

November 13, 2023

To the City Council and Management
City of Grosse Pointe Woods, Michigan

We have audited the financial statements of the City of Grosse Pointe Woods, Michigan (the "City") as of and for the year ended June 30, 2023 and have issued our report thereon dated November 13, 2023. Professional standards require that we provide you with the following information related to our audit, which is divided into the following sections:

Section I - Required Communications with Those Charged with Governance

Section II - Legislative and Informational Items

Section I includes information that we are required to communicate to those individuals charged with governance of the City. Section I also communicates significant matters related to the audit that are, in our professional judgment, relevant to your responsibilities in overseeing the financial reporting process.

Section II presents recommendations related to internal control, procedures, and other matters noted during our current year audit. These comments are offered in the interest of helping the City in its efforts toward continuous improvement, not just in the areas of internal control and accounting procedures, but also in operational or administrative efficiency and effectiveness.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the City's staff for the cooperation and courtesy extended to us during our audit. Their assistance and professionalism are invaluable.

This report is intended solely for the use of the City Council and management of the City and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

We welcome any questions you may have regarding the following communications, and we would be willing to discuss these or any other questions that you might have at your convenience.

Very truly yours,

Plante & Moran, PLLC



William E. Brickey
Partner



Joshua L. Yde
Principal

Section I - Required Communications with Those Charged with Governance

Our Responsibility Under U.S. Generally Accepted Auditing Standards

As stated in our engagement letter dated July 10, 2023, our responsibility, as described by professional standards, is to express an opinion about whether the financial statements prepared by management with your oversight are fairly presented, in all material respects, in conformity with U.S. generally accepted accounting principles. Our audit of the financial statements does not relieve you or management of your responsibilities. Our responsibility is to plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable, but not absolute, assurance that the financial statements are free of material misstatement.

As part of our audit, we considered the internal control of the City. Such considerations were solely for the purpose of determining our audit procedures and not to provide any assurance concerning such internal control.

We are responsible for communicating significant matters related to the audit that are, in our professional judgment, relevant to your responsibilities in overseeing the financial reporting process. However, we are not required to design procedures specifically to identify such matters.

Planned Scope and Timing of the Audit

We performed the audit according to the planned scope and timing previously communicated to you in our meeting about planning matters on August 31, 2023.

Significant Audit Findings

Qualitative Aspects of Accounting Practices

Management is responsible for the selection and use of appropriate accounting policies. In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter, we will advise management about the appropriateness of accounting policies and their application. The significant accounting policies used by the City are described in Note 1 to the financial statements.

No new accounting policies were adopted, and the application of existing policies was not changed during the year ended June 30, 2023.

We noted no transactions entered into by the City during the year for which there is a lack of authoritative guidance or consensus.

There are no significant transactions that have been recognized in the financial statements in a different period than when the transaction occurred.

Accounting estimates are an integral part of the financial statements prepared by management and are based on management's knowledge and experience about past and current events and assumptions about future events. Certain accounting estimates are particularly sensitive because of their significance to the financial statements and because of the possibility that future events affecting them may differ significantly from those expected.

The most sensitive estimates affecting the financial statements include the liabilities and expense associated with pension and OPEB, the liability associated with estimated property tax refunds, and incurred but not reported liabilities related to self-insurance.

Management's estimates of the pension and OPEB liability and expense are based on discount rates, rate of return, and other assumptions, which are used by an actuary to calculate the net pension liability and net OPEB liability. While the actuary uses assumptions to calculate the net pension and OPEB liabilities, it is management's responsibility to assess whether the assumptions made are reasonable.

Section I - Required Communications with Those Charged with Governance (Continued)

In the current year, pension valuations were prepared in accordance with GASB 67/68. The total pension liability of the main plan decreased by \$4,787,400, a 6.9 percent decrease, and the supplemental annuity plan total liability increased by \$128,349, a 3.3 percent increase. The City modified the amortization period, but still plans to end with open amortization period, which means that the City's actuarially determined contributions may not be sufficient to close the gap between the plan net position and the total pension liabilities. The change includes reducing the period from a 25-year open amortization period to a 20-year amortization period, which will then phase into a 15-year open amortization period.

Management's estimate of property tax refunds is calculated by known contested taxable values and the City's assessor's and lawyer's estimates, which are based on historical data.

At year end, due to the timing of the billing cycles for water and sewer, it is necessary to record an estimate for the amount unbilled to customers. Management estimated this amount based on billing registers and the timing of bills and recorded this amount as a receivable in the Water and Sewer Fund.

The estimates of the incurred but not reported amounts related to the City's self-insured workers' compensation and health insurance obligations are disclosed in Note 16 to the financial statements. Management's estimate of the various incurred but not reported amounts is based on historical information regarding claims.

We evaluated the key assumptions used to calculate these estimates in determining that they are reasonable in relation to the financial statements taken as a whole.

The disclosures in the financial statements are neutral, consistent, and clear.

