	25,012	286,918	53,036	364,966
Earnings on Investments	13	39		52
Total Cash Receipts	55,005	333,927	53,036	441,968
Cash Disbursements				
Current:				
General Government	34,201	128,273		162,474
Public Safety		57,624		57,624
Public Works		9,203		9,203
Other		10,008		10,008
Capital Outlay	20,000	35,867	53,036	108,903
Debt Service:				
Principal Retirement		15,865		15,865
Interest and Fiscal Charges	·	1,878		1,878
Total Cash Disbursements	54,201	258,718	53,036	365,955
Excess of Receipts Over (Under) Disbursements	804	75,209	0	76,013
Fund Cash Balances, January 1	12,434	176,028	0	188,462
Fund Cash Balances, December 31	\$13,238	\$251,237	\$0	\$264,475

See accompanying notes to the basic financial statements

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## Note 1 – Reporting Entity

The constitution and laws of the State of Ohio establish the rights and privileges of the Elizabeth Township, Lawrence County, (the Township) as a body corporate and politic. A publicly elected three-member Board of Trustees directs the Township. The Township provides road and bridge maintenance and cemetery maintenance. The Township contracts with the Aid Volunteer Fire Department to provide fire services.

#### Public Entity Risk Pool

The Township participates in a public entity risk pool. This organization is the Ohio Township Association Risk Management Authority (OTARMA). This is a risk sharing pool available to all townships for property and casualty insurance coverage. Note 7 to the financial statements provides additional information for this entity.

The Township's management believes these financial statements present all activities for which the Township is financially accountable.

## Note 2 – Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

#### **Basis of Presentation**

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

## Fund Accounting

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

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

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

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

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

*Fire Fund* The fire district fund receives property tax monies and homestead and rollback monies restricted for fire protection within the Township.

*American Rescue Plan Act Fund* The American Rescue Plan Act fund is restricted by governmental guidelines to assist the Township through a pandemic.

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

*Ohio Public Works Commission Fund* – The Township received a grant from the state for capital improvements. The proceeds are restricted for capital improvement.

## **Basis of Accounting**

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

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

## **Budgetary Process**

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

*Appropriations* Budgetary expenditures (that is, disbursements and encumbrances) may not exceed appropriations at the fund, function or object level of control, and appropriations may not exceed estimated resources. The Board of Trustees must annually approve appropriation measures and subsequent amendments. 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 2022 budgetary activity appears in Note 4.

## Deposits

The Township maintains its deposit pool in an interest-bearing checking account with a local commercial bank.

## 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.

## 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.

## Note 3 – Compliance

Contrary to Ohio law, budgetary expenditures exceeded appropriation authority in the following funds for the year ended December 31, 2022:

# **Elizabeth Township**

Lawrence County Notes to the Financial Statements For the Year Ended December 31, 2022

Fund	Appropriations	Budgetary Basis Expenditures	Variance
General Fund	\$0	\$82,996	(\$82,996)
Gasoline Tax	\$0	\$87,662	(\$87,662)
Road & Bridge	\$0	\$499	(\$499)
Fire Fund	\$0	\$54,082	(\$54,082)
American Rescue Plan Act Fund	\$0	\$118,206	(\$118,206)

Also, contrary to Ohio law, the Board of Township Trustees did not properly approve an appropriation measure for funds in 2022.

## Note 4 – Budgetary Activity

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

2022 Budgeted vs. Actual Receipts					
	Budgeted Actual				
Fund Type	Receipts	Receipts	Variance		
General	\$257,799	\$55,005	(\$202,794)		
Special Revenue	205,023	333,927	128,904		
Capital Projects	0	53,036	53,036		
Total	\$462,822	\$441,968	(\$20,854)		

2022 Budgeted vs. Actual Budgetary Basis Expenditures			
	Appropriation Budgetary		
Fund Type	Authority	Expenditures	Variance
General	\$0	\$82,996	(\$82,996)
Special Revenue	0	260,449	(260,449)
Capital Projects	53,036	53,036	0
Total	\$53,036	\$396,481	(\$343,445)

#### Note 5 – Deposits

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

2022

## Demand deposits

\$264,475

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, 2022, the Township is holding \$13,689 in unremitted employee payroll withholdings.

