

Reporting and insights from 2020 audit:

Great Lakes Water Authority

June 30, 2020

Executive summary

December 18, 2020

To the Board of Directors
Great Lakes Water Authority
Detroit, Michigan

We have completed our audit of the financial statements of the Great Lakes Water Authority for the year ended June 30, 2020, and have issued our report thereon dated December 18, 2020. This letter presents communications required by our professional standards.

Your audit should provide you with confidence in your financial statements. The audit was performed based on information obtained from meetings with management, data from your systems, knowledge of the Authority's operating environment and our risk assessment procedures. We strive to provide you clear, concise communication throughout the audit process and of the final results of our audit.

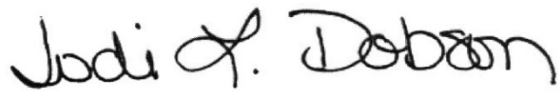
Additionally, we have included information on key risk areas Great Lakes Water Authority should be aware of in your strategic planning. We are available to discuss these risks as they relate to your organization's financial stability and future planning.

If you have questions at any point, please connect with us:

- Jodi L Dobson, Partner: jodi.dobson@bakertilly.com or +1 (608) 240.2469
- Gwen Zech, Manager: gwen.zech@bakertilly.com or +1 (608) 240.2443

Sincerely,

Baker Tilly US, LLP

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jodi L. Dobson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jodi L Dobson, CPA, Partner

Table of contents

Executive summary.....	2
Audit objectives	5
Our responsibilities	5
Management's responsibilities	6
Audit status	8
Significant changes to the audit plan.....	8
Audit approach and results	10
Planned scope and timing	10
Key areas of focus and significant findings	10
Internal control matters.....	12
Required communications	13
Accounting changes relevant to the Great Lakes Water Authority	18
Trending challenges for organizations	21
2020 strategic risks for boards	21
Cybersecurity.....	21
Data privacy.....	22
The talent problem.....	22
Innovation	23
Operational and organizational sustainability.....	23
COVID-19 Risks and ongoing response.....	24
Appendix A: Client service team	25
Appendix B: Management representation letter	27
Appendix C: Two-way communication regarding your audit.....	36

THIS COMMUNICATION IS INTENDED SOLELY FOR THE INFORMATION AND USE OF THOSE CHARGED WITH GOVERNANCE, AND, IF APPROPRIATE, MANAGEMENT, AND IS NOT INTENDED TO BE AND SHOULD NOT BE USED BY ANYONE OTHER THAN THESE SPECIFIED PARTIES.

Audit objectives



Audit objectives

Our responsibilities




As your independent auditor, our responsibilities include:

- Planning and performing the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance.
- Assessing the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. Included in that assessment is a consideration of the Authority's internal control over financial reporting.
- Performing appropriate procedures based upon our risk assessment.
- Evaluating the appropriateness of the accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management.
- Forming and expressing an opinion based on our audit about whether the financial statements prepared by management, with the oversight of the Board of Directors:
 - Are free from material misstatement
 - Present fairly, in all material respects, and in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America
- Performing tests related to compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts and grants, as required by *Government Auditing Standards*
- Considering internal control over compliance with requirements that could have a direct and material effect on major federal programs to design tests of both controls and compliance with identified requirements
- Forming and expressing an opinion based on our audit in accordance with OMB's *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards* (Uniform Guidance) about the entity's compliance with requirements described in the *OMB Compliance Supplement* that could have a direct and material effect on each of its major federal programs.

