



OHIO AUDITOR OF STATE
KEITH FABER



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BASIC AUDIT REPORT

Sharon Township Joint Economic Development District
Franklin County
Worthington, Ohio 43085

We have completed certain procedures in accordance with Ohio Rev. Code Section 117.01(G) to the accounting records and related documents of the Sharon Township Joint Economic Development District, Franklin County, (the District) for the years ended December 31, 2023 and 2022.

Our procedures were designed solely to satisfy the audit requirements of Ohio Rev. Code Section 117.11(A). Because our procedures were not designed to opine on the District's financial statements, we did not follow *generally accepted auditing standards*. We do not provide any assurance on the District's financial statements, transactions or balances for the years ended December 31, 2023 and 2022.

The District's management is responsible for preparing and maintaining its accounting records and related documents. Our responsibility under Ohio Rev. Code Section 117.11(A) is to examine, analyze and inspect these records and documents.

Based on the results of our procedures, we found the following significant compliance or accounting issues to report.

Current Year Observations

1. The reconciliation of cash (bank) balances to accounting system records (book) is the most basic and primary control process performed. Lack of completing an accurate and timely reconciliation may allow for accounting errors, theft and fraud to occur without timely detection.

For the year ending December 31, 2023, the District's bank to book reconciliation had a variance of \$47 for a collection fee reported on the reconciliation but not reflected within the internal accounting ledgers or financial statements. After factoring this error into the financial statements, the District's book balance agreed to the District's bank balance. We also noted the District did not prepare a formal, independent bank to book reconciliation for September 30, 2024.

The Fiscal Officer should ensure bank to book reconciliations are performed each month, reconciling items are clearly documented, and any variance are timely investigated and corrected.

2. **Ohio Rev. Code § 117.38** states that public offices reporting on a cash basis must file annual reports with the Auditor of State's HINKLE system within 60 days of the close of the fiscal year end. We noted the District's financial report for the years ending December 31, 2023 and 2022 were not filed on the Hinkle System until May 29, 2024 and May 30, 2023, respectively. The deadline for the Authority to file their annual financial report was on February 29, 2024 and March 1, 2023, respectively.
3. **Ohio Rev. Code § 149.43(E)(2)** provides that every public office must have a policy in place for responding to public records requests. Generally, a public records policy cannot: (1) limit the number of public records the office will make available to a single person; (2) limit the number of public records the office will make available during a fixed period of time; and (3) establish a fixed period of time before the office will respond to a request for inspection/copying of public records unless that period is less than eight hours. However, pursuant to **Ohio Rev. Code § 149.43(B)(7)(c)(i)**, the policy may limit the number of public records the public office will physically deliver by U.S. Mail or other delivery service to ten per month unless the person certifies to the office in writing that the person does not intend to use or forward the requested records, or the information contained in them, for commercial purposes. Regarding this, the term "commercial" is to be narrowly construed and does not include reporting or gathering news, reporting or gathering information to assist citizen oversight or understanding of the operation or activities of government, or nonprofit educational research.

Ohio Rev. Code § 149.43(E)(2) further requires all public offices take certain actions with regard to their public record policy. Public offices must distribute their public records policy to the employee who is the records custodian or records manager or otherwise has custody of the records of that office and have that employee acknowledge receipt of the copy of the public records policy. The statute also prescribes that a public office must also create and post in a conspicuous place in all locations where the public office has branch offices a poster describing the public records policy. Further, a public office that has established a manual or handbook of its general policies and procedures for all employees of the public office shall include the public records policy of the public office in the manual or handbook.

The District did not formally adopt a public records policy. The District should adopt a public records policy and take the other required steps regarding their public records policy as prescribed by **Ohio Rev. Code § 149.43(E)(2)**.

4. **Ohio Rev. Code § 149.43(B)(2)** Requires a public office or the person responsible for public records shall organize and maintain public records in a manner that they can be available for inspection or copying. A public office also shall have available a copy of its current records retention schedule at a location readily available to the public. The District does not have a records retention schedule as required by **Ohio Rev. Code § 149.43(B)(2)**. Failure to maintain a records retention schedule could result in records being destroyed that are not permitted, or being destroyed before they are permitted.
5. **Ohio Rev. Code § 121.22(F)** requires every public body to, by rule, establish a reasonable method whereby any person may determine the time and place of all regularly scheduled meetings and the time, place, and purpose of all special meetings. A public body shall not hold a special meeting unless it gives at least twenty-four hours advance notice to the news media that have requested notification, except in the event of an emergency requiring immediate official action. In the event of an emergency, the member or members calling the meeting shall immediately notify the news media that have requested notification.

The District did not establish a reasonable method whereby any person may determine the time and place of all regularly scheduled meetings. Policies and Procedures should be established and implemented to verify that all Board meetings are held in accordance with the Ohio Sunshine Laws.

6. **Ohio Rev. Code § 121.22(C)** states the minutes of a regular or special meeting of any public body shall be promptly prepared, filed, and maintained and shall be open to public inspection. The minutes need only reflect the general subject matter of discussions in executive sessions authorized under division (G) or (I) of this section. Contrary to the requirements described in **Ohio Rev. Code § 121.22(C)**, the District failed to maintain minutes of its regular or special meetings.



Keith Faber
Auditor of State
Columbus, Ohio

November 5, 2024

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OHIO AUDITOR OF STATE KEITH FABER



SHARON TOWNSHIP JOINT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

FRANKLIN 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 11/19/2024

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This report is a matter of public record and is available online at
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