

**FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023
WITH
INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT**

**BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023**

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CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

**Board of Fire Commissioners
District No. 4, Township of Howell
County of Monmouth
Howell, New Jersey 07731**

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

Opinions

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of the governmental activities, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of Fire District No. 4, Township of Howell in the County of Monmouth, State of New Jersey, as of and for the year ended December 31, 2023, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the District's basic financial statements as listed in the table of contents.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities, each major fund and the aggregate remaining fund information of Fire District No. 4, Township of Howell in the County of Monmouth, State of New Jersey as of December 31, 2023, and the respective changes in financial position for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Basis for Opinions

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of Fire District No. 4, Township of Howell in the County of Monmouth, State of New Jersey and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

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C E R T I F I E D P U B L I C A C C O U N T A N T S

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate that raise substantial doubt about Fire District No. 4, Township of Howell in the County of Monmouth, State of New Jersey's ability to continue as a going concern for twelve months beyond the financial statement date, including any currently known information that may raise substantial doubt shortly thereafter.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinions. 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 generally accepted auditing standards and *Government Auditing Standards* will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and *Government Auditing Standards*, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of Fire District No. 4, Township of Howell in the County of Monmouth, State of New Jersey's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about Fire District No. 4, Township of Howell in the County of Monmouth, State of New Jersey's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.

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Required Supplementary Information

Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require that the management's discussion and analysis and budgetary comparison information, and notes to the required supplementary information as listed in the table of contents be presented to supplement the basic financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and, although not a part of the basic financial statements, is required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board, who considers it to be an essential part of financial reporting for placing the basic financial statements in an appropriate operational, economic, or historical context. We have applied certain limited procedures to the required supplementary information in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, which consisted of inquiries of management about the methods of preparing the information and comparing the information for consistency with management's responses to our inquiries, the basic financial statements, and other knowledge we obtained during our audit of the basic financial statements. We do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the information because the limited procedures do not provide us with sufficient evidence to express an opinion or provide any assurance.

Other Reporting Required by Government Auditing Standards

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we have also issued our report dated September 10, 2024 on our consideration of the Fire District No. 4, Township of Howell in the County of Monmouth, State of New Jersey's internal control over financial reporting and on our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements and other matters. The purpose of that report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of Fire District No. 4, Township of Howell in the County of Monmouth, State of New Jersey's internal control over financial reporting or on compliance. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the Fire District No. 4, Township of Howell in the County of Monmouth, State of New Jersey's internal control over financial reporting and compliance.

Mohel Elliott Bauer & Gass

Toms River, New Jersey
September 10, 2024

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT ON INTERNAL CONTROL OVER FINANCIAL REPORTING
AND ON COMPLIANCE AND OTHER MATTERS BASED ON AN AUDIT OF FINANCIAL
STATEMENTS PERFORMED IN ACCORDANCE WITH GOVERNMENT AUDITING STANDARDS**

**Board of Fire Commissioners
Fire District No. 4, Township of Howell
Howell, New Jersey 07731**

We have audited, in accordance with the auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, and audit requirements as prescribed by the Bureau of Authority Regulation, Division of Local Government Services, Department of Community Affairs, State of New Jersey, the financial statements of the governmental activities and each major fund and the aggregate remaining fund information of Fire District No. 4, Township of Howell in the County of Monmouth, State of New Jersey as of and for the year ended December 31, 2023, and the related notes to the financial statements which collectively comprise Fire District No. 4, Township of Howell's basic financial statements, and have issued our report thereon dated September 10, 2024.

Report on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting

In planning and performing our audit of the financial statements, we considered Fire District No. 4, Township of Howell in the County of Monmouth, State of New Jersey's internal control over financial reporting (internal control) as a basis for designing audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances for the purpose of expressing our opinion on the financial statements, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Fire District No. 4, Township of Howell in the County of Monmouth, State of New Jersey's internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of Fire District No. 4, Township of Howell in the County of Monmouth, State of New Jersey's internal control.

A deficiency in internal control exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct, misstatements on a timely basis. *A material weakness* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control, such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the entity's financial statements will not be prevented, or detected and corrected on a timely basis. *A significant deficiency* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control that is less severe than a material weakness, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance.

Our consideration of internal control was for the limited purpose described in the first paragraph of this section and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be material weaknesses or, significant deficiencies. Given these limitations, during our audit we did not identify any deficiencies in internal control that we consider to be material weaknesses. However, material weaknesses or significant deficiencies may exist that were not identified.

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Report on Compliance and Other Matters

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the Fire District No. 4, Township of Howell in the County of Monmouth, State of New Jersey's financial statements are free from material misstatement, we performed tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements, noncompliance with which could have a direct and material effect on the financial statements. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our audit, and accordingly, we do not express such an opinion. The results of our tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards* and audit requirements as prescribed by the Bureau of Authority Regulation, Division of Local Government Services, Department of Community Affairs, State of New Jersey.

Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control or on compliance. This report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* and audit requirements as prescribed by the Bureau of Authority Regulation, Division of Local Government Services, Department of Community Affairs, State of New Jersey in considering the entity's internal control and compliance. Accordingly, this communication is not suitable for any other purpose.

Mohel Elliott Bauer & Gass

Toms River, New Jersey

September 10, 2024

**FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL
MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023
(Unaudited)**

As management of Fire District No. 4, Township of Howell (hereafter referred to as the "Fire District"), we offer readers of the Fire District's financial statements this narrative overview and analysis of the financial activities for the year ended December 31, 2023. The intent of this discussion and analysis is to look at the Fire District's financial performance as a whole; readers should also review the information furnished in the notes to the basic financial statements and financial statements to enhance their understanding of the Fire District's financial performance.

Financial Highlights

- The net position of the fire district which represents the difference between assets and liabilities was \$3,467,112. This represents an increase of \$145,760 from 2022.
- The amount raised by taxation was \$1,051,935 or 93.19% of all revenues.
- Total expenditures were \$983,073 as compared to \$911,942 in 2022; an increase of \$71,131 or 7.80%. Two of the larger increases were materials and supplies, \$42,024 and depreciation expense, \$32,904.

USING THIS ANNUAL REPORT

This annual report consists of a series of financial statements. Fire District No. 4, Township of Howell's basic financial statements are comprised of three components: district-wide financial statements; fund financial statements; and notes to the basic financial statements.

Reporting on the District as a Whole

Our analysis of the District as a whole begins on page -12-. District-wide financial statements are provided to give the reader a broad overview of the District's financial position and its financial activity for the year. It is presented in a format similar to the private sector to give the reader a familiar point of reference.

The Statement of Net Position presents information on all the assets and liabilities of Fire District No. 4, Township of Howell. The difference between the two is reported as the District's Net Position. Significant increases or decreases in the District's Net Position can be an indication of the financial health of the District.

The Statement of Activities presents financial information about activities that result in the District's Net Position increasing or decreasing during the year. Financial activities are recorded when the transactions occur rather than when the cash is received or paid out. As a result, there could be activities that result in cash flow in a future period.

**FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL
MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS
(Continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023**

Reporting on the District as a Whole (Continued)

The district-wide financial statements report on the financial data by function. Fire District No. 4, Township of Howell provides firefighting services to the citizens of Howell Township.