We are also required to communicate significant matters related to our audit that are relevant to the responsibilities of the Board of Directors, including:

- Qualitative aspects of Authority's accounting practice including policies, accounting estimates and financial statement disclosures
- Significant difficulties encountered
- Disagreements with management
- Corrected and uncorrected misstatements
- Internal control matters
- Significant estimates
- Other findings or issues arising from the audit

Management's responsibilities

Management	Auditor
 <p>Prepare and fairly present the financial statements</p>	<p>Our audit does not relieve management or the Board of Directors of their responsibilities</p>
 <p>Establish and maintain effective internal control over financial reporting and compliance with laws, regulations, contracts and grants</p>	<p>An audit includes consideration of internal control over financial reporting, but not an expression of an opinion on those controls</p>
<p>Compliance with the types of requirements described in the <i>OMB Compliance Supplement</i></p>	<p>While our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion on compliance, it does not provide a legal determination on compliance with those requirements.</p>
 <p>Provide us with written representations at the conclusion of the audit</p>	<p>See Appendix B for a copy of management's representations</p>

Audit status



Audit status

Significant changes to the audit plan

There were no significant changes made to either our planned audit strategy or to the significant risks and other areas of emphasis identified during the performance of our risk assessment procedures.

Audit approach and results



Audit approach and results

Planned scope and timing

Audit focus

Based on our understanding of the Authority and environment in which you operate, we focused our audit on the following key areas:

- Key transaction cycles
- Areas with significant estimates
- Implementation of new accounting standards

Our areas of audit focus were informed by, among other things, our assessment of materiality. Materiality in the context of our audit was determined based on specific qualitative and quantitative factors combined with our expectations about the Authority's current year results.

Key areas of focus and significant findings

Significant risks of material misstatement

A significant risk is an identified and assessed risk of material misstatement that, in the auditor's professional judgment, requires special audit consideration. Within our audit, we focused on the following areas below.

Significant risk areas	Testing approach	Conclusion
Management override of controls	Incorporate unpredictability into audit procedures, emphasize professional skepticism and utilize audit team with industry expertise	Procedures identified provided sufficient evidence for our audit opinion
Improper revenue recognition due to fraud	Confirmation or validation of certain revenues supplemented with detailed predictive analytics based on non-financial data and substantive testing of related receivables	Procedures identified provided sufficient evidence for our audit opinion

Other key areas of emphasis

We also focused on other areas that did not meet the definition of a significant risk, but were determined to require specific awareness and a unique audit response.

Other key areas of emphasis		
Cash and investments	Revenues and receivables	General disbursements
Payroll	Pension liability	Long-term debt
Capital assets including intangible assets	Net position calculations	Financial reporting and required disclosures
Shared services with and received from DWSD	Lease payables	Due to and due from other governments

Internal control matters

We considered the Authority's internal control over financial reporting as a basis for designing our audit procedures for the purpose of expressing our opinions on the financial statements. We are not expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Authority's internal control.

Our consideration of internal control was for the limited purpose described in the preceding paragraph and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies and, therefore, material weaknesses or significant deficiencies may exist that were not identified.

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 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. We did not identify any deficiencies in internal control that we consider to be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies.

Required communications

Qualitative aspect of accounting practices

- Accounting policies: Management is responsible for the selection and use of appropriate accounting policies. In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter, we have advised management about the appropriateness of accounting policies and their application. The significant accounting policies used by Authority are described in Note 1 to the financial statements. No new accounting policies were adopted and the application of existing accounting policies was not changed during fiscal year 2020. We noted no transactions entered into by the Authority during the year for which accounting policies are controversial or for which there is a lack of authoritative guidance or consensus or diversity in practice.
- Accounting estimates: Accounting estimates, including fair value estimates, are an integral part of the financial statements prepared by management and are based on management's knowledge and experience about past and current events and assumptions about future events. Certain accounting estimates are particularly sensitive because of their significance to the financial statements, the degree of subjectivity involved in their development and because of the possibility that future events affecting them may differ significantly from those expected. The following estimates are of most significance to the financial statements:

Estimate	Management's process to determine	Baker Tilly's conclusions regarding reasonableness
Accrued compensated absences	Evaluation of hours earned and accumulated in accordance with employment policies and average wage per hour rates	Reasonable in relation to the financial statements as a whole
Workers' compensation claims	Evaluation based on third-party administrators and subsequent claim activity.	Reasonable in relation to the financial statements as a whole
Allowance for doubtful accounts	Evaluation of historical revenues and loss levels with the analysis on collectability of individual amounts	Reasonable in relation to the financial statements as a whole
Net pension liability and related deferrals	Key assumptions set by management with the assistance of a third party actuary	Reasonable in relation to the financial statements as a whole
Depreciation	Evaluate estimated useful life of the asset and original acquisition value	Reasonable in relation to the financial statements as a whole
Shared services subject to joint review and true up	Evaluation based on joint review and agreement between parties	Reasonable in relation to the financial statements as a whole

There have been no significant changes made by management to either the processes used to develop the particularly sensitive accounting estimates, or to the significant assumptions used to develop the estimates, noted above.

