New York State Comptroller
THOMAS P. DiNAPOLI

Town of Williamstown

Supervisor's Records and Reports

September 2026 | 2026M-81
Prepared by the Division of Local Government and School Accountability

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Audit Results

Town of Williamstown

Audit Objective

Did the Town of Williamstown (Town) Supervisor (Supervisor) maintain accurate financial records, provide adequate reports to the Town Board (Board) and file the required Annual Financial Reports (AFRs) with the Office of the New York State Comptroller (OSC)?

Audit Period

January 1, 2025 – May 13, 2026

We extended the audit period to review the Town's 2023 through 2025 AFR filings as of June 29, 2026.

Understanding the Audit Area

The town supervisor is responsible for maintaining complete, accurate and up-to-date financial records, providing the town board with timely, accurate and comprehensive financial reports and filing the required AFR with OSC. These responsibilities provide the town board with reliable financial information needed to effectively oversee the town's financial operations, monitor its financial condition and make informed decisions. Timely filing of the AFR also promotes transparency, accountability and public trust by providing officials, taxpayers and other stakeholders with reliable financial information while ensuring compliance with statutory reporting requirements.

The Town's budgeted appropriations for the 2025 fiscal year from January 1 through December 31 totaled $1.4 million and was primarily funded by real property taxes, State aid, sales tax and reimbursements from Oswego County (County) for maintaining County roads (e.g., snow removal).

Audit Summary

The Supervisor did not maintain accurate accounting records, provide the Board with adequate monthly financial reports, and file the Town's AFRs as required. As a result, the Board's ability to properly and effectively monitor and manage the Town's financial operations and make informed decisions was limited, and the Town's financial standing at year-end was not transparent to the Board, Town residents, OSC and other interested parties. Specifically, the Supervisor did not:

- Ensure the accounting records accurately reflected all financial transactions and account balances. For example, payroll-related liabilities were overstated by $236,089 and revenues totaling $384,515 were misclassified or improperly recorded in the records.

- Provide the Board with monthly financial reports, such as budget-to-actual reports for revenues and expenditures, balance sheet reports, receipt and disbursement reports, and bank reconciliations and statements for the trust and agency fund. In addition, budget-to-actual reports would not have been reliable had they been given to the Board because certain revenues were misstated in the records and the 2025 adopted budget was not properly recorded in the records.

- Comply with New York State General Municipal Law (GML) Section 30, which requires the Supervisor to file the Town's AFR with OSC within 60 days following the end of the fiscal year. During the audit, the Supervisor filed the 2023 AFR on March 9, 2026, or 738 days late, and the 2024 and 2025 AFRs remained outstanding as of the end of the audit period.[1]

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1 OSC's website provides more information on AFR nonfilers and the Town's current AFR filing status at: https://web.osc.state.ny.us/localgov/afr-non-filers/.

The report includes nine recommendations that, if implemented, will improve the Town's accounting and financial reporting practices, enhance the reliability and transparency of financial information, ensure compliance with statutory reporting requirements and provide the Board with the information necessary to effectively oversee the Town's financial condition and operations. Town officials generally agreed with our recommendations and indicated they plan to initiate corrective action.

This audit was conducted pursuant to Article V, Section 1 of the State Constitution and OSC's authority as set forth in Article 3 of GML. The audit's methodology and standards are included in Appendix C.

The Board has the responsibility to initiate corrective action. A written corrective action plan (CAP) that addresses the findings and recommendations in this report should be prepared and provided to our office within 90 days, pursuant to Section 35 of GML. For more information on preparing and filing your CAP, please refer to our brochure, *Responding to an OSC Audit Report*, which you received with the draft audit report. We encourage the Board to make the CAP available for public review in the Town Clerk's office.

Supervisor’s Records and Reports: Findings and Recommendations

A town supervisor should maintain financial records that provide an accurate accounting of all financial transactions. If a town supervisor assigns any of these duties to another official or employee (e.g., a bookkeeper), the town supervisor should provide clear guidance on those duties and adequate oversight of their work because the town supervisor is still responsible for the completeness and accuracy of the financial records.

A town supervisor should also provide the town board with monthly financial reports and file the required AFR indicating its financial position and results of operations with OSC within 60 days after the town’s fiscal year end so the town board can effectively manage the town’s financial operations. 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 Supervisor did not maintain accurate accounting records.