Fund Financial Statements

A fund is a grouping of related accounts that is used to maintain control over resources that have been segregated for specific activities or objectives. Like other state and local governments, Fire District No. 4, Township of Howell uses fund accounting to document compliance with finance-related legal matters. Fire District No. 4, Township of Howell has two types of fund groups, and that is the general fund and capital projects fund.

Governmental Funds

Fire District No. 4 of the Township of Howell's activities are all reported in governmental funds. These funds record the flow of cash in and out of the District during the period and the balances remaining at year end for future periods. The modified accrual basis of accounting is utilized for reporting purposes. This method of accounting measures cash and all other financial assets that can be converted to cash. The governmental fund statements provide a detailed short-term view of the District's general government operations and the basic services that it provides. Governmental fund information helps you determine whether there are more or fewer financial resources that can be spent in the near future to finance the District's services.

The relationship (or differences) between governmental activities (reported in the Statement of Net Position and the Statement of Activities) and governmental funds is described in a reconciliation at the bottom of the fund financial statements.

As required by N.J.S.A. 40A:14:78-3, Fire District No. 4 Township of Howell adopts an annual budget which is voted on by the legal voters of the district on the third Saturday in February. Budgetary comparison schedules have been prepared to document compliance with budgetary requirements.

Notes to Financial Statements

The notes to the financial statements provide additional information that is essential to a full understanding of the data provided in the district-wide and fund financial statements. The notes to the financial statements are an integral part of the financial statements.

**FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL
MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS
(Continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023**

DISTRICT-WIDE FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

Fire District No. 4 Township of Howell's Net Position is a useful indicator of the District's financial condition. At the end of 2023, the District's assets exceeded the liabilities by approximately \$3.467 million. A significant portion of Fire District No. 4, Township of Howell's Net Position is its investment in capital assets. The District uses these assets to provide fire-fighting services to the community; consequently, these assets are not available for future spending.

Statement of Net Position

**FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4, TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL
NET POSITION
DECEMBER 31, 2023**

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>\$ Increase (Decrease)</u>	<u>% Increase (Decrease)</u>
Total assets	\$ 5,829,025	\$ 4,593,258	\$ 1,235,767	26.90%
Total liabilities	(2,361,913)	(1,271,906)	1,090,007	85.70%
Net position	<u>\$ 3,467,112</u>	<u>\$ 3,321,352</u>	<u>\$ 145,760</u>	4.39%

Analysis of net position

Net invested in capital assets	\$ 736,272	\$ 974,634	\$ (238,362)	-24.46%
Restricted for:				
Capital projects	1,788,306	1,590,213	198,093	12.46%
Unrestricted	942,534	756,505	186,029	24.59%
Total net position	<u>\$ 3,467,112</u>	<u>\$ 3,321,352</u>	<u>\$ 145,760</u>	4.39%

**FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL
MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS
(Continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023**

Governmental Activities

The Statement of Activities shows the cost of the governmental activities and general revenues. A summary of these activities follows:

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>\$ Increase (Decrease)</u>	<u>% Increase (Decrease)</u>
Expenses				
Administration	\$ 136,617	\$ 144,451	\$ (7,834)	-5.42%
Cost of operations and maintenance	767,723	719,091	48,632	6.76%
Length of Service Award Program Contribution	64,170	48,400	15,770	32.58%
Interest expense	14,563		14,563	100.00%
Total program expenses	<u>983,073</u>	<u>911,942</u>	<u>71,131</u>	7.80%
General revenues				
Property taxes levied for:				
General purposes	837,372	513,800	323,572	62.98%
Capital projects	200,000	400,000	(200,000)	-50.00%
Debt service	14,563		14,563	100.00%
Total property taxes levied	<u>1,051,935</u>	<u>913,800</u>	<u>138,135</u>	15.12%
Other revenue	76,898	24,605	52,293	212.53%
Total general revenues	<u>1,128,833</u>	<u>938,405</u>	<u>190,428</u>	20.29%
Change in net position	145,760	26,463	119,297	450.81%
Net position, January 1	3,321,352	3,294,889	26,463	0.80%
Net position, December 31	<u>\$ 3,467,112</u>	<u>\$ 3,321,352</u>	<u>\$ 145,760</u>	4.39%

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS OF THE GOVERNMENT FUNDS

Fire District No. 4, Township of Howell uses fund accounting to document compliance with finance-related legal requirements.

Government Fund

The primary objective of the District's governmental funds is to report on cash flows in and out during the period and the ending balances of the spendable resources. This information is useful to evaluate the performance of the district and to assess its future needs and available resources.

As of December 31, 2023, the combined balance of the governmental cash and investment funds of Fire District No. 4, Township of Howell was approximately \$2.780 million. This balance is approximately \$391,000 less than last year's combined governmental funds balance.

**FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL
MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS
(Continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023**

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS OF THE GOVERNMENT FUNDS (Continued)

The combined fund balance of the governmental funds of Fire District No. 4, Township of Howell was a surplus of approximately \$3.887 million. Amounts of approximately \$1,788,000 is restricted for capital projects, approximately \$1,156,000 is restricted for investment in length of service awards program, approximately \$218,000 is assigned - designated for subsequent year's expenditures and \$725,000 is unassigned.

The general fund is the main operating fund of Fire District No. 4, Township of Howell. At the end of 2023, the total fund balance of the general fund was approximately \$2.099 million.

During 2023, the general fund balance of Fire District No. 4 Township of Howell increased by approximately \$435,000. The primary reason for this increase was due to the excess of revenues over expenditures.

At the end of 2023, the District has a capital projects fund balance of approximately \$1,788,000. This was an increase of approximately \$198,000 from the previous year.

General Fund Budgetary Highlights

The original budget had a projected deficit of \$(39,525). The District had an excess of revenues over expenditures of approximately \$384,000 in 2023.

Administrative expenses were approximately \$34,000 less than projected in 2023. Operating expenses were approximately \$28,000 less than projected in 2023.

CAPITAL ASSETS AND DEBT ADMINISTRATION

Capital Assets

As of December 31, 2023 Fire District No. 4 Township of Howell had invested in capital assets for government activities of approximately \$1,624,000 (net of accumulated depreciation). Capital assets consist of apparatus, vehicles and equipment. The addition for 2023 was a communications project with the Township, \$888,000. The District also disposed of a 2003 Ford F-550, \$111,424.

**CAPITAL ASSETS
DECEMBER 31, 2023**

	2023	2022	\$ Increase (Decrease)
Capital assets			
Apparatus	\$ 2,732,441	\$ 2,732,441	\$ -
Vehicles	293,680	405,104	(111,424)
Equipment	635,564	635,564	-
Communications project	888,000	-	888,000
Total capital assets	4,549,685	3,773,109	776,576
Accumulated depreciation	(2,925,413)	(2,798,475)	126,938
Total capital assets, net	\$ 1,624,272	\$ 974,634	\$ 649,638

**FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL
MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023**

CAPITAL ASSETS AND DEBT ADMINISTRATION (Continued)

Debt Administration

The District has no debt.