- Financial statement disclosures: The disclosures in the financial statements are neutral, consistent and clear.

Significant unusual transactions

There have been no significant transactions that are outside the normal course of business for the Authority or that otherwise appear to be unusual due to their timing, size or nature.

Other information in documents containing audited financial statements

The Authority's audited financial statements are "general purpose" financial statements. General purpose financial statements consist of the basic financial statements that can be used by a broad group of people for a broad range of activities. Once we have issued our audit report, we have no further obligation to update our report for events occurring subsequent to the date of our report. The Authority can use the audited financial statements in other client prepared documents, such as official statements related to the issuance of debt, without our acknowledgement. Unless we have been engaged to perform services in connection with any subsequent transaction requiring the inclusion of our audit report, as well as to issue an auditor's acknowledgment letter, we have neither read the document nor performed subsequent event procedures in order to determine whether or not our report remains appropriate.

Difficulties encountered during the audit

We encountered no significant difficulties in dealing with management and completing our audit.

Disagreements with management

Professional standards define a disagreement with management as a matter, whether or not resolved to our satisfaction, concerning a financial accounting, reporting, or auditing matter that could be significant to the financial statements or the auditors' report. We are pleased to report that no such disagreements arose during the course of our audit.

Management's consultations with other accountants

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

Written communications between management and Baker Tilly

The Appendix includes copies of other material written communications, including a copy of the management representation letter.

Uncorrected misstatements and corrected misstatements

Professional standards require us to accumulate all known and likely misstatements identified during the audit, other than those that are trivial, and communicate them to the appropriate level of management. There were no misstatements identified.

Compliance with laws and regulations

We did not identify any non-compliance with laws and regulations during our audit.

We will issue a separate document which contains the results of our audit procedures to comply with the Uniform Guidance.

Fraud

We did not identify any known or suspected fraud during our audit.

Going concern

Pursuant to professional standards, we are required to communicate to you, when applicable, certain matters relating to our evaluation of the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time but no less than 12 months from the date the financial statements are issued or available to be issued, including the effects on the financial statements and the adequacy of the related disclosures, and the effects on the auditor's report. No such matters or conditions have come to our attention during our engagement.

Independence

We are not aware of any relationships between Baker Tilly and the Authority that, in our professional judgment, may reasonably be thought to bear on our independence.

Related parties

We did not have any significant findings or issues arise during the audit in connection with the Authority's related parties.

Other audit findings or issues

We encountered no other audit findings or issues that require communication at this time.

We generally discuss a variety of matters, including the application of accounting principles and auditing standards, with management each year prior to retention as the Authority's auditors. However, these discussions occurred in the normal course of our professional relationship and our responses were not a condition to our retention.

Other matters

We applied certain limited procedures to the required supplementary information (RSI) that supplements the basic financial statements. Our procedures consisted of inquiries of management regarding 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 did not audit the RSI and do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the RSI.

We were engaged to report on the supplementary information which accompanies the financial statements but is not RSI. With respect to the supplementary information, we made certain inquiries of management and evaluated the form, content, and methods of preparing the information to determine that the information complies with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, the method of preparing it has not changed from the prior period, and the information is appropriate and complete in relation to our audit of the financial statements. We compared and reconciled the supplementary information to the underlying accounting records used to prepare the financial statements or to the financial statements themselves.

We were not engaged to report on the other information, which accompanies the financial statements but are not RSI. We did not audit or perform other procedures on this other information and we do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on it.

