

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' COMMUNICATION WITH THOSE CHARGED WITH GOVERNANCE

June 23, 2017

Board of Commissioners
County of Berrien, Michigan
St. Joseph, Michigan

We have audited the financial statements of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, the aggregate discretely presented component units, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of the *County of Berrien, Michigan* (the "County") as of and for the year ended December 31, 2016, and have issued our report thereon dated June 23, 2017. We did not audit the financial statements of the Berrien County Road Commission or the Berrien Mental Health Authority component units. Those financial statements were audited by other auditors whose report thereon has been furnished to us, and our opinion on the financial statements and this report, insofar as they relate the Berrien County Road Commission and the Berrien Mental Health Authority are based solely on the report of other auditors. Professional standards require that we advise you of the following matters relating to our audit.

Our Responsibility in Relation to the Financial Statement Audit

As communicated in our engagement letter dated January 13, 2017, our responsibility, as described by professional standards, is to form and express opinions about whether the financial statements that have been prepared by management with your oversight are fairly presented, in all material respects, in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. Our audit of the financial statements does not relieve you or management of your respective responsibilities.

Our responsibility, as prescribed by professional standards, is to plan and perform our audit to obtain reasonable, rather than absolute, assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit of financial statements includes consideration of internal control over financial reporting as a basis for designing audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control over financial reporting. Accordingly, as part of our audit, we considered the internal control of the County solely for the purpose of determining our audit procedures and not to provide any assurance concerning such internal control.

We are also 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 for the purpose of identifying other matters to communicate to you.

We have provided our findings regarding internal control over financial reporting and compliance noted during our audit in a separate letter to you dated June 23, 2017. In addition, we noted certain other matters which are included in Attachment A to this letter.

Planned Scope and Timing of the Audit

We performed the audit according to the planned scope and timing previously communicated to you in our engagement letter and in our meeting about planning matters on April 17, 2017.

Compliance with All Ethics Requirements Regarding Independence

The engagement team, others in our firm, as appropriate, and our firm has complied with all relevant ethical requirements regarding independence.

Qualitative Aspects of the County's Significant Accounting Practices

Significant Accounting Policies

Management has the responsibility to select and use appropriate accounting policies. A summary of the significant accounting policies adopted by the County is included in Note 1 to the financial statements.

There have been no initial selections of accounting policies and no changes in significant accounting policies or their application during the year.

No matters have come to our attention that would require us, under professional standards, to inform you about (1) the methods used to account for significant unusual transactions and (2) the effect of significant accounting policies in controversial or emerging areas for which there is a lack of authoritative guidance or consensus.

Significant Accounting Estimates

Accounting estimates are an integral part of the financial statements prepared by management and are based on management's current judgments. Those judgments are normally based on 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 markedly from management's current judgments.

The most sensitive accounting estimates affecting the financial statements were:

- Management's estimate of the useful lives of depreciable capital assets is based on the length of time it is believed that those assets will provide some economic benefit in the future.
- Management's estimate of the accrued compensated absences is based on current hourly rates and policies regarding payment of sick and vacation banks.
- Management's estimate of the allowance for uncollectible receivable balances is based on past experience and future expectation for collection of various account balances.
- Management's estimate of the insurance claims incurred but not reported is based on information provided by the entity's third party administrators and subsequent claims activity.
- The assumptions used in the actuarial valuations of the pension and other postemployment benefits plans are based on historical trends and industry standards.

We evaluated the key factors and assumptions used to develop these estimates and determined that they are reasonable in relation to the basic financial statements taken as a whole and in relation to the applicable opinion units.

Significant Difficulties Encountered During the Audit

We encountered no significant difficulties in dealing with management relating to the performance of the audit.

Uncorrected and Corrected Misstatements

For purposes of this communication, professional standards require us to accumulate all known and likely misstatements identified during the audit, other than those that we believe are trivial, and communicate them to the appropriate level of management. Further, professional standards require us to also communicate the effect of uncorrected misstatements related to prior periods on the relevant classes of transactions, account balances or disclosures, and the financial statements as a whole and each applicable opinion unit. In addition, professional standards require us to communicate to you all material, corrected misstatements that were brought to the attention of management as a result of our audit procedures. The material misstatements detected as a result of audit procedures and corrected by management are described in the Schedule of Findings and Questioned Costs issued in connection with the Single Audit.