## Deposits

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

## **Note 6 – Property Taxes**

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

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

## Note 7 – Risk Management

## 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 and casualty
- Public official's liability
- Cyber
- Law enforcement liability
- Automobile liability
- Vehicles
- Property
- Equipment breakdown

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

2022 Cash and investments \$32,288,098 Actuarial liabilities \$9,146,434

## Note 8 – Defined Benefit Pension Plans

## **Ohio Public Employees Retirement System**

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

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

## Note 9 – Postemployment Benefits

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

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

## Note 10 – Debt

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

	Principal	Interest Rate
Backhoe Loan	\$33,561	3.80%
Total	\$33,561	

In 2019, the Township financed the purchase of a Case 580SN Loader Backhoe for township road maintenance.

## Amortization

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

# **Elizabeth Township**

Lawrence County Notes to the Financial Statements For the Year Ended December 31, 2022

Backhoe Loan
\$17,743
17,743
\$35,486

## Note 11 – Contingent Liabilities

## Grants

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.

## Litigation

The Township is not currently party to legal proceedings.

## Note 12 – Fund Balances

Included in fund balance are amounts the Township cannot spend, including the balance of unclaimed monies, which cannot be spent for five years and the unexpendable corpus of the permanent funds. 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	28,795	1,731		30,526
Total	\$28,795	\$1,731	\$0	\$30,526

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

## Note 13 – COVID-19

The United States and the State of Ohio declared a state of emergency in March of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ohio's state of emergency ended in June, 2021 while the national state of emergency continues. During 2022, the Township received \$113,637 in COVID-19 funding. The financial impact of COVID-19 and the continuing emergency measures will impact subsequent periods of the Township. The impact on the Township's future operating costs, revenues, and additional recovery from funding, either federal or state, cannot be estimated. This page left intentionally blank.



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

Elizabeth Township Lawrence County 47119 State Route 93 Ironton, Ohio 45638

To the Board of Trustees:

We have audited, in accordance with the auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States (*Government Auditing Standards*), the financial statements of the cash balances, receipts, and disbursements for each governmental fund type combined total as of and for the years ended December 31, 2023 and 2022 and the related notes to the financial statements of the Elizabeth Township, Lawrence County, Ohio (the Township) and have issued our report thereon dated August 7, 2024, 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 2023-001 through 2023-003 that we consider to be material weaknesses.

Elizabeth Township Lawrence 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 2023-003 through 2023-006.

#### Township's Response 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 schedule of findings. 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.

Keith Faber Auditor of State Columbus, Ohio August 7, 2024

#### ELIZABETH TOWNSHIP LAWRENCE COUNTY

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

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

#### FINDING NUMBER 2023-001

#### Material Weakness

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.

Due to deficiencies in internal control related to financial reporting, the Township misclassified and misposted various receipts and disbursements in the annual financial report submitted to the Auditor of State for fiscal years 2023 and 2022 as follows:

December 31, 2023 Financial Statements:

• \$6,422 of General Fund Intergovernmental receipts were overstated due to Homestead and Rollback being posted 100% to General Fund, instead of being allocated out to the other required funds. This caused Road & Bridge Fund Intergovernmental Receipts to be understated by \$2,261 and Fire Fund Intergovernmental Receipts to be understated by \$4,161. (also see Finding Number 2023-005)

December 31, 2022 Financial Statements:

- \$6,166 of General Fund Intergovernmental receipts were overstated due to Homestead and Rollback being posted 100% to General Fund, instead of being allocated out to the other required funds. This caused Road & Bridge Fund Intergovernmental Receipts to be understated by \$1,960 and Fire Fund Intergovernmental Receipts to be understated by \$4,206. (also see Finding Number 2023-005)
- General Fund disbursements of \$20,000 were classified as General Government disbursements instead of Capital Outlay disbursements.
- Gasoline Tax Fund disbursements of \$29,850 were classified as Public Works disbursements instead of Capital Outlay disbursements.
- \$53,036 of on behalf of payments from Ohio Public Works Commission was not posted to the accounting system.

There were also immaterial adjustments that are not listed or included in the Township's Financial Statements noted. The Township has adjusted the financial statements and accounting system, where appropriate, to correct the errors noted above. Failure to correctly classify transactions could result in errors in the financial statements presented to the Board and posted in the Hinkle system.

To ensure the Township's financial statements and notes to the financial statements are complete and accurate, the Township should adopt policies and procedures, including a final review of the statements and footnotes by the Township Fiscal Officer and Board of Trustees to identify and correct errors and omissions.

#### Officials' Response:

We will strive to correct this in the future.

Elizabeth Township Lawrence County Schedule of Findings Page 2

#### FINDING NUMBER 2023-002

#### Material Weakness

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.

Sound accounting practices require accurately posting estimated receipts and appropriations to the ledgers to provide information for budget versus actual comparison and to allow the Board of Trustees to make informed decisions regarding budgetary matters.