ECONOMIC FACTORS AND NEXT YEARS BUDGET

In 2023, Fire District No. 4 Township of Howell was able to fund its appropriations through the fire tax levy and other revenues. The 2023 budget anticipated a deficit of \$(39,525) and finished the year with an excess of \$384,123.

Fire District No. 4, Township of Howell adopted the 2024 budget on January 9, 2024. The 2024 budget reflects a 0.5% increase in the tax levy compared to 2023. The proposed budget reflects no change in the tax rate for 2024. The proposed tax rate per \$100 of assessed value will be \$.066.

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

The District financial report is designed to provide users of the financial statements with a general overview of the District's finances and to show the District's accountability for the money it receives. The financial statements of the District are a matter of public record.

If you have any questions about this report or need additional information please contact The Board Clerk at 88 Ramtown-Greenville Road, Howell, New Jersey 07731.

**FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL**

**STATEMENT OF NET POSITION
DECEMBER 31, 2023**

	2023
ASSETS	
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 2,779,883
Accounts receivable	419
Prepaid expenses	66,074
Capital assets, net	1,624,272
Right-of-use lease asset, net	202,084
Contribution receivable - length of service award program	64,170
Cash and investments - length of service award program	1,092,123
Total assets	5,829,025
LIABILITIES	
Current liabilities	
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	115,536
Operating lease liability	65,353
Bonds payable	73,000
Total current liabilities	253,889
Noncurrent liabilities	
Operating lease liability	136,731
Bonds payable	815,000
Net assets available for program benefits - length of service award program	1,156,293
Total noncurrent liabilities	2,108,024
Total liabilities	2,361,913
NET POSITION	
Net invested in capital assets	736,272
Restricted for capital projects	1,788,306
Unrestricted	942,534
Total net position	\$ 3,467,112

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

**FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL**

**STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023**

	2023
Expenses:	
Operating appropriations:	
Administration	\$ 136,617
Cost of operations and maintenance	767,723
Length of service award program (LOSAP) - Contribution P.L. 1997, c.388)	64,170
Interest expense	14,563
Total program expenses	983,073
 General revenues:	
Amount raised by taxation	1,051,935
Interest on investments and deposits	62,006
Miscellaneous revenue	14,892
Total general revenues	1,128,833
 Change in net position	 145,760
 Net position - beginning of year	 3,321,352
Net position - end of year	\$ 3,467,112

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements

**FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL
GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS BALANCE SHEET
DECEMBER 31, 2023**

	GENERAL FUND	CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND	DEBT SERVICE FUND	TOTAL GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS
ASSETS				
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 991,577	\$ 1,788,306	\$ -	\$ 2,779,883
Accounts receivable	419			419
Prepaid expenses	66,074			66,074
Contribution receivable - length of service award program	64,170			64,170
Cash and investments - length of service award program	1,092,123			1,092,123
Total assets	\$ 2,214,363	\$ 1,788,306	\$ -	\$ 4,002,669
LIABILITIES				
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 115,536			\$ 115,536
Total liabilities	115,536			115,536
FUND BALANCES				
Restricted for Capital Projects		1,788,306		1,788,306
Investment in length of service award program	1,156,293			1,156,293
Assigned - other				-
Assigned - Designated for subsequent year's expenditures	217,575			217,575
Unassigned	724,959			724,959
Total fund balances	2,098,827	1,788,306	-	3,887,133
Total liabilities and fund balances	\$ 2,214,363	\$ 1,788,306	\$ -	\$ -

Amounts reported for governmental activities in the statement of net position (A-1) are different because:

Capital assets used in governmental activities are not financial resources and therefore are not reported in the funds. The cost of the assets is \$4,549,685 and the accumulated depreciation is \$2,925,413.

Right-of-use lease asset

Operating lease liability

Long-term liabilities, including bonds payable and length of service awards program payable, are not due and payable in the current period and are therefore not reported as liabilities in the funds.

	1,624,272
	202,084
	(202,084)
	<u>(2,044,283)</u>
	<u>\$ 3,467,112</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements

FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL
STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

	General Fund	Capital Projects Fund	Debt Service Fund	Total
Revenues:				
Amount raised by taxation	\$ 837,372	\$ 200,000	\$ 14,563	\$ 1,051,935
Interest on investments and deposits	62,006			62,006
Investment (loss) income - length of service award program	185,207			185,207
Miscellaneous revenue	14,892			14,892
Total revenues	<u>1,099,477</u>	<u>200,000</u>	<u>14,563</u>	<u>1,314,040</u>
Expenditures:				
Administration	136,617			136,617
Cost of operations and maintenance	527,453			527,453
Capital expenditures		1,907		1,907
Debt service principal payments			-	-
Interest payments on debt			14,563	14,563
Participant distributions, forfeitures and charges length of service award program				-
Total expenditures	<u>664,070</u>	<u>1,907</u>	<u>14,563</u>	<u>680,540</u>
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenditures	435,407	198,093	-	633,500
Fund balance, January 1	1,663,420	1,590,213	-	3,253,633
Fund balance, December 31	<u>\$ 2,098,827</u>	<u>\$ 1,788,306</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 3,887,133</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

**FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL
RECONCILIATION OF THE STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES AND
CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES OF GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS TO THE STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023**

Total net changes in fund balance - governmental funds (B - 2)	\$	633,500
Amounts reported for governmental activities in the statement of activities (A - 2) are different because:		
Capital outlays are reported in governmental funds as expenditures. However, in the statement of activities, the cost of those assets is allocated over their useful lives as depreciation expense		
Capital outlays		
Depreciation expense	(238,363)	(238,363)
Length of service award program contribution is not reported in governmental funds as expenditures. However, in the statement of net position, the expense is equal to the amount of contributions to the volunteers accounts as determined by the benefit terms. Investment income LOSAP is not a revenue in the government-wide financial statements as it is payable to the volunteers in accordance with the plan benefits		
District contribution to length of service award program	(64,170)	
Length of service award investment loss (income)	(185,207)	
Participant withdrawals	-	(249,377)
Amortization of right-of-use asset and interest expense		(71,500)
Reduction of lease expense		71,500
Changes in net position of governmental activities (A - 2)	\$	145,760

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

**FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023**

GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Description of Reporting Entity

Fire District No. 4 Township of Howell is a political subdivision of the Township of Howell, County of Monmouth, State of New Jersey. A board of five commissioners oversees all operations of the Fire District. The length of each commissioner's term is three years with the annual election held the third Saturday of every February.

Fire Districts are governed by the *N.J.S.A. 40A: 14-70* et al. and are taxing authorities charged with the responsibility of providing the resources necessary to provide fire fighting services to the residents within its territorial location.

The primary criterion for including activities with the District's reporting entity, as set forth in Section 2100 of the *GASB Codification of Governmental Accounting and Financial Reporting Standards*, is whether:

- the organization is legally separate (can sue or be sued in their own name);
- the District holds the corporate powers of the organization;
- the District appoints a voting majority of the organization's board;
- the District is able to impose its will on the organization;
- the organization has the potential to impose a financial benefit/burden on the District;
- there is a fiscal dependency by the organization on the District.

There were no additional entities required to be included in the reporting entity under the criteria as described above. Furthermore, the District is not includable in any other reporting entity on the basis of such criteria.