Our review of the Supervisor’s accounting records for the 2025 fiscal year identified various recordkeeping errors. For example:

- Payroll-related liabilities (e.g., taxes and health insurance contributions) were overstated by $236,089. These liabilities were carried over from a prior fiscal year, and the balance remained consistent during the 2025 fiscal year. While these liabilities were paid as part of the regular payroll process, the Supervisor did not make the necessary entries in the financial records to reduce the recorded liability. As a result, amounts no longer payable or due for payroll related costs remained inaccurately recorded in the accounting records.

- A State aid payment totaling $155,693 for the Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) and associated programs was received in the highway fund bank account. However, the payment was recorded in the general fund State Aid revenue sharing account, which resulted in that revenue account being overstated and the CHIPS revenue account being understated. Therefore, revenues available to support highway operations were not accurately reflected in the highway records to offset highway expenditures.

- Payments received by the Town totaling $124,843 for CHIPS ($68,234) and reimbursements from the County for mowing and snow removal ($56,609) were recorded as unclassified revenues instead of their corresponding highway revenues, resulting in the corresponding revenue accounts being overstated and understated. As a result, the ability to compare these revenues to the same revenues received in prior years is reduced and limits the ability to monitor or budget these revenues when they are not properly classified.

- Accounts receivable and revenues were overstated by $84,272 for the sale of a gravel pit totaling $64,250 and County sales tax totaling $20,022. This occurred because the former bookkeeper initially recognized the revenue and recorded accounts receivable, but when the funds were later received, she recognized the revenues again instead of reducing the accounts receivable. Recording revenues twice inaccurately reports funds available for operations and not reducing the accounts receivable for the funds received misrepresents the amounts due and payable to the Town.

- A State Aid revenue sharing payment for the general fund totaling $10,007 was electronically deposited in the highway bank account and recorded in the highway fund. The funds were not transferred to the general fund account, which caused the cash and associated revenue balances to be overstated in the highway fund and understated in the general fund. As a result, these funds were not accurately recorded to represent funds available to the general fund.

- Insurance recovery revenues totaling $9,700 were misclassified as interest and penalties revenue. A misclassification limits the ability to monitor or budget these funds but also does not properly identify the funds received.

In addition, we reviewed all bank reconciliations as of December 31, 2025 and determined that the recorded cash balances generally reconciled with the adjusted bank balances. However, the Town's bookkeepers used incomplete accounting records to prepare the bank reconciliations and followed up with the Supervisor to obtain supporting documentation for transactions that were reflected on the bank statements but not recorded in the records. The records were incomplete because the Supervisor did not record deposits, payroll-related journal entries or electronic payments to vendors (e.g., for utilities, Internet and telephone) in the accounting records as they occurred. As a result, during the bank reconciliation process, the bookkeepers recorded the payroll-related journal entries and other unrecorded bank activity, such as deposits, transfers and electronic payments, to update the records to agree with the bank statements. When transactions are not recorded in a timely manner, there is an increased risk that errors could occur without detection. For example, the Town's process to update the records based on the bank statement activity would not detect a missing deposit or other bank error.

The incomplete records and recordkeeping errors occurred, in part, because the Supervisor did not establish any written procedures to clearly define how the recordkeeping responsibilities would be divided between the Supervisor and bookkeepers, and he did not establish an effective process to provide the bookkeepers with all the necessary information needed to update the records. In addition, the Supervisors did not provide adequate oversight and review of the records and reports to ensure that financial transactions were properly recorded.

When the Town's accounting records are not accurate, the Supervisor is unable to generate reliable reports for the Board to monitor financial operations. Also, when revenues are not recorded in the proper accounts, it makes it more difficult to develop realistic budget estimates for future years based on the actual historical results.

Starting in March 2026, the Supervisor began reviewing bank activity throughout the month, recording electronic vendor payments (e.g., utility, Internet and telephone payments) in the accounting records and providing supporting invoices to the bookkeeper. However, the Supervisor did not develop procedures to relay revenue collection and deposit documentation to the bookkeepers so they could properly record the transactions in the records when they occurred. As a result, the risk for errors in recording revenues continued.

Recommendations

The Supervisor should:

1. Ensure complete and accurate accounting records are maintained in a timely manner.

2. Provide the bookkeeper with the necessary documentation to update the accounting records and review the bookkeeper's work.