The schedule of adjustments passed is included with management's written representations in Attachment C to this letter, and summarizes uncorrected financial statement misstatements whose effects in the current and prior periods, as determined by management, are immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the financial statements taken as a whole and each applicable opinion unit.

Disagreements with Management

For purposes of this letter, professional standards define a disagreement with management as a matter, whether or not resolved to our satisfaction, concerning a financial accounting, reporting, or auditing matter, which could be significant to the County's financial statements or the auditors' report. No such disagreements arose during the course of the audit.

Representations Requested from Management

We have requested certain written representations from management, which are included in Attachment C to this letter.

Management's Consultations with Other Accountants

In some cases, management may decide to consult with other accountants about auditing and accounting matters. Management informed us that, and to our knowledge, there were no consultations with other accountants regarding auditing and accounting matters.

Other Significant Matters, Findings, or Issues

In the normal course of our professional association with the County, we generally discuss a variety of matters, including the application of accounting principles and auditing standards, operating and regulatory conditions affecting the entity, and operational plans and strategies that may affect the risks of material misstatement. None of the matters discussed resulted in a condition to our retention as the County's auditors.

Other Information in Documents Containing Audited Financial Statements

Our responsibility for the supplementary information accompanying the financial statements, as described by professional standards, is to evaluate the presentation of the supplementary information in relation to the financial statements as a whole and to report on whether the supplementary information is fairly stated, in all material respects, in relation to the financial statements as a whole. We made certain inquiries of management and evaluated the form, content, and methods of preparing the information to determine that the information complies with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, the method of preparing it has not changed from the prior period, and the information is appropriate and complete in relation to our audit of the financial statements. We compared and reconciled the supplementary information to the underlying accounting records used to prepare the financial statements or to the financial statements themselves.

Upcoming Changes in Accounting Standards

Generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) are continually changing in order to promote the usability and enhance the applicability of information included in external financial reporting. While it would not be practical to include an in-depth discussion of every upcoming change in professional standards, Attachment B to this letter contains a brief overview of recent pronouncements of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) and their related effective dates. Management is responsible for reviewing these standards, determining their applicability, and implementing them in future accounting periods.

This information is intended solely for the use of the governing body and management of the *County of Berrien, Michigan* and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lehman Lobson LLC". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

COUNTY OF BERRIEN, MICHIGAN

Attachment A - Comments and Recommendations

For the December 31, 2016 Audit

During our audit, we became aware of certain other matters that are opportunities for strengthening internal control and/or improving operating efficiency. This memorandum summarizes our comments and recommendations regarding those matters. Our consideration of the County's internal control over financial reporting is described in our report, dated June 23, 2017, issued in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*. This memorandum does not affect that report or our report dated June 23, 2017, on the financial statements of Berrien County.

Special Assessments Receivable - Subsidiary Ledger (repeat comment)

During our review of the drain commission funds, we noted that special assessments receivable are recorded related to the debt that has been issued for each project (as expected); however, a detail of the receivable by parcel was not available. We recommend that the County maintain a detail of the special assessments by parcel and periodically reconcile that to the special assessments receivable on the general ledger.

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COUNTY OF BERRIEN, MICHIGAN

Attachment B - Upcoming Changes in Accounting Standards / Regulations

For the December 31, 2016 Audit

The following pronouncements of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) have been released recently and may be applicable to the County in the near future. We encourage management to review the following information and determine which standard(s) may be applicable to the County. For the complete text of these and other GASB standards, visit www.gasb.org and click on the "Standards & Guidance" tab. If you have questions regarding the applicability, timing, or implementation approach for any of these standards, please contact your audit team.

GASB 74 ■ Postemployment Benefit Plans Other than Pension Plans

Effective 06/15/2017 (your FY 2017)

This standard requires the calculation of a net other postemployment benefit (OPEB) liability based on an actuarial valuation of retiree healthcare and similar benefits administered by an OPEB trust. It mirrors the new accounting and financial reporting requirements of GASB 67 for pension plans.

