

\$ 21,320<sup>00</sup>

# OHIO AUDITOR OF STATE KEITH FABER

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800-282-0370

February 10, 2025

Cheryl Benedict, Finance Director

City of Willowick  
Lake County  
30435 Lakeshore Boulevard  
Willowick, Ohio 44095

This engagement letter describes the arrangement between the City of Willowick (the City) and the Auditor of State including the objective and scope of the services we will provide, the City's required involvement and assistance in support of our services, the related fee arrangements, and other terms and conditions designed to ensure that our professional services satisfy the City's audit requirements.

### SUMMARY OF SERVICES

We are pleased to confirm our acceptance and our understanding of this audit engagement by means of this letter.

We will audit the City's basic financial statements as of and for the year ended December 31, 2024 to express our opinion concerning whether the basic financial statements and related disclosures present fairly, in all material respects, the City's financial position, changes in financial position, required budgetary comparisons and cash flows (where applicable), in conformity with U.S. generally accepted accounting principles.

The objectives of our audit are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements for each opinion unit and related disclosures are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. 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 auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (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. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

We will apply certain limited procedures to required supplementary information. However, we will not opine or provide any assurance on this information because the limited procedures do not provide us with sufficient evidence to express an opinion or provide any other assurance.

We expect to deliver our report on or about August 29, 2025.

Additional Auditor Communication

As part of this engagement the Auditor of State will communicate certain additional matters (if applicable) to the appropriate members of management and to those charged with governance. These matters include:

1. Misstatements for correction, whether corrected or uncorrected
  - a. We will present those charged with governance our Summary of Identified Misstatements (if any) at the conclusion of our audit;
2. Instances where we believe fraud may exist. These would include instances where we:
  - a. Have persuasive evidence that fraud occurred.
  - b. Determined fraud risks exist and were unable to obtain convincing evidence to determine that fraud was unlikely;
3. Noncompliance that comes to our attention. However, our audit provides no assurance that noncompliance generally will be detected and only reasonable assurance that we will detect noncompliance directly and materially affecting the determination of financial statement amounts;
4. Significant risks identified during the audit;
5. Any disagreements with management, whether or not satisfactorily resolved, about matters that individually or in the aggregate could be significant to the financial statements or our opinion;
6. Our views about matters that were the subject of management's consultation with other accountants about auditing and accounting matters;
7. Significant, unusual transactions;
8. Major issues that were discussed with management related to retaining our services, including, among other matters, any discussions regarding the application of accounting principles and auditing standards;
9. Significant difficulties we encountered during the audit, including significant delays by management, the unavailability of City personnel, or an unwillingness by management to provide information necessary to perform our procedures; and
10. Matters that are difficult or contentious for which we consulted outside the engagement team and that are, in our professional judgment, significant and relevant to those charged with governance regarding their responsibility to oversee the financial reporting process.

We will also communicate pertinent information, as necessary in our professional judgment, to those that have ongoing oversight responsibilities for the audited entity, including contracting parties or legislative committees, if any.

Our evaluation of internal control may provide evidence of waste or abuse. Because the determination of waste and abuse is subjective, we are not required to perform specific procedures to detect waste or abuse. If we detect waste or abuse, we will determine whether and how to communicate such matters.

If for any reason we are unable to complete the audit or are unable to form an opinion, we may disclaim an opinion on your financial statements. In this unlikely event, we will communicate the reason for disclaiming an opinion to you, and to those charged with governance, in writing.

Compliance with Laws and Regulations

Management and those charged with governance are responsible for:

1. Being knowledgeable of, implementing systems designed to achieve compliance with, and complying with, laws, regulations, contracts, and grants applicable to the City.
2. Identifying for us other financial audits, attestation engagements, performance audits, internal audits, reports from regulators or other studies related to the City (if any), and the corrective actions taken to address these audits' significant findings and recommendations.
3. Tracking the status of prior audit findings.
4. Taking timely and appropriate steps to remedy fraud, noncompliance, violations of provisions of laws, regulations, contracts or grant agreements, waste or abuse we may report.
5. Providing your views and planned corrective action on audit findings we may report.

Internal Control

Management and those charged with governance are responsible for designing, implementing and maintaining internal control relevant to compliance and the preparing and fairly presenting financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. Appropriate supervisory reviews are necessary to reasonably assure that adopted policies and prescribed procedures are followed.

Service Organizations

Service organizations are other governmental entities, organizations, or companies that provide services to you, as the user City, relevant to your internal controls over financial reporting. Service organizations process transactions reflected in your City's financial statements, and therefore fall within the scope of our audit. While service organizations are responsible for establishing and maintaining their internal control, you are responsible for being aware of the service organizations your City uses, and for establishing controls to monitor the service organization's performance. Because the complexity of service organization transaction processing can vary considerably, your monitoring activities can vary accordingly.

When transaction processing is complex and the volume of transactions is relatively high, obtaining and reviewing a service organization auditor's *Independent Service Auditor's Report on Management's Description of a Service Organization's System and the Suitability of the Design and Operating Effectiveness of Controls Report* (Type 2 Service Organization Control Report (SOC 1)) may be the most effective method of meeting your responsibility to monitor a service organization, and may also be the only efficient means by which we can obtain sufficient evidence regarding their internal controls. AT-C Section 320, *Reporting on an Examination of Controls at a Service Organization Relevant to User Entities' Internal Control Over Financial Reporting* discusses the aforementioned report. (In some circumstances, we can accept a suitably designed agreed-upon procedures report (AUP) in lieu of a SOC 1 report.)