3. Establish written procedures defining the Supervisor's and bookkeeper's roles and responsibilities for maintaining and reconciling the accounting records.

4. Ensure the recordkeeping errors identified in this report are corrected.

The Supervisor and bookkeeper should:

5. Attend municipal accounting training available through OSC, which can be accessed on our website at: https://www.osc.ny.gov/local-government/academy/oscs-online-government-accounting-schools.

Finding 2 – The Supervisor did not provide the Board with adequate monthly financial reports.

While the Supervisor provided the Board with abstracts (a listing of claims for audit), supporting claim documentation (invoices and receipts), bank statements and bank reconciliations for the general and highway funds, the Supervisor did not provide other necessary financial reports to assist the Board with its oversight function. For example, the Supervisor did not provide the Board with:

- Budget-to-actual reports for revenues and expenditures,
- Balance sheet reports showing the assets, liabilities and fund balance for each fund,
- Supervisor's reports showing all money received and disbursed during the month, and
- Monthly bank reconciliations and bank statements for the trust and agency fund.

As a result, the Board lacked sufficient financial information to adequately oversee Town operations, monitor budget performance, and identify potential financial issues in a timely manner.

In addition, had the Supervisor provided the Board with budget-to-actual reports, they would not have been reliable because of the recording errors described in Finding 1 and additional errors the former bookkeeper made when recording the adopted budget in the accounting records. Specifically, estimated revenues recorded in the accounting records exceeded the adopted budget by $476,726, while certain budgeted appropriations recorded in the records were $116,520 less than reflected in the adopted budget (Figure 1).

Figure 1: 2025 Budget Items Not Properly Recorded in Town Records

Description	Adopted Budget	Recorded Budget	Difference
Estimated Revenues			
Real Property Taxes - Highway Fund	$390,298	$692,624	$302,326
Real Property Taxes - General Fund	278,837	463,244	184,407
Revenue Sharing - General Fund	10,007	-	-10,007
Total	**$679,142**	**$1,155,868**	**$476,726**
Appropriations[a]			
Snow Removal Equipment	$45,000	-	-$45,000
Serial Bond Principal	40,000	-	-40,000
Serial Bond Interest	31,320	-	-31,320
Preschool Personnel Services	23,000	23,400	400
Unemployment Insurance	1,800	-	-1,800
Traffic Control Contractual Expense	-	1,200	1,200
Total	**$141,120**	**$24,600**	**-$116,520**

a – The appropriation for snow removal equipment was included in the highway fund budget. All other appropriations were in the general fund budget.

The Supervisor and former bookkeeper told us the former Supervisor recorded the adopted budget entries into the accounting system before 2025. Because the former Supervisor had health issues, a Board member asked the former bookkeeper to input the 2025 budget into the records in April 2025. The former bookkeeper attempted the task, but the lack of training and limited experience contributed to the recording errors.

Monthly report preparation and reviewing the associated reports are necessary for maintaining financial stability and accountability. Without complete and accurate financial information, the Board and other Town officials may be unable to identify potential overspending, revenue shortfalls or unexpected expenditures that require remedial actions to avoid financial decline.

Recommendations

The Supervisor should:

6. Ensure monthly financial reports are prepared and provided to the Board, including:

    - Budget-to-actual reports,
    - Balance sheet reports,
    - Receipts and disbursements reports, and
    - Bank reconciliations for all funds.

7. Ensure the Board-adopted budget is accurately entered into the accounting records at the start of the fiscal year.

8. Review monthly budget status reports to monitor revenues and expenditures and identify variances requiring corrective action.

Finding 3 – The Supervisor did not file the required AFRs.

The Supervisor did not prepare and file the Town's AFRs, as required by GML Section 30. The AFR for the 2023 fiscal year was filed on March 9, 2026, or 738 days late. In addition, the AFRs for the 2024 and 2025 fiscal years were not filed as of June 29, 2026.[2] The Town hired an external accountant to assist with the preparation of the AFRs. However, the Supervisor and accountant told us that the preparation and filing process was delayed due to the former Supervisor's health issues and because some revenues were not properly recorded in the accounting records and they needed time to identify and correct any errors.[3] When AFRs are not filed, transparency is diminished and the Board, Town residents, taxpayers, OSC and other interested parties are denied the ability to assess the Town's financial standing.