The Appropriation resolution and subsequent amendments establish the legal spending authority of the Township and the appropriation ledger provides the process by which the Township controls spending, it is therefore necessary the amounts appropriated by the Board of Trustees are precisely stated and accurately posted to the appropriation ledger.

The original certificate and amendments establish the amounts available for expenditures for the Township and the receipts ledger provides the process by which the Township controls what is available, it is therefore necessary the amounts estimated by the County Budget Commission are posted accurately to the receipts ledger.

The Township did not have procedures in place to accurately post authorized budgetary measures to the accounting system. The Board of Trustees did not approve any 2022 appropriations and no amendments for 2023; however, there were appropriations and amendments posted to the accounting system.

Variances between the Approved Appropriations and amounts recorded in the Uniform Accounting Network (UAN) system at December 31, 2023 were as follows:

Fund	Approved Appropriations	Appropriations in UAN System	Difference
General Fund (#1000)	\$250,704	\$245,704	\$5,000

Variances between the Approved Appropriations and amounts recorded in the UAN system at December 31, 2022 were as follows:

Fund	Approved Appropriations	Appropriations in UAN System	Difference
General Fund (#1000)	\$0	\$257,672	(\$257,672)
Motor Vehicle License Fund (#2011)	\$0	\$25,000	(\$25,000)
Gasoline Tax Fund (#2021)	\$0	\$147,615	(\$147,615)
Road & Bridge Fund (#2031)	\$0	14,900	(\$14,900)
Fire Fund (#2111)	\$0	\$54,334	(\$54,334)
American Rescue Plan Act Fund (#2272)	\$0	\$111,013	(\$111,013)
Misc. Special Revenue Fund (#2902)	\$0	\$20,300	(\$20,300)

Additionally, we noted the following regarding estimated receipts posted to the accounting system:

#### FINDING NUMBER 2023-002 (Continued)

Variances between estimated receipt amounts from the Amended Certificate of Estimated Resources and amounts recorded in the UAN system at December 31, 2023 were as follows:

Fund:	Estimated Receipts from Amended Certificate of Estimated Resources	Estimated Receipts in UAN System	Difference
Road & Bridge Fund (#2031)	\$14,746	\$12,500	\$2,246

Variances between estimated receipt amounts from the Amended Certificate of Estimated Resources and amounts recorded in the UAN system at December 31, 2022 were as follows:

Fund:	Estimated Resources from Amended Certificate of Estimated Resources	Estimated Receipts in UAN System	Difference
Fire Fund (#2111)	\$33,134	\$82,710	(\$49,576)
American Rescue Plan Act (#2272)	\$0	\$113,638	(\$113,638)

Failure to accurately post the appropriations and estimated resources to the ledgers could result in overspending and negative cash balances. In addition, this could lead to inaccurate reporting of the budgetary information in the footnotes.

To effectively control the budgetary cycle and to maintain accountability over receipts and expenditures, the Township should post to the ledgers, on a timely basis, estimated resources as certified by the budget commission and only appropriations approved by the Board of Trustees. The Township should then monitor budget versus actual reports to help ensure amended certificates of resources and appropriations have been properly posted to the ledgers.

#### Officials' Response:

We will strive to correct this in the future.

#### FINDING NUMBER 2023-003

#### Material Weakness and Noncompliance

**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.

**Ohio Rev. Code § 5705.38(C)** requires appropriation measures to be classified so as to set forth separately the amounts appropriated for each office, department, and division, and, within each, the amount appropriated for personal services.

For 2022, the Board of Trustees did not approve a permanent annual appropriation measure and file it with the County as required. In addition to this, for 2022, original and supplemental appropriations were entered into the Township's accounting system; however, they were not approved by the Board of Trustees.

The failure to approve appropriations may result in spending greater than available resources and could lead to deficit fund balances.

Elizabeth Township Lawrence County Schedule of Findings Page 4

#### FINDING NUMBER 2023-003 (Continued)

The Board of Trustees should approve permanent appropriations on or about January 1 of each fiscal year at the required legal level of control. If temporary appropriations are approved, we recommend the Board of Trustees approve the permanent appropriations by April 1. Approval of appropriations and supplemental appropriation measures should be recorded in the Township's minute record. Further, once approved, all appropriation and supplemental appropriation measures should be promptly entered into the Township's accounting system and reconciled to the approved measures to ensure accuracy of input. A copy should also be filed with the County Auditor's office.

#### Officials' Response:

We will strive to correct this in the future.

