New York State Comptroller
THOMAS P. DiNAPOLI

Deansboro Fire District

Claims Auditing

July 2026 | 2026M-64

Prepared by the Division of Local Government and School Accountability

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Audit Results

Deansboro Fire District

Audit Objective

Did the Deansboro Fire District (District) Board of Fire Commissioners (Board) ensure claims were adequately supported, for proper District purposes and authorized before payment?

Audit Period

January 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026

Understanding the Audit Area

An effective audit of claims is often the last line of defense to prevent unauthorized, improper or fraudulent claims from being paid. A fire district with a strong claims auditing process ensures that a careful review of claims will occur before public funds are disbursed.

Because it is the Board's responsibility to ensure tax dollars are spent properly, efficiently and in the best interest of taxpayers, the Board should conduct a thorough and deliberate audit of claims before directing the Treasurer to issue payment.

From January 1, 2025 through March 31, 2026, the Treasurer paid 102 claims totaling $82,860.

Audit Summary

We reviewed 25 claims totaling $51,230. Except for minor discrepancies, which we discussed with District officials, the claims were adequately supported, for proper District purposes and authorized before payment.

There were no recommendations as a result of this audit. The results of our audit were discussed with District officials. District officials agreed with the results and their response is included in in Appendix B.

This audit was conducted pursuant to Article V, Section 1 of the State Constitution and the Office of the New York State Comptroller's (OSC's) authority as set forth in Article 3 of the New York State General Municipal Law. The audit's methodology and standards are included in Appendix C.

Claims Auditing: Finding

A board of fire commissioners should perform a thorough audit of every claim against the fire district before authorizing payment by ensuring, among other requirements, that claims are adequately supported (i.e., they include itemized invoices or receipts), are for valid and legal purposes and that the goods and services were received.

Typically, a board of fire commissioners will audit the claim packet, which includes a standard voucher form (as a cover sheet) and a combination of original invoices, receiving slips and other relevant documentation supporting the claim. Every claim should be properly itemized and provide all information, including supporting documentation, to permit a satisfactory audit by a person who is unfamiliar with the transaction.

More details on the criteria used in this report, as well as resources OSC makes available to local officials that can help them improve operations, are included in Appendix A.

Finding 1 – The Board ensured claims were adequately supported, for proper District purposes and authorized before payment.

We reviewed 25 claims totaling $51,230 and determined that except for minor discrepancies that we discussed with District officials, the claims were adequately supported, for proper District purposes and authorized before payment.

The Board established and generally adhered to adequate procedures for preparing and reviewing claims before payment, including:

- Each month the Treasurer prepared voucher packets with supporting documentation for each claim and a listing of all claims for the Board to audit (abstract).
- The Board reviewed the claims and supporting documentation. To certify their review and approval, all five Board members signed the abstract of audited claims. The Board's approval of claims was also documented in the Board's meeting minutes.
- The Treasurer prepared the checks and two Board members compared the checks with the approved abstract before they signed the checks. The Treasurer then mailed the check payments.

To provide additional oversight of disbursements, the Board reviews bank statements each month, monitoring for suspicious activities such as cash withdrawals or unapproved payments. One Board member also maintains a list of approved check payments and compares it to bank activity to ensure only Board-approved payments clear the bank.

Because our audit testing did not identify any significant deficiencies in the Board's claims auditing process, there were no recommendations as a result of this audit.

Appendix A: Profile, Criteria and Resources

Profile

The District provides fire protection services within its boundaries, which cover the Towns of Augusta, Kirkland and Marshall in Oneida County. The District is governed by the elected five-member Board, including the Chairman and four Commissioners. The Board is responsible for the overall financial management of the District and it meets monthly to conduct District business, such as auditing and approving claims.

The Board-appointed Treasurer is the District's chief fiscal officer and is responsible for preparing and recording the claims in the accounting system, providing the claims to the Board for audit and issuing payments.

The District's budgeted appropriations for the 2026 calendar year totaled approximately $80,000 and the budget was primarily funded by real property taxes.

Criteria

Generally, in accordance with New York State Town Law Section 176(4-a), a board of fire commissioners (board) must audit all claims against the fire district and order the payment of claims by resolution before the treasurer disburses payments. A board's audit responsibilities include determining, among other things, that each claim is:

- For a valid and legal purpose,
- Mathematically accurate,
- Sufficiently itemized,
- Exclusive of reimbursement for sales tax, and
- Supported by sufficient documentation, such as detailed receipts, invoices and receiving documentation.

Obtaining documentation regarding the board's authorization to pay claims is important. This documentation is generally available through preparation of an abstract, which is a listing of all claims audited and approved for payment. Once prepared and certified, the abstract of audited claims should be forwarded to the treasurer. The treasurer must pay only the claims authorized by the board.