***You are responsible for informing our staff of the service organizations your City uses, and for monitoring these service organizations' performance.***

Service organizations of which we are aware are:

- Lake County, which bills and collects your City's property taxes and waste water fees.
- Regional Income Tax Agency (RITA), which collects your City's income taxes.
- Life Force Management, which processes your City's ambulance billings.

Please confirm to us that, to the best of your knowledge, the above listing is complete.

Of the service organizations above, those for which we believe the complexity of processing and volume of transactions warrant a SOC 1 (or AUP) report are:

- Regional Income Tax Agency (RITA), which collects your City's income tax
- Life Force Management, which processes your City's ambulance billings

### Your Management Responsibilities

The City will provide in a timely manner all financial records and related information to us, an initial list of which has been furnished to you, including timely communication of all significant accounting and financial reporting matters, as well as working space and clerical assistance as mutually agreed upon and as is normal and reasonable in the circumstances. When and if for any reason the City is unable to provide these schedules, information and assistance, the Auditor of State and the City will mutually revise the fee to reflect additional services, if any, we require to achieve these objectives. These revisions will be set forth in the form of the attached *Amendment to Engagement Letter*.

### Confidential Information

You should make every attempt to minimize or eliminate the transmission of personal information to the Auditor of State (AOS). All documents you provide to the AOS in connection with our services including financial records and reports, payroll records, employee rosters, health and medical records, tax records, etc. should be redacted of any personal information. Personal information includes social security numbers, date of birth, drivers' license numbers or financial institution account numbers associated with an individual. The public office should redact all personal information from electronic records before they are transmitted to the AOS. This information should be fully blacked out in all paper documents prior to sending to the AOS. If personal information cannot be redacted from any records or documents; the public office must identify these records to the AOS.

If redacting this personal information compromises the audit or the ability to prepare financial statements, the public office and the AOS will consider these exceptions on a case-by-case basis. Additionally, if redacting this information creates a hardship on the public office in terms of resources, recordkeeping or other issues, the public office and the AOS may collaborate on alternative methods of providing the public office's data to the AOS without compromising the personal information of individuals served by the public office. The AOS is willing to work with the public office and it is our intent to greatly reduce the amount of personal information submitted to the AOS for audit or financial statement preparation purposes. It is important that the public office review internal policies to find ways to eliminate as much personal information from financial records as possible by substituting non-personal information (i.e., change social security numbers to employee identification numbers).

### **Fee**

Except for any changes in fees and expenses which may result from the circumstances described above, we expect our fees and expenses for our audit services will not exceed \$21,320.

Pursuant to Ohio Rev. Code § 117.13, you may charge all of this audit's cost to the general fund or you may allocate the cost among the general fund and other eligible funds. While eligible funds may include federal grant funds, additional restrictions under the Uniform Guidance 2 CFR 200.425 should be considered. For more information, refer to the annual *Hourly Audit Rates and Allocation of Audit Costs* technical bulletin available at [www.ohioauditor.gov](http://www.ohioauditor.gov).

### **eServices Portal and Billing**

The Auditor of State's billing statements are available through the office's eServices portal located at <https://eservices.ohioauditor.gov>. Clients are required to designate one, or more, authorized users who must complete the registration process to establish an eServices account. A confirmed account will have the ability to access and/or update information regarding their customer account, including entity contact information, billing and payments, and an electronic check option for online payments. Authorized users are encouraged to keep eServices contact information updated.

Auditor of State billing statements are prepared monthly and are sent to clients who have an outstanding balance through a paperless electronic billing system. Audit and Local Government Services are charged monthly, while clients using the Uniform Accounting Network are charged quarterly. The City will receive an email notification at the beginning of the month that a statement is available for review. Clients are to access their billing statement upon receipt through eServices, and payment is due by the date identified on the statement.

**PEER REVIEW REPORT**

As required by *Government Auditing Standards*, we have made our most recent external quality control review report (Peer Review) publicly available, at [https://ohioauditor.gov/publications/docs/Peer Opinion.pdf](https://ohioauditor.gov/publications/docs/Peer%20Opinion.pdf). Audit organizations can receive a rating of *pass*, *pass with deficiency(ies)*, or *fail*. The Auditor of State received a peer review rating of *pass*.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND AGREEMENT**

Please sign and return this letter to indicate your acknowledgement of, and agreement with, the arrangements for our audit of the financial statements including our respective responsibilities. If you have any questions, please call Andrea Cardina, Senior Audit Manager at (216) 353-3084.

Sincerely,

KEITH FABER  
Auditor of State

**William J.  
Ward**

Digitally signed by William J.  
Ward  
Date: 2025.02.10 14:41:41  
-05'00'

William Ward, CPA  
Assistant Chief Auditor, Northeast Region

Attachment

cc: City Council  
Mayor



ACKNOWLEDGED AND AGREED TO BY

Mayor / Safety Director  
TITLE

2/12/25  
DATE