B. District Officials

The District is governed by a board of five commissioners. The following were in office at December 31, 2023;

<u>Officials</u>	<u>Term Expires</u> <u>March</u>
Gregory E. Scarlato	2025
James S. Bailey	2026
Richard H. Stalling	2025
Michael L. Acampora	2024
Ricky V. Romano	2024

C. Accounting Records

The official accounting records of the Fire District No. 4 Township of Howell are maintained in the office of the district.

(Continued)

**FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL
(Continued)
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023**

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The financial statements of Fire District No. 4, Township of Howell (the "Fire District") have been prepared to conform with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America ("GAAP") as applied to governmental units. The Governmental Accounting Standards Board ("GASB") is the accepted standard setting body for establishing governmental accounting and financial reporting principles. The following is a summary of the more significant of these policies.

Government-wide and Fund Financial Statements

The Fire District's basic financial statements consist of government-wide statements, and fund financial statements which provide a more detailed level of financial information.

The government-wide financial statements (i.e., the statement of net position and the statement of activities) report information on all of the nonfiduciary activities of the government. The Fire District's operations consist of governmental activities, which normally are supported by property taxes.

The statement of activities demonstrates the degree to which the direct expenses of a given function, segment or component unit are offset by program revenues. Direct expenses are those that are specifically associated with a service, program, or department and, therefore, clearly identifiable to a particular function.

In regards to the fund financial statements, the Fire District segregates transactions related to certain functions or activities in separate funds in order to aid financial management and to demonstrate legal compliance. A fund is defined as a fiscal and accounting entity with a self-balancing set of accounts. Fund financial statements report detailed information about the Fire District. The focus of governmental fund financial statements is on major funds rather than reporting funds by type. Each major fund is presented in a single column.

(Continued)

**FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL
(Continued)
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023**

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

Measurement Focus, Basis of Accounting and Financial Statement Presentation

The government-wide financial statements are reported using the economic resources measurement focus and the accrual basis of accounting. Revenues are recorded when earned and expenses are recorded when a liability is incurred, regardless of the timing of related cash flows. Grants and similar items are recognized as revenue as soon as all eligibility requirements imposed by the provider have been met. Property taxes are recognized as revenues in the year for which they are levied, as under New Jersey State Statute, Statute, a municipality is required to remit to its fire district the entire balance of taxes in the amount voted upon or certified, prior to the end of the fire district year. The Fire District records the entire approved tax levy as revenue (accrued) at the start of the year since the revenue is both measurable and available. The Fire District is entitled to receive moneys under the following established payment schedule: on or before April 1, an amount equaling 21.25% of all moneys assessed; on or before July 1, an amount equaling 22.5% of all moneys assessed; on or before October 1, an amount equaling 25% of all moneys assessed; and on or before December 31, an amount equaling the difference between the total of all moneys so assessed and the total amount of moneys previously paid over.

Governmental fund financial statements are reported using the current financial resources measurement focus and the modified accrual basis of accounting. Revenues are recorded when they are deemed both available and measurable. Available means when revenues are collectible within the current period or soon enough thereafter to pay liabilities of the current period. For this purpose, the Fire District considers revenues to be available if they are collected within sixty (60) days of the end of the current year. Measurable means that the amount of revenue can be determined. Expenditures generally are recorded when a liability is incurred, as under accrual accounting.

Property taxes, reimbursable-type grants, and interest associated with the current year are all considered to be susceptible to accrual and so have been recognized as revenues of the current year. All other revenue items are considered to be measurable and available only when cash is received by the Fire District.

The Fire District reports the following major governmental funds:

General Fund - The general fund is the primary operating fund of the Fire District. It is used to account for all financial resources except those required to be accounted for in another fund.

Capital Projects Fund - The capital projects fund is used to account for and report financial resources that are restricted, committed, or assigned to expenditures for capital outlays, including the acquisition or construction of capital facilities and other capital assets.

Debt Service Fund - The debt service fund is used to account for and report financial resources that are restricted, committed, or assigned to expenditures for principal and interest.

(Continued)

**FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL
(Continued)
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023**

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

Budgets/Budgetary Control

The Fire District must adopt an annual budget in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:14-78.1 et al. The fire commissioners must introduce and approve the annual budget not later than sixty days prior to the annual election. At introduction, the commissioners shall fix the time and place for a public hearing on the budget and must advertise the time and place at least ten days prior to the hearing in a newspaper having substantial circulation in the Fire District. The public hearing must not be held less than twenty-eight days after the date the budget was introduced. After the hearing has been held, the fire commissioners may, by majority vote, adopt the budget.

Amendments may be made to the Fire District budget in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:14-78.3. The budget may not be amended subsequent to its final adoption and approval, except for provisions allowed by N.J.S.A 40A:14-78.5.

Subsequent to the adoption of the Fire District budget, the amount of money to be raised by taxation in support of the Fire District budget must appear on the ballot for the annual election for approval of the legal voters.

Formal budgetary integration into the accounting system is employed as a management control device during the year. For governmental funds, there are no substantial differences between the budgetary basis of accounting and generally accepted accounting principles. Encumbrance accounting is also employed as an extension of formal budgetary integration in the governmental fund types. Unencumbered appropriations lapse at year-end.

The budget, as detailed on exhibit C-1, includes all amendments and modifications to the adopted budget has approved by the Board of Commissioners.

Encumbrances

Encumbrance accounting, under which purchase orders, contracts, and other commitments for the expenditure of funds are recorded to assign a portion of the applicable appropriation, is utilized for budgetary control purposes. Encumbrances are a component of fund balance at year-end as they do not constitute expenditures or liabilities, but rather commitments related to unperformed contracts for goods and services. Open encumbrances in the governmental funds, which have not been previously restricted, committed, or assigned, should be included within committed or assigned fund balance, as appropriate.

The encumbered appropriation authority carries over into the next year. An entry will be made at the beginning of the next year to increase the appropriation reflected in the certified budget by the outstanding encumbrance amount as of the current year end. The encumbrances at December 31, 2023 totaled \$0 for the general fund and \$0 for the capital projects fund.

(Continued)

**FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL
(Continued)
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023**

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

Cash, Cash Equivalents and Investments

Cash and cash equivalents, for all funds, include petty cash, cash in banks and all highly liquid investments with a maturity of three months or less at the time of purchase and are stated at cost plus accrued interest. Certificates of deposit with maturities of one year or less when purchased are stated at cost. All other investments are stated at fair value.

New Jersey fire districts are limited as to the types of investments and types of financial institutions they may invest in. N.J.S.A. 40A:5-15.1 provides a list of permissible investments that may be purchased by New Jersey fire districts.

N.J.S.A. 17:9-41 et seq. establishes the requirements for the security of deposits of governmental units. The statute requires that no governmental unit shall deposit public funds in a public depository unless such funds are secured in accordance with the Governmental Unit Deposit Protection Act ("GUDPA"), a multiple financial institutional collateral pool, which was enacted in 1970 to protect governmental units from a loss of funds on deposit with a failed banking institution in New Jersey. Public depositories include State of federally chartered banks, savings banks or associations located in or having a branch office in the State of New Jersey, The deposits of which are federally insured. All public depositories must pledge collateral, having a market value at least equal to five percent of the average daily balance of collected public funds, to secure the deposits of governmental units. If a public depository fails, the collateral it has pledged, plus the collateral of all other public depositories, is available to pay the amount of their deposits to the governmental units.