An aerial photograph of a winding asphalt road with white dashed lines, curving through a dense green forest. A small stream flows through the forest in the upper right corner.

Accounting changes relevant to the Great Lakes Water Authority

Accounting changes relevant to the Great Lakes Water Authority

Future accounting standards updates

GASB Statement Number	Description	Potentially Impacts you	Effective Date
84	Fiduciary Activities	✓	6/30/21*
87	Leases	✓	6/30/22*
90	Majority Equity Interests and amendment of GASB Statements No. 14 and No. 61		6/30/22*
91	Conduit Debt	✓	6/30/23*
92	Omnibus 2020	✓	6/30/22*
93	Replacement of Interfund Bank Offered Rates	✓	6/30/22*
94	Public-Private and Public-Public Partnerships and Availability Payment Arrangements	✓	6/30/23
96	Subscription-Based Information Technology Arrangements	✓	6/30/23
97	Certain Component Unit Criteria, and Accounting and Financial Reporting for Internal Revenue Code Section 457 Deferred Compensation Plans	✓	6/30/21 (for certain component unit criteria), 6/30/22 (for 457 Plans)

*The statements listed above through Statement No. 93 had their required effective dates postponed by one year with the issuance of Statement No. 95, *Postponement of Effective Dates of Certain Authoritative Guidance*, with the exception of Statement No. 87 which was postponed by one and a half years. The effective date reflected above is the required revised implementation date.

Further information on upcoming [GASB pronouncements](#)

Preparing for the new lease standard

GASB's new single model for lease accounting will be effective for the upcoming year. This standard will require governments to identify and evaluate contracts that convey control of the right to use another entity's nonfinancial asset as specified in the contract for a period of time in an exchange or exchange-like transaction. Contracts meeting the criteria for control, term and other items within the standard will result in recognizing a right to use asset and lease liability or a receivable and deferred inflow of resources.

We recommend the Authority review this standard and start planning now as to how this will affect your financial reporting. We recommend that you begin by completing an inventory of all contracts that might meet the definition of a lease. The contract listing should include key terms of the contracts such as:

- Description of contract
- Underlying asset
- Contract term
- Options for extensions and terminations
- Service components, if any
- Dollar amount of lease

In addition, the Authority should begin to establish a lease policy to address the treatment of common lease types, including a dollar threshold for each lease. We are available to discuss this further and help you develop an action plan.

Learn more about [GASB 87](#).

Planning for the new conduit debt reporting

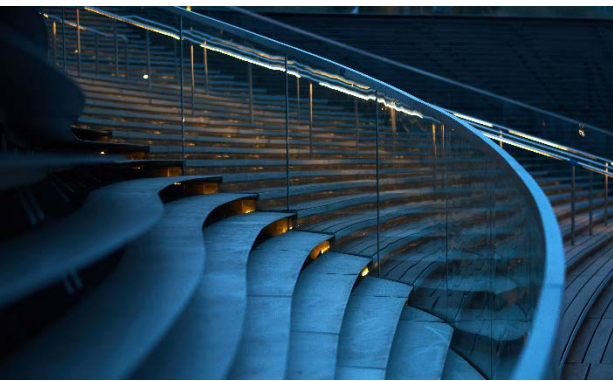
Conduit debt includes arrangements where there are three separate parties involved including a third party that is obligated for payment, a debt holder or lender and an issuing party which is often a government. This standard provides additional criteria for identifying and classifying conduit debt with the intent of providing consistency in how the debt is recorded and reported in governmental financial statements. The Authority should identify any existing debt arrangements involving third party obligors and evaluate how those arrangements will be reported under the new standard in order to determine the potential impact of this standard on future financial reporting.

Trending challenges for organizations

Trending challenges for organizations

Management and the governing body of the Authority must keep the future in mind as they evaluate strategies to achieve future growth. Keeping a balance between risk and sustainability is key, and organizations need to think beyond their immediate needs to their long term goals. Economic uncertainty, coupled with key risk areas and fast paced technology change, make strategic planning complex. Begin the discussion with your management team to find your path to your future.