Difficulties Encountered in Performing the Audit

We encountered no significant difficulties in performing and completing our audit.

Disagreements with Management

For the purpose of this letter, professional standards define a disagreement with management as a financial accounting, reporting, or auditing matter, whether or not resolved to our satisfaction, that could be significant to the financial statements or the auditor's report.

We are pleased to report that no such disagreements arose during the course of our audit.

Corrected and Uncorrected Misstatements

Professional standards require us to accumulate all known and likely misstatements identified during the audit, other than those that are trivial, and communicate them to the appropriate level of management. We did not detect any misstatements as a result of audit procedures.

Significant Findings or Issues

We generally discuss a variety of matters, including the application of accounting principles and auditing standards, business conditions affecting the City, and business plans and strategies that may affect the risks of material misstatement, with management each year prior to our retention as the City's auditors. However, these discussions occurred in the normal course of our professional relationship, and our responses were not a condition of our retention.

Management Representations

We have requested certain representations from management that are included in the management representation letter dated November 13, 2023.

**Section I - Required Communications with Those Charged with Governance
(Continued)**

Management Consultations with Other Independent Accountants

In some cases, management may decide to consult with other accountants about auditing and accounting matters, similar to obtaining a second opinion on certain situations. If a consultation involves application of an accounting principle to the City's financial statements or a determination of the type of auditor's opinion that may be expressed on those statements, our professional standards require the consulting accountant to check with us to determine that the consultant has all the relevant facts.

To our knowledge, there were no such consultations with other accountants.

Other Information Included in Annual Reports

Our responsibility for other information included in annual reports does not extend beyond the financial statements, and we do not express an opinion or any form of assurance on the other information. However, we read the introductory section and statistical section, and nothing came to our attention that caused us to believe that such information, or its manner of presentation, is materially misstated or materially inconsistent with the information or manner of its presentation appearing in the financial statements.

Section II - Legislative and Informational Items

COVID-19 Resource Center and ARPA

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Plante & Moran, PLLC's COVID-19 task force of leaders across the firm has monitored, addressed, and provided insight related to the virus and the unique challenges our local governments have faced while continuing to provide essential services to their communities through our ARPA and COVID-19 resource center for governments. Following is a link to various ARPA-related articles that we believe will be of interest to you: <https://www.plantemoran.com/explore-our-thinking/search?skip=10&keyword=arpa&type=all&professional=all&practice=all&industry=85a5df97-9c41-4000-86d3-db25835731a6&areaOfFocus=all&daterange=all&sortBy=DateDesc>.

In March 2021, the president signed the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) into law, which included federal stimulus funding for state and local governments of all sizes. The largest of all funding streams, the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF), represents a \$350 billion top-line allocation for state and local governments. Funding was provided in two tranches beginning in May 2021, with the second tranche not being released until 12 months after the first payment. Effective April 1, 2022, the U.S. Department of the Treasury published the final rule for determining the types of programs and services that are eligible uses of the SLFRF funding. Overall information about the program, including a frequently asked questions document and an overview of the final rule, is available on the U.S. Department of the Treasury's website at <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/coronavirus/assistance-for-state-local-and-tribal-governments>.

The ARPA award terms provide that payments from the Fiscal Recovery Funds as a general matter will be subject to the provision of Title 2 U.S. Code of Federal Regulations Part 200, *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards* (the "Uniform Guidance"), including the cost principles and restrictions on general provisions for selected items of cost. The City will need to understand these reforms and may be required to evaluate, document, and monitor internal procedures around compliance, including maintaining certain required policies.

Plante & Moran, PLLC's COVID-19 resource center is being continuously updated for the latest guidance and strategy related to SLFRF and will help keep the City running smoothly through our nation's recovery.

Want to receive relevant content directly to your email? Subscribe at <https://www.plantemoran.com/subscribe> where you can customize your subscription preferences based on your specific interests and industry selection.

Michigan's COVID-19 Updates and Related Grant Programs

The Michigan Department of Treasury has developed a webpage with numbered letters, memorandums, webinars, and resources regarding COVID-19 updates and related grant programs: https://www.michigan.gov/treasury/0,4679,7-121-1751_98769---.00.html.

Monitoring Lease/SBITA Activity

GASB Statement No. 87, *Leases*, was effective in fiscal year 2022. Additionally, GASB Statement No. 96, *Subscription-Based Information Technology Arrangements*, became effective in fiscal year 2023. Although significant analyses were performed to determine the applicability of the new standards and record any necessary adjustments, we want to stress the importance of implementing ongoing monitoring procedures over lease activity and IT arrangements. When the City enters into new leases, existing leases are modified, or other facts and circumstances change, consideration must be given to the impact those changes will have on lease accounting. In order to do so, the City must ensure there is a process in place to identify and appropriately account for new leases or changes to existing leases on an ongoing basis or at least at the end of each year.