Inventories

Inventories recorded on the government-wide financial statements are recorded as expenses when consumed rather than when purchased. The Fire District did not have any significant inventory for the year ended December 31, 2023.

Prepaid Expenses

Prepaid expenses recorded on the government-side financial statements represent payments made to vendors for services that will benefit periods beyond December 31, 2023.

**FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL
(Continued)
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023**

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

Capital Assets

Capital assets represent the cumulative amount of capital assets owned by the Fire District. Purchased capital assets are recorded as expenditures in the governmental fund financial statements and are capitalized at cost on the government-wide statement of net position. In the case of gifts or contributions, such capital assets are recorded at acquisition value at the time received.

The Fire District's capitalization threshold is \$5,000. Other costs incurred for repairs and maintenance is expensed as incurred. All reported capital assets, except land and construction in progress, are depreciated. Depreciation is computed using the straight-line method over the following estimated useful lives:

<u>Description</u>	<u>Estimated Lives</u>
Apparatus	10 years
Vehicles	5 - 10 years
Equipment	5 years
Communications project	10 years

Net Position

Net position represents the difference between the summation of assets and the summation of liabilities. Net position is classified into the following three components:

Net investment in Capital Assets - This component represents capital assets, net of accumulated depreciation, net of outstanding balances of borrowings used for acquisition, construction, or improvement of those assets.

Restricted - Net position is reported as restricted when there are limitations imposed on their use either through the enabling legislation adopted by the Fire District or through external restrictions imposed by creditors, grantors or laws or regulations of other governments.

Unrestricted - Net position is reported as unrestricted when it does not meet the criteria of the other two components of net position.

The Fire District applies restricted resources when an expense is incurred for purposes for which both restricted and unrestricted net position is available.

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**FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL
(Continued)
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023**

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

Fund Balance

The Fire District reports fund balance in classifications that comprise a hierarchy based primarily on the extent to which the Fire District is bound to honor constraints of the specific purposes for which amounts in those funds can be spent. The Fire District's classifications, and policies for determining such classifications, are as follows:

Nonspendable - The nonspendable fund balance classification includes amounts that cannot be spent because they are either not in spendable form or are legally or contractually required to be maintained intact. The "not in spendable form" criterion includes items that are not expected to be converted to cash, such as inventories and prepaid amounts.

Restricted - The restricted fund balance classification includes amounts that are restricted to specific purposes. Such restrictions, or constraints, are placed on the use of resources either by being (1) externally imposed by creditors, grantors, contributors, or laws or regulations of other governments; or (2) imposed by law through constitutional provisions or enabling legislation.

Committed - The committed fund balance classification includes amounts that can only be used for specific purposes pursuant to constraints imposed by formal action of the Fire District's highest level of decision-making authority, which, for the Fire District, is the Board of Fire Commissioners. Such formal actions consists of an affirmative vote by the Board of Fire Commissioners, memorialized by the adoption of a resolution. Once committed, amounts cannot be used for any other purpose unless the Board of Fire Commissioners removes, or changes the specified use by taking the same type of action (resolution) it employed to previously commit those amounts.

Assigned - The assigned fund balance classification includes amounts that are constrained by the Fire District's intent to be used for specific purposes, but are neither restricted nor committed. Intent is expressed by either the Board of Fire Commissioners or by the Fire Chief, to which the Board of Fire Commissioners has delegated the authority to assign amounts to be used for specific purposes. Such authority of the Fire Chief is established by way of a formal job description for the position, approved by the Board of Fire Commissioners.

Unassigned - The unassigned fund balance classification is the residual classification for the general fund. This classification represents fund balance that has not been assigned to other funds and that has not been restricted, committed, or assigned to specific purposes within the general fund. The general fund is the only fund that reports a positive unassigned fund balance amount. In other governmental funds, if expenditures incurred for specific purposes exceed the amounts restricted, committed, or assigned to those purposes, it may be necessary to report a negative unassigned fund balance.

When expenditures are incurred for purposes for which both restricted and unrestricted fund balances are available, it is the policy of the Fire District to spend restricted fund balances first. Moreover, when expenditures are incurred for purposes for which amounts in any of the unrestricted fund balance classifications can be used, it is the policy of the Fire District to spend fund balances, if appropriated in the following order: committed, assigned, and then unassigned.

(Continued)

**FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL
(Continued)
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023**

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

Accounting Estimates

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported in the financial statements and accompanying notes. Actual results may differ from those estimates.

Subsequent Events

The District has evaluated subsequent events through September 10, 2024, the date the financial statements were available to be issued.

CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

Custodial Credit Risk Related to Deposits

Custodial credit risk is the risk that, in the event of a bank failure, the Fire District's deposits might not be recovered. Although the Fire District does not have a formal policy regarding custodial credit risk, N.J.S.A. 17:9-41 et seq. requires that governmental units shall deposit public funds in public depositories protected from loss under the provisions of the Governmental Unit Deposit Protection Act ("GUDPA"). Under the Act, the first \$250,000 of governmental deposits in each insured depository is protected by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation ("FDIC"). Public funds owned by the Fire District in excess of FDIC insured amounts are protected by GUDPA.

PROPERTY TAX LEVIES

Following is a tabulation of district assessed valuations, tax levies and property tax rates per \$100 of assessed valuations for the current and preceding four years:

<u>Calendar Year</u>	<u>Assessed Valuations</u>	<u>Total Tax Levy</u>	<u>Property Tax Rates</u>
12/31/2023	\$ 1,595,759,600	\$ 1,051,935	0.066
12/31/2022	\$ 1,347,980,400	\$ 913,800	0.068
12/31/2021	\$ 1,201,608,900	\$ 905,500	0.075
12/31/2020	\$ 1,194,375,400	\$ 887,579	0.074
12/31/2019	\$ 1,163,639,900	\$ 865,829	0.074

(Continued)

**FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL
(Continued)
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023**

COMMITMENTS

The District, the "lessee" leases facilities from Ramtown-Howell Fire Company No. 2, the "lessor" for storage of equipment, housing of fire apparatus, training and education of fire fighters, public meetings, commissioners office, deployment of fire personnel and other appropriate and necessary fire service related functions. The lease is for an initial term of eleven years beginning January 1, 2015 and ending December 31, 2026 at the yearly rent amount as follows:

2016 - 2026 \$ 71,500

Rent is payable in three equal installments on the 15th day of April, August, and December.

Utilities are to be provided by the lessor. Reimbursement for incurred utilities shall be paid by the lessee at the annual rate of \$14,500 payable in two equal installments on the 15th day of June and December.

CAPITAL ASSETS

Capital assets together with accumulated depreciation and estimated useful lives consists of the following:

	2023	Estimated Useful Life (Years)
Assets		
Apparatus	2,732,441	10
Vehicles	293,680	5
Equipment	635,564	5
Communications project	888,000	10
	4,549,685	
Less: accumulated depreciation	(2,925,413)	
	\$ 1,624,272	

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE AND ACCRUED EXPENSES

	2023
Accounts payable	\$ 29,105
Accrued LOSAP	64,170
Accrued pension	4,102
Accrued other	18,159
	\$ 115,536

(Continued)

**FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL
(Continued)
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023**

BONDS PAYABLE

Fire District No. 4, Township of Howell has entered into a shared service agreement dated April 4, 2023 with the Township of Howell, Borough of Farmingdale, Fire District No. 1, Fire District No. 2, Fire District No. 3, and Fire District No. 5, Township of Howell.