Additional Resources

OSC's *Local Government Management Guides,* and other informational resources that are available on OSC's website to help officials understand and perform their responsibilities, include:

- *Improving the Effectiveness of Your Claims Auditing Process:* https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/local-government/publications/pdf/improving-the-effectiveness-of-claims-auditing-process.pdf
- *Fiscal Oversight Responsibilities of the Governing Board:* https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/local-government/publications/pdf/fiscal-oversight-responsibilities-of-the-governing-board.pdf

In addition, local officials can use OSC's website to search for audits, resources, publications and training for officials at: https://www.osc.ny.gov/local-government

Appendix B: Response From District Officials

The content below is a reproduced copy of the original response letter issued by District officials, is reformatted to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)*,[1] and may have included changes to spelling and grammar. The substance of the content was not changed.

DEANSBORO FIRE DISTRICT

To Whom It May Concern:

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the audit team for their thorough examination of the Deansboro Fire District.

We appreciate the professionalism demonstrated throughout the audit process, as well as the time taken to answer all of our questions and provide valuable guidance. Your recommendations have helped reinforce our understanding of our responsibilities and have given us greater confidence in our procedures.

We appreciate the audit findings and are pleased to know that we are carrying out our duties correctly and in accordance with established requirements. Thank you for your constructive feedback and for helping us continue to improve our operations.

Sincerely,

Kevin Lewis

Chairman

The Deansboro Fire District

[1] https://www.ada.gov/resources/2024-03-08-web-rule/#highlights-of-the-requirements-in-the-rule

Appendix C: Audit Methodology and Standards

OSC auditors obtained an understanding of internal controls that were deemed significant within the context of the audit objective and assessed those controls. Information related to the scope of the work on internal controls, as well as the work performed in the audit procedures to achieve the audit objective and obtain valid audit evidence, included the following:

- We interviewed the Treasurer, the Chairman, and one Commissioner and reviewed the Board's meeting minutes, resolutions and abstracts to gain an understanding of the District's policies and claims audit and approval procedures.
- The Treasurer paid 102 claims totaling $82,860 from January 1, 2025 through March 31, 2026. We selected the months of February 2025, September 2025 and March 2026 for review because these months had the highest claims activity. We reviewed all 25 claims paid during these months totaling $51,230 to determine whether claims were adequately supported, for proper District purposes and authorized before payment. The sample of claims tested was 62 percent of the total dollar amount of claims paid during our test period.

OSC auditors conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards (GAGAS). Those standards require that auditors plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for the findings and conclusions based on the audit objective. Auditors believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for the findings and conclusions based on the audit objective.

Unless otherwise indicated in this report, samples for testing were selected based on professional judgment, as it was not the intent to project the results onto the entire population. Where applicable, information is presented concerning the value and/or relevant population size and the sample selected for examination.

Questions?

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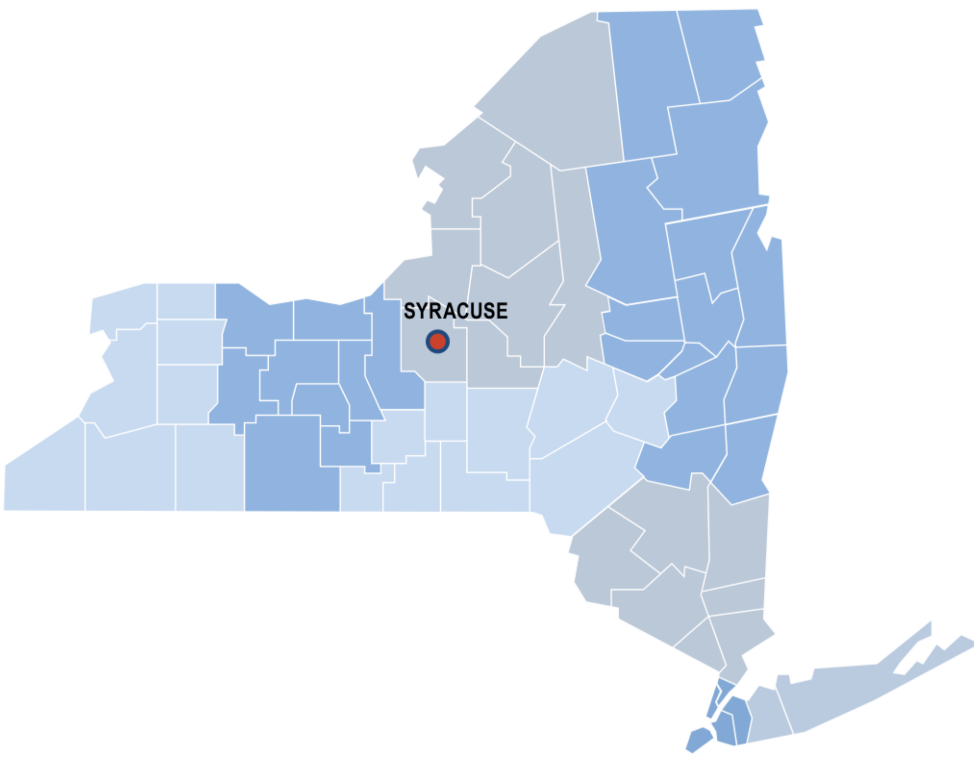

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