Recommendation

9. The Supervisor should ensure that delinquent AFRs are filed with OSC and future AFRs are filed within 60 days of the close of the fiscal year, as required by GML Section 30.

2 See *supra*, note 1.
3 See Finding 1 for examples related to maintaining inaccurate accounting records.

Appendix A: Profile, Criteria and Resources

Profile

The Town is located in Oswego County and has a population of 1,335 residents. The Town is governed by the elected Board consisting of the Supervisor and four Board members. The Board is responsible for the general oversight of the Town's operations and finances.

The Town had two Supervisors during the audit period. The former Supervisor was in office through July 16, 2025. The Board then appointed the current Supervisor who was later elected to the position effective January 1, 2026. Two bookkeepers assisted the Supervisors with maintaining the accounting records. The former bookkeeper worked through her resignation on November 12, 2025, and the other bookkeeper subsequently assumed the position.

Criteria

A town supervisor, as chief fiscal officer, should maintain financial records that provide an accurate and up-to-date accounting of all financial transactions. If a town supervisor assigns any of these duties to another official or employee (e.g., a bookkeeper), the town supervisor should provide clear guidance on those duties and adequate oversight of their work because the town supervisor is still responsible for the completeness and accuracy of the financial records.

In addition, a town supervisor is responsible for providing accurate monthly financial reports to the town board so it can fulfill its responsibility to oversee and monitor financial operations. These reports should generally include, but not be limited to:

- A budget-to-actual report showing the year-to-date comparison of budgeted and actual revenues and expenditures for each fund,
- A balance sheet report showing the assets (e.g., cash), liabilities and fund balance for each fund,
- A town supervisor's report showing monthly receipts, disbursements and cash balances, and
- Bank reconciliations showing the comparison of adjusted bank balances to recorded cash.

A town supervisor is required by GML Section 30 to file an AFR with OSC within 60 days following the end of the fiscal year. The AFR provides a town board, town residents and taxpayers, OSC and other interested parties with a town's financial position at a point in time and a summary of the town's financial activities for the fiscal year.

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:

- *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

- *Accounting and Reporting Manual – Counties, Cities, Towns, Villages, Libraries, Soil and Water Conservation Districts*: https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/local-government/publications/pdf/arm.pdf

- *The Practice of Internal Controls*: https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/local-government/publications/pdf/the-practice-of-internal-controls.pdf

- *OSC's Online Government Accounting Schools*: https://www.osc.ny.gov/local-government/academy/oscs-online-government-accounting-schools

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 Town Officials

The content below is a reproduced copy of the original response letter issued by Town officials, is reformatted to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)*,[4] and may have included changes to spelling and grammar. The substance of the content was not changed.

Town of Williamstown
Williamstown, NY 13493

Robert Oakes, Supervisor, 79 Lakewood Road, Altmar, NY 13302
315-440-7541 (cell)
Faith Baker, Town Clerk, 79 Lakewood Road, Altmar NY, 13302
315-964-0203 (Office) (Fax) 315-964-2438

September 17, 2026
Town of Williamstown
2026M-81

To: Office of the State Comptroller,

The Town of Williamstown is in agreement with the findings of the audit.

Regarding complete and accurate records being done in a timely manner, as well as providing the bookkeeper with the necessary documentation to update records: Pete Solinsky, Deputy Supervisor, has taken on the role of budget officer, as well as doing the bookkeeper's duties.

The Supervisor works with the bookkeeper to have monthly financial reports presented at the monthly meetings; this includes budget-to-actual reports of revenues and expenditures, as well as bank reconciliations and bank statements for the General, Highway and Trust and Agency funds.

We have filed the 2023 AFR and are currently working on the 2024 AFR.

We will provide a better corrective action plan after the final report is released.

Sincerely,
Robert M. Oakes
Town of Williamstown Supervisor

4 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 Town officials and employees and reviewed various financial records, reports and Board meeting minutes to gain an understanding of the Supervisor's procedures for maintaining the accounting records and providing monthly financial reports to the Board.

- We reviewed the 2025 Board-adopted budget to determine whether it was properly recorded in the accounting system.