2020 strategic risks for boards



Evaluating and mitigating the greatest risks

Public sector organizations face a multitude of internal and external risks in an evolving landscape. Risks can stem from strategy, finances, legal situations, operations, regulatory compliance, information technology, economic environment, and/or fraud, waste and abuse.

By employing a risk assessment, areas with the greatest needs and highest risks are evaluated. Then a risk mitigation plan can be developed and deployed.

Learn about [risk assessment](#) types, tools and strategies.

Cybersecurity

Operational reporting on cybersecurity effectiveness

As boards engage management in cybersecurity risk discussions, directors should expect management to produce reports on the effectiveness of the organization's cybersecurity-risk management program. Management can (and should) collect and analyze relevant performance measures and metrics to determine if cybersecurity safeguards and controls are operating as intended, and whether any corrective action should be taken to strengthen management's risk-mitigation approaches. While not an exhaustive list, some key processes on which management should report include these:

- Incident management
- Risk management and governance
- Independent assurance on the cybersecurity program

[Learn more](#) about cybersecurity risk management.



[WATCH: On demand webinar about board governance over cybersecurity.](#)

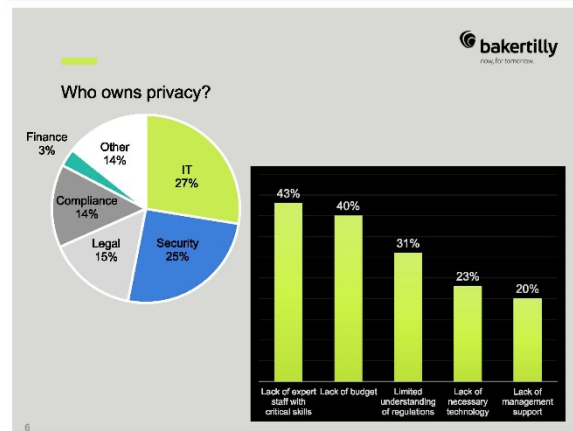
Data privacy

Elevating privacy risks to the forefront of board agendas

Organizations around the world are still scrambling to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation in the European Union, which went into effect in May 2018. While the data privacy regulatory environment changes rapidly, organizations can take proactive steps to ensure that they stay informed of the existing regulations and of those developing on the near horizon.

Adequate oversight remains a key part of staying on top of data privacy developments. Some regulations specify oversight requirements, and can depend on the type of the organization, the quantity and type of personal data processed, and the locations where operations take place. In many cases, a data protection officer (DPO) must lead the effort. Since the DPO is responsible for overseeing practices related to data protection strategy and implementation, having one in place early on will help ensure that the privacy program is comprehensive and consistent.

Learn more about [data privacy risk management](#).



[WATCH: On demand webinar about a risk-based approach to oversight, compliance and management of privacy](#)

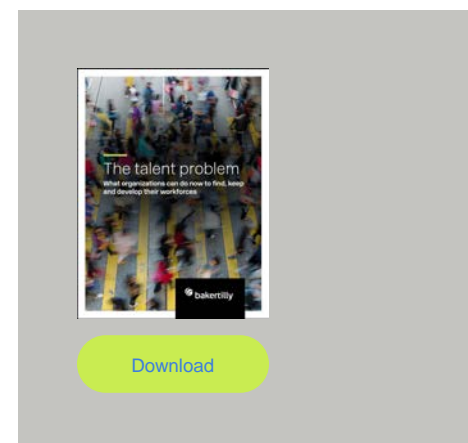
The talent problem

Establishing a lifeline for your shifting workforce

Employee recruitment and retention challenges are an all too common struggle in the public sector:

- Aging workers with institutional knowledge retire
- High demand for small qualified candidate pool
- Perception of geographic disadvantages
- Wage/benefit competition with private sector
- Lean operations exclude investments in recruitment, on-the-job training and technology
- Unclear growth and career advancement tracks

Sustainable organizations must have a robust workforce development and succession planning program. Learn how to get started and incorporate a workforce/succession planning program with existing operational practices.