Under the agreement the Township is willing to issue its bonds under a separate \$4,160,000 bond ordinance of the Township finally adopted on December 16, 2022. (the "Fire District Costs Bond Ordinance") For such portion of the capital cost of the project as allocable to Fire District No. 1, Fire District No. 3, Fire District No. 4 and Fire District No. 5, provided each such Fire District commit to pay its allocable portion to the Township through the execution of this agreement.

The Township of Howell in the County of Monmouth, New Jersey issued bonds dated March 15, 2023 in the amount of \$3,215,000 General Obligation Bonds Series 2023. The Bonds bear interest at the rate of 3 - 4%. The Bonds were issued for the acquisition of new communications infrastructure that will serve the Township's each of the five Fire Districts located within the Township's boundaries and the Borough of Farmingdale.

The allocable portion of the Bonds is payable by Fire District No. 4 over 10 years. Debt service for each of the succeeding five years are as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Principal</u>	<u>Interest</u>	<u>Total</u>		
2024	\$ 73,000	\$ 28,525	\$ 101,525		
2025	86,000	26,140	112,140		
2026	81,000	23,635	104,635		
2027	81,000	21,205	102,205		
2028	85,000	18,715	103,715		
Thereafter	<u>482,000</u>	<u>47,670</u>	<u>529,670</u>		
	<u>\$ 888,000</u>	<u>\$ 165,890</u>	<u>\$ 1,053,890</u>		
	<u>Balance</u>	<u>Increases</u>	<u>Decreases</u>	<u>Balance</u>	<u>Due Within</u>
	<u>12/31/2022</u>			<u>12/31/2023</u>	<u>One Year</u>
Bonds Payable	\$ <u>-</u>	\$ <u>888,000</u>	\$ <u>-</u>	\$ <u>888,000</u>	\$ <u>73,000</u>

SHARED SERVICE AGREEMENT

The shared service agreement dated April 4, 2023 also requires District No. 4 to make the following payments:

1. On or before December 31, 2023 the District shall reimburse the Township for its agreed-upon share of itemized non-capital items in the amount of \$13,548.79.
2. On or before December 31 of each year in which the Township makes a payment relating to the computer assisted dispatch (CAD) component of the project the District shall reimburse the Township for its agreed-upon share of such payment in the amount of \$5,000 for a period of nine (9) years.
3. On or before December 31 of each year in which the Township makes a payment relating to the warranty paging simulcast component of the project the District shall reimburse the Township for its agreed-upon share of such payment in the amount of \$6,527.42 for a period of four(4) years.
4. If the Township shall pay other expenses described in the shared service agreement on or before December 31 of each year the District shall reimburse the Township for its agreed-upon portion of 15.6%.

(Continued)

**FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL
(Continued)
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023**

OPERATING LEASE OBLIGATION PAYABLE

Fire District No. 4 Township of Howell leases the premises of 88 Ramtown Greenville Road, Howell NJ 07731 under a long-term operating lease agreement. The lease is for the term of eleven years expiring December 31, 2026. We include in the determination right-of-use assets and liabilities any renewal options when the options are reasonably certain to be exercised.

The weighted-average discount rate is being based on the discount rate implicit in the lease. If the implicit rate is not readily determined from the lease, we estimate an incremental borrowing rate. The incremental borrowing rate is estimated using our applicable borrowing rates and contractual lease term.

The right-of-use assets and lease liabilities at December 31, 2023 is as follows:

	<u>2023</u>
Operating right-of-use assets	\$ <u>202,084</u>
	\$ <u><u>202,084</u></u>
	<u>2023</u>
Operating lease liabilities	\$ <u>202,084</u>
	\$ <u><u>202,084</u></u>

The following summarizes the weighted-average remaining lease term and weighted-average discount rate:

	<u>2023</u>
Weighted-average remaining lease term in years:	
Operating lease	3
Weighted-average incremental borrowing rate:	
Operating lease	3.00%

The future minimum lease payments under noncancelable operating leases with terms greater than one year are listed below as of December 31, 2023:

<u>December 31,</u>	<u>Operating</u>
2024	\$ 71,500
2025	71,500
2026	<u>71,500</u>
Total lease payments	214,500
Less interest	<u>(12,416)</u>
Present value of lease liabilities	\$ <u><u>202,084</u></u>

(Continued)

**FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL
(Continued)
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023**

LENGTH OF SERVICE AWARDS PROGRAM

LENGTH OF SERVICE AWARD PROGRAM

The Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP) for the Board of Fire Commissioners of Fire District No. 4, of the Township of Howell, was created by a Fire District Resolution dated November 11, 2003, pursuant to Section 457 (e)(11)(13) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 as amended, except for provisions added by reason of the Length of Service Award Program as enacted into federal law in 1997. The voters of the Township of Howell, Fire District No. 4, approved the adoption of the Program at the general election held on February 21, 2004.

The first year of eligibility for entrance into the program was calendar year 2003. The tax deferred income benefits for active volunteer Fire Fighters that serve Fire District No. 4, Township of Howell come from contributions made solely by the Board of Fire Commissioners, on behalf of those volunteers who meet the criteria of the Program created by the Board of Fire Commissioners.

Contributions

If an active member meets the year of active service requirement, a length of service awards program must provide a benefit between the minimum contribution of \$100 and a maximum contribution of \$1,150 per year. While the maximum amount is established by statute, it is subject to periodic increases that are related to the consumer price index (N.J.S.A. 40A:14-185(f)). The Division of Local Government Services of the State of New Jersey will issue the permitted maximum annually.

The Fire District after notice to the participants and public publication elected to automatically make the maximum annual contribution permitted by the Division of Local Government Services and budgets accordingly.

The Fire District elected to contribute \$2,070 for the year ended December 31, 2023, per eligible volunteer, into the Plan. Participants direct the investment of the contributions into various investment options offered by the Plan.

Participant Accounts

Each participant's account is credited with the Fire District's contribution and Plan earnings, and charged with administrative expenses. For the period ended December 31, 2021, the Fire District elected to pay substantially all of the Plan's administrative costs. The benefit to which a participant is entitled is the benefit that can be provided from the participant's vested account. In accordance with the amendments to Section 457 of the Internal Revenue Code, and the State Deferred Revenue Regulations, the Fire District has placed the amounts deferred, including earnings, in a trust for the exclusive benefit of the plan participants and their beneficiaries.

VALIC ("Plan Contractor"), an approved Length of Service Awards Contractor provides investment and other services regarding the length of services award program. The Fire District's practical involvement in administering the Plan is essentially limited to verifying the eligibility of each participant and remitting the funds to the Plan Contractor.