- We reviewed bank reconciliations for all Town funds as of December 31, 2025 to determine whether they were prepared accurately and in a timely manner and the adjusted bank balances agreed with the cash balances in the accounting records. We selected December 2025 because it was the last month of the fiscal year and the last completed month at the time of our testing.

- We used our professional judgment to select three months in 2025 (January, June and October) to review disbursements and transfers. We selected January because the former Supervisor was in office and receiving assistance from a former Board member and bookkeeper to process transactions. We selected June because the Deputy Supervisor (now the current Supervisor) was assisting with records and October because it was the last month before we notified the Town of the audit.

  - For October, we reviewed all disbursements and transfers on the bank statements.
  - For January and June, we selected higher-risk disbursements based on factors such as large vendor payments, payments for rounded dollar amounts, payments made to the Supervisor, and payments identified through auditor judgment (e.g., handwritten checks or checks written out of sequence).

  In total, we selected 74 disbursements totaling $141,806 and six transfers totaling $47,079 from the bank statements to determine whether they agreed with the accounting records and were properly supported, approved and for appropriate Town purposes. Except for minor discrepancies, which we discussed with officials, we determined disbursements and transfers were supported, approved and for appropriate Town purposes.

- We reviewed balance sheet and budget status reports that officials generated during the audit upon our request and followed up on various accounts to determine whether the account balances were accurate. We interviewed officials to obtain an understanding of the use of certain balance sheet accounts, including payroll liabilities, and we reviewed the general ledger and revenue accounts for questionable transactions, such as one-sided journal entries or entries with questionable descriptions, to determine whether payments were properly classified and recorded.

- We reviewed the OSC online reporting system to determine the filing status of the 2023, 2024 and 2025 AFRs and interviewed the Supervisor to determine the reason AFRs were not filed.

- We interviewed Town officials and reviewed the Board's meeting minutes to determine whether the Board audited, or obtained an audit of, the Supervisor's records and reports in the audit period, and we provided officials with additional resources for strengthening the annual audit process.

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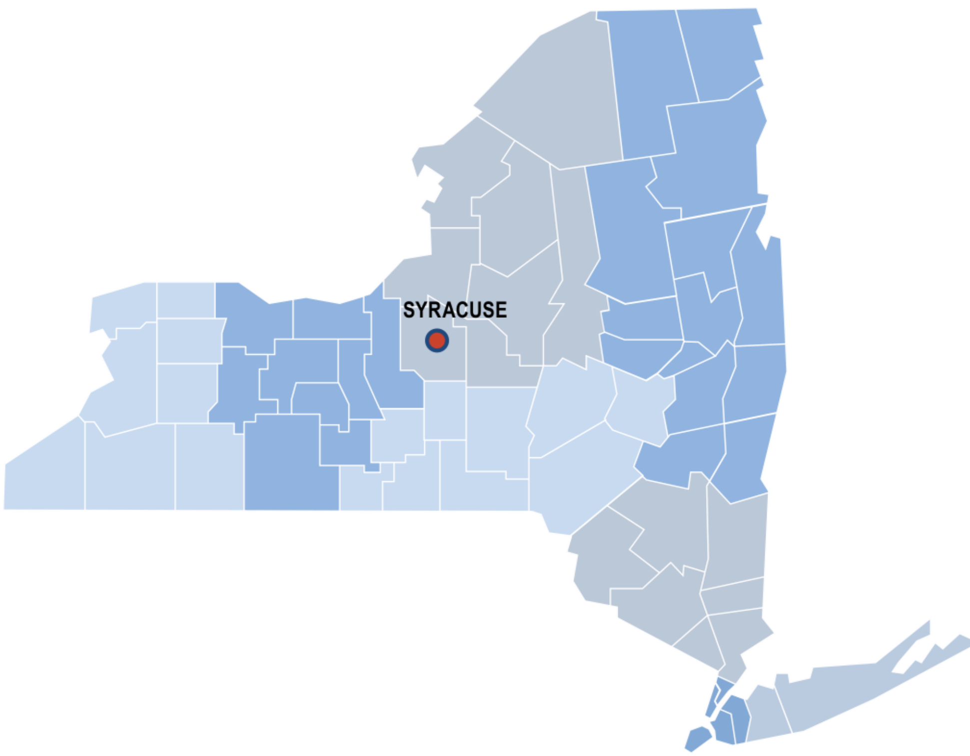

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