Innovation

Anticipating disruptive innovation and digital transformation

To stay competitive and relevant in a rapidly changing business landscape, organizations in every industry must navigate an increasingly disruptive, technology-enabled environment. Companies that do not address and embrace new and emerging technologies will be less competitive or may even face obsolescence.

Given these challenges to companies, what does innovation mean in this era of digital transformation? Innovation now involves finding the right problems worth solving; building new offerings, business models, and experiences; and generating value at scale for customers.

Furthermore, the rapid digital transformation of advanced technologies such as blockchain, robotic process automation (RPA), and artificial intelligence (AI) now portend similar effects in industries from financial services and healthcare to communications and manufacturing. Boards must become

knowledgeable about these digital disruption trends in order to be able to conduct meaningful oversight that management can use successfully as the company embraces new technologies.

Anticipating Disruptive Innovation and Digital Transformation

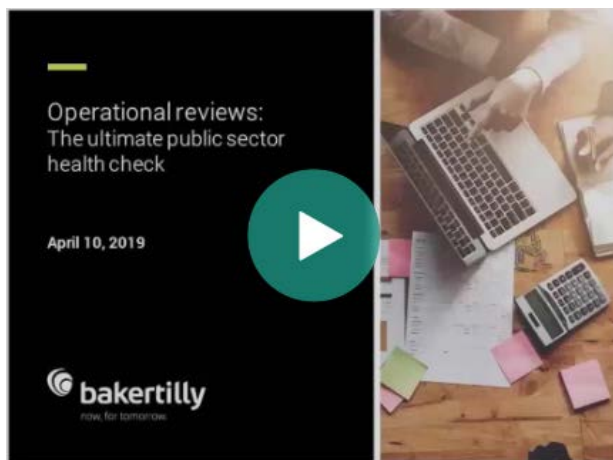
To stay competitive and relevant in a rapidly changing business landscape, organizations in every industry must navigate an increasingly disruptive, technology-enabled environment.

[Read the blog post.](#)

Learn more about [innovation opportunities](#).

Operational and organizational sustainability

Aligning resources with strategy



As new demands confront the public sector industry, it's easy to solve an immediate problem instead of pausing to take a holistic view. Rippling inefficiencies, increasing financial pressures, taxing staff resources and plummeting constituent satisfaction can pile atop organizations already facing pressure to improve efficiency, effectiveness, relevance and financial viability.

An operational review follows a systematic, strategic approach to understanding an entity's operations and performance. Opportunities to improve processes, bolster internal controls and reduce costs are uncovered in order to realign organizational resources and strategic objectives.

Learn invaluable methods for [executing an operational review](#) while maintaining day-to-day operations.

COVID-19 Risks and ongoing response

Staying nimble and resilient during unprecedented disruption

COVID-19 has challenged all organizations and the effects continue to unfold. It is critical that management and governing bodies stay nimble to respond to direct and indirect effects of this disruption on operations, cash flow, and people. Some best practices to consider include:

- Establish mechanisms to track COVID-19 related expenses, lost revenues or delayed revenues
- Monitor cash flow projections and seek short term liquidity help
- Create a policy and forms for compliance with Family First Coronavirus Response Act
- Compare anticipated results to bond covenants and track any continuing disclosure items
- Re-evaluate TIF projections with revised development scenarios
- Develop a strategy for leading your community through the crisis



Learn about public sector [Coronavirus resources](#), including the latest news on business continuity and cash flow management, Federal stimulus and tax developments, and more.

A photograph showing a group of hands of various skin tones holding small green seedlings with soil. The hands are arranged in a circle, and the seedlings are held in the palms. The background is dark and out of focus.