(Continued)

**FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL
(Continued)
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023**

Vesting

Benefits, plus actual earnings thereon, are one hundred percent (100%) vested after five (5) years of active emergency service. "Year of active emergency service" means a twelve (12) month period during which an active volunteer member participates in the Fire Service and satisfies the minimum requirements of participation established by the sponsoring agency on a consistent uniform basis.

Payment of Benefits

Upon separation from service or disability as defined under the program, vested participants may select various options, which include lump sum, periodic, or annuity payments. In the case of death, with certain exceptions, any amount invested under the participant's account is paid to the beneficiary or the participant's estate.

The Board did adopt an amended plan in 2010 wherein "In-Service Distribution" after vesting is permitted. Such distribution requires the total vested amount is withdrawn by the participant. No partial distribution is permitted. If a participant elects in-service distribution the participant must thereafter complete at least five (5) years of emergency service again to vest in the program. Participants do not have to separate himself/herself from service.

Forfeited Accounts

During the year ended December 31, 2023 forfeitures were \$-0-.

LENGTH OF SERVICE AWARD PROGRAM - INVESTMENTS

An investment agreement was entered into at the inception of the Plan between the Fire District and the Plan Contractor, whereby the Plan Contractor would have custody of the securities of the Plan and also advises the Fire District as to investment alternatives.

The investments consist of pooled separate accounts by Fund. Each participant may choose his/her allocation from among these investments. The investments are made by the Plan Contractor for benefit of plan participants. The investments are valued at fair value at the end of each year and the increase/decrease benefit of plan is posted to the participant's account.

	<u>2023</u>
Pooled Separate Accounts	\$ <u><u>1,092,123</u></u>

PLAN TERMINATION

Although the Fire District has not expressed any intent to do so, a length of service awards program, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:14-187 and N.J.A.C. 5:30-11.08, may be abolished or amended in the same way by which it was created, except in the case of minor amendments. Upon such termination, vested, accumulated deferrals will be paid.

**FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL
(Continued)
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023**

TAX STATUS - LENGTH OF SERVICE AWARD PROGRAM

In accordance with the amendments to Section 457 of the Internal Revenue Code and the State Deferred Revenue Regulations, the Fire District has placed the amounts deferred, including earnings, in a trust for the exclusive benefit of the plan participants and their beneficiaries. The Plan administrator and the management of the Fire District believe that the Plan is designed, and is currently being operated, in compliance with the applicable requirements of the Internal Revenue Service Code.

The Plan is generally subject to routine audits by the Internal Revenue Service, for three years. There are currently no audits in progress.

RISK AND UNCERTAINTIES - LENGTH OF SERVICE AWARD PROGRAM

The Plan invests in various investment securities. Investment securities are exposed to various risks such as interest rate, market, and credit risks due to the level of risk associated with certain investment securities, it is at least reasonably possible that changes in the values of investment securities will occur in the near term and that such changes could materially affect participant's account balances and the amounts reported in the statement of net assets available for benefits.

DEFINED CONTRIBUTION RETIREMENT PLAN (DCRP)

The Defined Contribution Retirement Plan is a cost-sharing multiple employer defined contribution pension plan which was established on July 1, 2007, under the provisions of Chapter 92, P.L. 2007 and Chapter 103, P.L. 2007 (N.J.S.A. 43:15C-1 et. seq), and expanded under the provisions of Chapter 89, P.L. 2008 and Chapter 1, P.L. 2010. The Defined Contribution Retirement Program Board oversees the DCRP, which is administered for the Divisions of Pensions and Benefits by Prudential Financial. The DCRP provides eligible members, and their beneficiaries, with tax-sheltered, defined contribution retirement benefit, along with life insurance and disability coverage. Vesting and benefit provisions are established by N.J.S.A. 43:15C-1 et. seq.

The contribution requirements of plan members are determined by State statute. In accordance with Chapter 92, P.L. 2007 and Chapter 103, P.L. 2007, plan members are required to contribute 5.5% of their annual covered salary.

The employers contribution rate is 3%. The District also contributes .74% for group term life insurance and .31% for long term disability.

(Continued)

**FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL
(Continued)
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023**

FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS

The District categorizes its assets and liabilities measured at fair value into a three-level hierarchy based on the priority of the inputs to the valuation technique used to determine fair value. The fair value hierarchy gives the highest priority to quoted prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities (Level 1) and the lowest priority to unobservable inputs (Level III). If the inputs used in the determination of the fair value measurement fall within different levels of the hierarchy, the categorization is based on the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement. Assets and liabilities valued at fair value are categorized based on the inputs to the valuation techniques as follows:

- Level 1 Inputs that utilize quoted prices (unadjusted) in active markets for identical assets or liabilities that the Authority has the ability to access. Fair values for these instruments are estimated using pricing models or quoted prices of securities with similar characteristics.

- Level 2 Inputs that include quoted market prices for similar assets and liabilities in active markets and inputs that are observable for the asset or liability, either directly or indirectly, for substantially the full term of the financial instrument.

- Level 3 Inputs that are unobservable inputs for the asset or liability, which are typically based on an entity's assumptions, as there is little, if any, related market activity. Fair values for these instruments are estimated using appraised values.

Subsequent to initial recognition, the District may remeasure the carrying value of assets and liabilities measured on a nonrecurring basis to fair value. Adjustments to fair value usually result when certain assets are impaired. Such assets are written down from their carrying amounts to their fair value.

The preceding methods described above may produce a fair value calculation that may not be indicative of net realizable value or reflective of future fair values. Furthermore, while the plan believes its valuation methods are appropriate and consistent with other market participants, the use of different methodologies or assumptions to determine the fair value of certain financial instruments could result in a different fair value measurement at the reporting date.

Following is a description of the valuation methodologies used for assets measured at fair value. There have been no changes in the methodologies used at December 31, 2023.

Pooled Separate Accounts: Valued at the net asset value (NAV) of the participation units held by the plan at year end. The NAV, as reported by the insurance company, is used as a practical expedient to estimate fair value. The NAV is based on the fair value of the underlying mutual fund held in the subaccounts.

(Continued)

**FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL
(Continued)
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023**

CONTRIBUTION RECEIVABLES - LENGTH OF SERVICE AWARD PROGRAM

Receivables as of December 31, 2023 are as follows:

	2023
The Board of Fire Commissioners District No. 3	\$ 64,170

LENGTH OF SERVICE AWARD PROGRAM - CASH AND INVESTMENTS

The following table sets forth by level, within the fair value hierarchy, the Plan's assets at fair value as of December 31, 2023.