#### FINDING NUMBER 2023-004

#### Noncompliance

**Ohio Rev. Code § 5705.41(B)** prohibits a subdivision or taxing authority unit from making any expenditure of money unless it has been appropriated in accordance with the Ohio Revised Code.

Due to the Township's failure to approve an appropriation measure for 2022, the Township had expenditures in excess of appropriations at December 31, 2022 as follows:

Fund	Appropriations	Budgetary Basis Expenditures	Variance
General	\$0	\$82,996	(\$82,996)
Gasoline Tax	\$0	\$87,662	(\$87,662)
Road & Bridge	\$0	\$499	(\$499)
Fire Fund	\$0	\$54,082	(\$54,082)
American Rescue Plan Act	\$0	\$118,206	(\$118,206)

Failure to have adequate appropriations in place at the time expenditures are made could cause expenditures to exceed available resources, further resulting in deficit spending practices.

The Board of Trustees should closely monitor expenditures and appropriations and make the necessary appropriation amendments, if possible, to reduce the likelihood of expenditures exceeding appropriations. Additionally, the Township Fiscal Officer should deny payment requests exceeding appropriations when appropriations are inadequate to cover the expenditures.

#### Officials' Response:

We will strive to correct this in the future.

#### FINDING NUMBER 2023-005

#### Noncompliance

**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.

Elizabeth Township Lawrence County Schedule of Findings Page 5

#### FINDING NUMBER 2023-005 (Continued)

The Township inappropriately recorded \$2,261 of the Road & Bridge Fund and \$4,161 of the Fire Fund Intergovernmental Revenues in the General Fund in 2023 and \$2,043 of the Road & Bridge Fund and \$4,384 of the Fire Fund Intergovernmental Revenue in the General Fund in 2022. Audit adjustments are reflected in the financial statements and in the accounting records correcting the misstatement.

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.

#### Officials' Response:

We will strive to correct this in the future.

#### FINDING NUMBER 2023-006

#### Noncompliance

**26 U.S.C. § 3102** provides that Medicare taxes should be deducted from employees' compensation for all employees hired after March 31, 1986. Furthermore, employers are liable for reporting and remitting these taxes.

**26 U.S.C. § 3402(a)(1)** states in general, except as otherwise provided in this section, every employer making payment of wages shall deduct and withhold upon such wages a tax determined in accordance with tables or computational procedures prescribed by the Secretary.

**26 U.S.C. § 3403** states that the employer shall be liable for the payment of the tax required to be deducted and withheld under this chapter and shall not be liable to any person for the amount of any such payment. The Township did not remit federal income and Medicare taxes for any Township employees' withholdings or the required employer portion during the audit period. In 2023, this equaled a total of \$8,159 and for year 2022 a total of \$5,187.

The Township Fiscal Officer posted payments in UAN for the 2021 and 2020 remittances; however, the actual monies were never paid over to the Internal Revenue Service. Thus, The Township did not remit federal income and Medicare taxes also for years 2021 and 2020 in the amounts of \$4,663 and \$3,839.

The Township should withhold federal income and Medicare from all applicable officials and employees' compensation and remit payments to the Internal Revenue Service in a timely manner.

This matter will be referred to the Internal Revenue Service.

#### Officials' Response:

We will strive to correct this in the future.

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## ELIZABETH TOWNSHIP LAWERNCE COUNTY

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

Finding Number	Finding Summary	Status	Additional Information
2021-001	Material Weakness – Bank Reconciliation	Partially Corrected.	Reissued in Management Letter.
2021-002	Material Weakness - Sound Financial Reporting	Not Corrected.	Reissued as Finding 2023-001.
2021-003	Material Weakness – Budgetary Information	Not corrected.	Reissued as Finding 2023-002.
2021-004	Noncompliance Citation and Material Weakness – Ohio Rev. Code § 5705.36(A)(1), Certificate of Estimated Resources	Corrected.	
2021-005	Noncompliance Citation and Material Weakness – Ohio Rev. Code § 5705.38(A), Appropriation Measure	Not Corrected.	Reissued as Finding 2023-003.
2021-006	Noncompliance Citation and Material Weakness – Ohio Rev. Code § 5705.41(B), Expenditures exceeded appropriations	Not Corrected.	Reissued as Finding 2023-004.
2021-007	Noncompliance Citation – Ohio Rev. Code § 5705.41(D)(1), Encumbrances	Partially Corrected.	Reissued in Management Letter.
2021-008	Finding for Recovery- Repaid under Audit	Corrected.	



## **ELIZABETH TOWNSHIP**

## LAWRENCE COUNTY

## AUDITOR OF STATE OF OHIO CERTIFICATION

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



Certified for Release 8/22/2024

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