Appendix A: Client service team

Client service team



Jodi L Dobson, CPA

Partner

10 Terrace Ct
Madison, WI 53707
United States

T +1 (608) 240 2469

jodi.dobson@bakertilly.com



Gwen Zech, CPA

Manager

10 Terrace Ct
Madison, WI 53707
United States

T +1 (608) 240 2443

gwen.zech@bakertilly.com

A photograph of two men in an office setting. The man on the right, with a beard and wearing a light blue button-down shirt, is smiling and shaking hands with the man on the left. The man on the left is seen from the back, wearing a white shirt and glasses. They are standing behind a wooden desk. On the desk, there is a laptop, a tablet, a white mug, a small potted plant, and some papers. A window is visible in the background, showing a view of a building exterior.

Appendix B: Management representation letter



Office of the Chief Executive
735 Randolph Street, Suite 1900
Detroit, Michigan 48226

December 18, 2020

Baker Tilly US, LLP
Ten Terrace Court
PO Box 7398
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Baker Tilly US, LLP:

We are providing this letter in connection with your audit of the financial statements of the Great Lakes Water Authority as of June 30, 2020 and for the year then ended for the purpose of expressing opinions as to whether the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Great Lakes Water Authority (Authority), each major enterprise fund, and the respective changes in financial position and cash flows, where applicable, in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. We confirm that we are responsible for the fair presentation of the previously mentioned financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. We are also responsible for adopting sound accounting policies, establishing and maintaining internal control over financial reporting, and preventing and detecting fraud.

Certain representations in this letter are described as being limited to matters that are material. Items are considered material, regardless of size, if they involve an omission or misstatement of accounting information that, in the light of surrounding circumstances, makes it probable that the judgment of a reasonable person relying on the information would be changed or influenced by the omission or misstatement. An omission or misstatement that is monetarily small in amount could be considered material as a result of qualitative factors.

We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, the following representations made to you during your audit.

Financial Statements

1. We have fulfilled our responsibilities, as set out in the terms of the audit engagement letter.
2. The financial statements referred to above are fairly presented in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. We have engaged you to advise us in fulfilling that responsibility. The financial statements include all properly classified funds of the Authority required by accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America to be included in the financial reporting entity.
3. We acknowledge our responsibility 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.

4. We acknowledge our responsibility for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud.
5. Significant assumptions we used in making accounting estimates, if any, are reasonable.
6. All events subsequent to the date of the financial statements and for which accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require adjustment or disclosure have been adjusted or disclosed. No other events, including instances of noncompliance, have occurred subsequent to the financial statement date and through the date of this letter that would require adjustment to or disclosure in the aforementioned financial statements or in the schedule of expenditures of federal and state awards.
7. All material transactions have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements and the schedule of expenditures of federal and state awards.
8. There are no known or possible litigation, claims, and assessments whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements. There are no unasserted claims or assessments that our lawyer has advised us are probable of assertion and must be disclosed in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.
9. Guarantees, whether written or oral, under which the Authority is contingently liable, if any, have been properly recorded or disclosed.

Information Provided

10. We have provided you with:
 - a. Access to all information, of which we are aware, that is relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements, such as financial records and related data, documentation, and other matters and all audit or relevant monitoring reports, if any, received from funding sources.
 - b. Additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit.
 - c. Unrestricted access to persons within the entity from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence.
 - d. Minutes of the meetings of Board of Directors or summaries of actions of recent meetings for which minutes have not yet been prepared.
11. We have disclosed to you results of our assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.
12. We have no knowledge of any fraud or suspected fraud that affects the entity and involves:
 - a. Management,

- b. Employees who have significant roles in internal control, or
 - c. Others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements.
13. We have no knowledge of any allegations of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the entity received in communications from employees, former employees, regulators, or others.
14. We have no knowledge of known instances of noncompliance or suspected noncompliance with provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, or grant agreements, or abuse, whose effects should be considered when preparing financial statements.
15. There are no known related parties or related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware.