Assets at Fair Value as of December 31, 2023

Pooled Separate Accounts:	<u>Level 1</u>	<u>Level 2</u>	<u>Level 3</u>	<u>Total</u>
Asset Allocation Fund	\$ 12,327	\$	\$	\$ 12,327
Fixed Account Plus	95,441			95,441
Government Securities Fund	3,280			3,280
Growth Fund	31,490			31,490
GS Vit Gov Money Mkt Fund Inst	11,066			11,066
International Equities Index Fund	24,426			24,426
Mid Cap Strategic Growth Fund	3,403			3,403
Mid Cap Index Fund	107,337			107,337
Moderate Growth Lifestyle	24,065			24,065
NASDAQ-100(R) Index Fund	74,225			74,225
Science & Technology Fund	237,115			237,115
Short Term Fixed Account	233,560			233,560
Small Cap Growth Fund	64,048			64,048
Small Cap Index Fund	15,962			15,962
Stock Index Fund	120,426			120,426
Systematic Core Fund	20,563			20,563
Systematic Growth Fund	6,486			6,486
Systematic Value	6,903			6,903
Total Pooled Separate Accounts	\$ 1,092,123	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,092,123
Total Assets at Fair Value	\$ 1,092,123	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,092,123

(Continued)

REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

**FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL
BUDGETARY COMPARISON SCHEDULE
GENERAL FUND
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023**

	<u>Budgeted Amounts</u>		<u>Actual Budgetary Basis</u>	<u>Variance with Final Budget Positive (Negative)</u>
	<u>Original</u>	<u>Modified</u>		
Revenues				
Miscellaneous anticipated revenues:				
Interest investments and deposits	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500	\$ 62,006	\$ 54,506
Miscellaneous revenue				-
Total miscellaneous anticipated revenues	<u>7,500</u>	<u>7,500</u>	<u>62,006</u>	<u>54,506</u>
Amount to be raised by taxation to support the district budget	<u>1,051,935</u>	<u>1,051,935</u>	<u>1,051,935</u>	<u>-</u>
Total anticipated revenues	1,059,435	1,059,435	1,113,941	54,506
Non-budgetary revenues:				
Miscellaneous			<u>14,892</u>	<u>14,892</u>
Total revenues	1,059,435	1,059,435	1,128,833	69,398
Expenditures				
Operating appropriations:				
Administration:				
Commissioners salaries	54,300	58,300	58,300	-
Fringe benefits	22,220	18,220	8,126	10,094
Advertising	3,000	3,000	1,049	1,951
Elections	5,000	5,000	3,033	1,967
Professional fees	65,000	65,000	56,395	8,605
Administration	<u>21,000</u>	<u>21,000</u>	<u>9,714</u>	<u>11,286</u>
Total administration	<u>170,520</u>	<u>170,520</u>	<u>136,617</u>	<u>33,903</u>
Cost of operations and maintenance:				
New equipment		6,000	5,163	837
Materials and supplies	69,000	87,000	86,655	345
Insurance	132,000	110,000	106,209	3,791
Repairs and maintenance	85,000	104,000	103,560	440
Hydrant charges	83,100	84,100	83,664	436
Training and education	57,000	21,000	20,370	630
Reimbursement-expenses and losses	22,000	22,000	12,205	9,795
Lease	71,500	71,500	71,500	-
Shared service agreement		14,000	13,549	451
Utilities	<u>36,000</u>	<u>36,000</u>	<u>24,578</u>	<u>11,422</u>
Total cost of operations and maintenance	<u>555,600</u>	<u>555,600</u>	<u>527,453</u>	<u>28,147</u>

(Continued)

**FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL
BUDGETARY COMPARISON SCHEDULE
GENERAL FUND
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023**

	<u>Budgeted Amounts</u>		<u>Actual Budgetary Basis</u>	<u>Variance with Final Budget Positive (Negative)</u>
	<u>Original</u>	<u>Modified</u>		
Expenditures (Continued)				
Capital appropriations:				
Capital appropriations	200,000	200,000	1,907	198,093
Length of service award program (LOSAP)	60,000	60,000	64,170	(4,170)
Debt service for capital appropriations:				
Principal payment on debt service	76,000	76,000		76,000
Interest payment on debt service	36,840	36,840	14,563	22,277
Total debt service for capital appropriations	112,840	112,840	14,563	98,277
Total expenditures	<u>1,098,960</u>	<u>1,098,960</u>	<u>744,710</u>	<u>354,250</u>
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over (under) expenditures	<u>(39,525)</u>	<u>(39,525)</u>	<u>384,123</u>	<u>423,648</u>
Fund balance, January 1			<u>2,346,717</u>	
Fund balance, December 31			<u>\$ 2,730,840</u>	
RECAPITULATION OF FUND BALANCE				
Restricted fund balance				
Capital projects			\$ 1,788,306	
Assigned fund balance				
Designated for subsequent year's expenditures			217,575	
Other purposes			-	
Unassigned fund balance			<u>724,959</u>	
Total budgetary basis			2,730,840	
Reconciliation to governmental fund statements::				
Length of service award program investment balance not recognized on the budgetary basis			<u>1,156,293</u>	
Total fund balance per governmental funds			<u>\$ 3,887,133</u>	

**FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL
RECONCILIATION OF BUDGET TO STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES
AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023**

Sources/Inflows of Resources:

Actual amount (budgetary basis) total revenues from budgetary comparison schedule (C - 1)	\$ 1,128,833
Budgetary basis differs from GAAP in that the District does not budget for length of service award program investment income (loss)	<u>185,207</u>
Total revenues as reported on the statement of revenues, expenditures, and changes in fund balance - governmental funds (B - 2)	\$ <u><u>1,314,040</u></u>

Use/Outflows of Resources:

Actual amount (budgetary basis) total expenditures from budgetary comparison schedule (C - 1)	744,710
Budgetary basis differs from GAAP in that the District is required to budget for contributions to the length of service award program. Expenditures under the current financial resources measurement focus and modified accrual basis of accounting are limited to the benefits paid in accordance with the plan	
Length of service award program district contribution	(64,170)
Participant distributions and forfeitures	<u>-</u>
Total expenditures as reported on the statement of revenues, expenditures, and changes in fund balance - governmental funds (B - 2)	\$ <u><u>680,540</u></u>

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL

NOTES TO THE REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
DECEMBER 31, 2023

Length of Service Awards Program (LOSAP)

Changes in Benefit Terms

None.

Changes of Assumptions

None.

**FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL
SCHEDULE OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023**

Schedule of Financial Statement Findings

This section identifies the significant deficiencies, material weaknesses, and instances of noncompliance related to the financial statements that are required to be reported in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* and with audit requirements as prescribed by the Bureau of Authority Regulation, Division of Local Government Services, Department of Community Affairs, State of New Jersey.

LOSAP Contributions

During our audit we noted the District budgeted \$60,000 for LOSAP contributions for its members. During 2023, the District contributed \$64,170 in LOSAP contributions for its members. The District contributed \$4,170 more than they budgeted during 2023 as a result of more members qualifying and are therefore over the line item.

The District needs to budget additional funds to cover LOSAP contributions.

Commissioner Compensation

During our audit we noted the District budgeted \$54,300 for Commissioner Compensation. This amount was set by the District through a Resolution which was submitted to the Township who approved this amount of 2023 Commissioner Compensation by Resolution. The 2023 Commissioners Compensation was \$58,300 which is \$4,000 more than set and approved by Resolutions. The reason for the additional compensation is Commissioners receive an additional \$250 for any special meetings.

The Resolution submitted to the Township should include the \$250 for special meetings. This can be estimated and included in the total Commissioners Compensation.

**FIRE DISTRICT NO. 4
TOWNSHIP OF HOWELL
SUMMARY SCHEDULE OF PRIOR YEAR AUDIT FINDINGS
AND RECOMMENDATIONS AS PREPARED BY MANAGEMENT**

This section identifies the status of prior year findings related to the financial statements that are required to be reported in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*.

None.