**Section II - Legislative and Informational Items
(Continued)**

Cybersecurity and Information Technology Controls

Cyberattacks are on the rise across the globe, and the cost of these attacks is ever increasing. Because of these attacks, municipalities stand to lose their reputation, the ability to operate efficiently, and proprietary information or assets. Communities potentially can also be subject to financial and legal liabilities. Managing this issue is especially challenging because even a municipality with a highly mature cybersecurity risk management program still has a residual risk that a material cybersecurity breach could occur and not be detected in a timely manner. We understand that the technology department continues to monitor and evaluate this risk, which are critical best practices. Additionally, periodic assessments of the system in order to verify that the control environment is working as intended are key parts of measuring associated business risk. We encourage administration and those charged with governance to work with the technology team on this very important topic. If we can be of assistance in the process, we would be happy to do so.

Revenue Sharing

The fiscal year 2023 governor's budget recommendation includes \$1.5 billion for revenue sharing. Further details of the breakdown of this amount are available at https://www.michigan.gov/treasury/0,,7-121-1751_2197---,00.html.

Inflation Rate Multiplier for 2023

In January 2023, the Michigan State Tax Commission issued Bulletin 17 of 2022 regarding the inflation rate multiplier for use in the 2023 capped value formula and the Headlee millage reduction fraction formula. The inflation rate for property taxes as defined in Michigan Compiled Law (MCL) 211.34d has increased beyond the historical 5 percent cap to 7.9 percent for 2023. As a result, the inflation rate multiplier of 1.079 must be used in the calculation of the 2023 Headlee millage reduction fraction required by Michigan Compiled Law (MCL) 211.34d. As the inflation rate multiplier of 1.079 is higher than 1.05, the inflation rate multiplier to be used in the 2023 capped value formula is 1.05.

Legacy Costs

Legacy costs and the challenge of funding them continue to be topics of discussion. GASB pronouncements of late have placed even more focus on the net long-term liability arising from these benefit promises by requiring governmental financial statements to reflect the net pension and OPEB liabilities. For many governments, these net liabilities are significant. In addition, Public Act 202 of 2017 has brought further focus on the funding level of these plans.

The following are the funding levels per the financial statements the last three years for both pension (both general and supplemental annuity) and OPEB:

	Pension	OPEB
2022	62.41% - 64.66%	7.27%
2021	54.85% - 59.68%	5.89%
2020	65.03% - 67.84%	4.21%

Maintaining or even improving the funded status of the plan(s) is dependent upon a number of factors, including the government's contribution policies, its amortization policy for funding the unfunded actuarial accrued liability, its benefit levels, and the ability to make future changes to the plan. That said, the challenge here is significant. We are happy to assist you in thinking through alternative ways to manage this liability. Furthermore, as noted above, the City still plans to end with open amortization period, which means that the City's actuarially determined contributions may not be sufficient to close the gap between the plan net position and the total pension liabilities.

Section II - Legislative and Informational Items (Continued)

Upcoming Accounting Standards Requiring Preparation

We actively monitor new Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) standards and due process documents and provide periodic updates to help you understand how the latest financial reporting developments will impact the City. In addition to the summaries below and to stay up to date, Plante & Moran, PLLC issues a biannual GASB accounting standard update. The most recent fall 2023 update and a link to previous fall and spring updates are available [here](#).

GASB Statement No. 100 - Accounting Changes and Error Corrections

This new accounting pronouncement will be effective for fiscal years ending June 30, 2024 and after. This statement enhances the accounting and financial reporting requirements for accounting changes and error corrections.

GASB Statement No. 101 - Compensated Absences

This new accounting pronouncement will be effective for fiscal years ending December 31, 2024 and after. This statement updates the recognition and measurement guidance for compensated absences under a unified model, requiring that liabilities for compensated absences be recognized for leave that has not been used and leave that has been used but not yet paid in cash or settled through noncash means. This statement also establishes guidance for measuring a liability for leave that has not been used and updates disclosure requirements for compensated absences.

Significant GASB Proposals Worth Watching

The GASB is working on two comprehensive projects that result in changes to financial reporting for state and local governments.

The Financial Reporting Model exposure draft was issued in June 2020, and the final statement is expected to be released in mid-2024. This standard proposes changes to many aspects of the City's financial statements, including the management's discussion and analysis (MD&A), proprietary fund financial statements, and budgetary comparisons. In August 2023, the GASB removed issues related to reporting of governmental funds from the scope of this project.

The Revenue and Expense Recognition project aims to develop a comprehensive accounting and financial reporting model for transactions that result in revenue and expenses. The GASB has issued a preliminary views document that proposes a new categorization framework that replaces the exchange/nonexchange transaction notion with a four-step categorization process for classifying a transaction. In addition to this new framework, the proposal also addresses recognition and measurement of revenue and expense transactions. The exposure draft for this project is expected sometime in 2025.

Plante & Moran, PLLC has spent significant time digesting these new proposed standards and recently testified to the GASB about our feedback. We strongly encourage the City to monitor developments with these standards, as the potential impacts are quite broad.