GASB 75 ■ Postemployment Benefits Other than Pensions

Effective 06/15/2018 (your FY 2018)

This standard builds on the requirements of GASB 74 by requiring employers that provide other postemployment benefits (OPEB) to recognize a net OPEB liability on their statements of net position. It mirrors the new accounting and financial reporting requirements of GASB 68 for pension benefits.

GASB 80 ■ Blending Requirements for Certain Component Units

Effective 06/15/2017 (your FY 2017)

This standard is an amendment to GASB 14, The Financial Reporting Entity, and requires blending component units incorporated as not-for-profit corporations in which the government is the sole corporate member. We do not expect this standard to have any significant effect on the County.

GASB 81 ■ Irrevocable Split-Interest Agreements

Effective 12/15/2017 (your FY 2017)

This standard addresses the accounting for split-interest agreements for which the government serves as the intermediary and/or the beneficiary. It requires governments to record assets, liabilities, and deferred inflows of resources at the inception of the agreement when serving as intermediary, or when the government controls the present service capacity of a beneficial interest. We do not expect this standard to have any significant effect on the County.

GASB 82 ■ Pension Issues

Effective 06/15/2017 (your FY 2017)

This standard is an amendment to GASB 67/68 to clarify several issues related to pensions. We do not expect this standard to have any significant effect on the County.

COUNTY OF BERRIEN, MICHIGAN

Attachment B - Upcoming Changes in Accounting Standards / Regulations

For the December 31, 2016 Audit

GASB 83 ■ Certain Asset Retirement Obligations

Effective 06/15/2019 (your FY 2019)

This standard addresses accounting and financial reporting for certain asset retirement obligations--legally enforceable liabilities associated with the retirement of a tangible capital asset. We do not expect this standard to have any significant effect on the County.

GASB 84 ■ Fiduciary Activities

Effective 12/15/2019 (your FY 2019)

This standard establishes new criteria for determining how to report fiduciary activities in governmental financial statements. The focus is on whether the government is controlling the assets, and who the beneficiaries are. Under this revised standard, certain activities previously reported in agency funds may be reclassified in future periods. Due to the number of specific factors to consider, we will continue to assess the degree to which this standard may impact the County.

GASB 85 ■ Omnibus 2017

Effective 06/15/2018 (your FY 2018)

This standard includes a variety of small technical revisions to previously issued GASB statements. We do not expect this standard to have any significant effect on the County.

GASB 86 ■ Certain Debt Extinguishment Issues

Effective 06/15/2018 (your FY 2018)

This standard provides guidance for reporting the in-substance defeasance of outstanding debt obligations using existing resources. Qualifying transactions will remove both the assets placed into trust and the related debt obligation from the government's statement of net position. We do not expect this standard to have any significant effect on the County.



COUNTY OF BERRIEN, MICHIGAN

Attachment C - Management Representations

For the December 31, 2016 Audit

Following are the written representations that we requested from management.

COUNTY OF BERRIEN, MICHIGAN

Schedule of Adjustments Passed (SOAP)

For the December 31, 2016 Audit

In accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, we have prepared the following schedule of proposed audit adjustments, which we believe are immaterial both individually and in the aggregate. We are providing this schedule to both management and those charged with governance to receive their assurance that they agree that the amounts listed below are not material to the financial statements, either individually or in the aggregate, and do not need to be recorded.

	Effect of Passed Adjustment - Over(Under)Statement				
	Assets	Liabilities	Beginning Equity	Revenues	Expenses/ Expenditures
General fund					
Overaccrual of prior year wages expense	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (21,106)	\$ -	\$ (21,106)
911 county operational fund					
Underaccrual of prior year accounts payable	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 23,869	\$ -	\$ 23,869
Underaccrual of current year accounts payable	-	(30,241)	-	-	(30,241)
Total 911 county operational fund	\$ -	\$ (30,241)	\$ 23,869	\$ -	\$ (6,372)
Nonmajor governmental funds					
Unaccrued prior year wages	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 40,860	\$ -	\$ 40,860
Governmental activities					
Cumulative effect of items noted above	\$ -	\$ (30,241)	\$ 43,623	\$ -	\$ 13,382
Misstatement as a percentage of					
total assets - governmental activities	0.00%	-0.03%	0.04%	0.00%	0.01%