Other

16. There have been no communications from regulatory agencies concerning noncompliance with, or deficiencies in, financial reporting practices.
17. We have taken timely and appropriate steps to remedy fraud, noncompliance with provisions of laws, regulations, contracts or grant agreements, or abuse that you have reported to us.
18. We have a process to track the status of audit findings and recommendations.
19. We have provided our views on reported findings, conclusions, and recommendations, as well as our planned corrective actions, for our report.
20. The Authority has no plans or intentions that may materially affect the carrying value or classification of assets, liabilities, or equity.
21. We are responsible for compliance with federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and provisions of contracts and grant agreements applicable to us, including tax or debt limits, debt contracts, and IRS arbitrage regulations; and we have identified and disclosed to you all federal, state, and local laws, regulations and provisions of contracts and grant agreements that we believe have a direct and material effect on the determination of financial statement amounts or other financial data significant to the audit objectives, including legal and contractual provisions for reporting specific activities in separate funds.
22. There are no:
- a. Violations or possible violations of budget ordinances, federal, state, and local laws or regulations (including those pertaining to adopting, approving and amending budgets), provisions of contracts and grant agreements, tax or debt limits, and any related debt covenants whose effects should be considered for disclosure in the financial statements or as a basis for recording a loss contingency, or for reporting on noncompliance, except those already disclosed in the financial statement, if any.
 - b. Other liabilities or gain or loss contingencies that are required to be accrued or disclosed by accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

- c. Rates being charged to customers other than the rates as authorized by the applicable authoritative body.
 - d. Violations of restrictions placed on revenues as a result of bond resolution covenants such as revenue distribution or debt service funding.
23. The Great Lakes Water Authority has satisfactory title to all owned assets, and there are no liens or encumbrances on such assets nor has any asset been pledged as collateral.
24. The Great Lakes Water Authority has complied with all aspects of contractual agreements that would have a material effect on the financial statement in the event of noncompliance.
25. The financial statements properly classify all funds and activities.
26. Components of net position (net investment in capital assets; restricted; and unrestricted) are properly classified and, if applicable, approved.
27. The Great Lakes Water Authority has no derivative financial instruments such as contracts that could be assigned to someone else or net settled, interest rate swaps, collars or caps.
28. Provisions for uncollectible receivables, if any, have been properly identified and recorded.
29. Interfund, internal, and intra-entity activity and balances have been appropriately classified and reported.
30. Deposits and investments are properly classified, valued, and disclosed (including risk disclosures, collateralization agreements, valuation methods, and key inputs, as applicable).
31. Provision, when material, has been made to reduce excess or obsolete inventories to their estimated net realizable value.
32. Capital assets, including infrastructure and intangible assets, are properly capitalized, reported, and, if applicable, depreciated/amortized. Any known impairments have been recorded and disclosed.
33. Tax-exempt bonds issued have retained their tax-exempt status.
34. We have appropriately disclosed the Great Lakes Water Authority's policy regarding whether to first apply restricted or unrestricted resources when an expense is incurred for purposes for which both restricted and unrestricted net position are available and have determined that net position were properly recognized under the policy.
35. We acknowledge our responsibility for the required supplementary information (RSI). The RSI is measured and presented within prescribed guidelines and the methods of measurement and presentation have not changed from those used in the prior period.

We have disclosed to you any significant assumptions and interpretations underlying the measurement and presentation of the RSI.

36. With respect to the supplementary information, (SI):

a. We acknowledge our responsibility for presenting the SI in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and we believe the SI, including its form and content, is fairly presented in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. The methods of measurement and presentation of the SI have not changed from those used in the prior period, and we have disclosed to you any significant assumptions or interpretations underlying the measurement and presentation of the supplementary information.

b. If the SI is not presented with the audited financial statements, we will make the audited financial statements readily available to the intended users of the supplementary information no later than the date we issue the supplementary information and the auditor's report thereon.

37. We are responsible for the fair presentation of the Authority's net pension liability based upon calculations by the City of Detroit General Employees' Retirement System (GRS) and related amounts. We appropriately allocated the net pension liability based on the assumptions in the lease agreements, pension agreement and the allocation letter signed by the GLWA Chief Executive Officer and the Detroit Water & Sewerage Department (DWSD) Director on January 24, 2017. We have properly disclosed our special funding situation under GASB 68, Accounting and Financial Reporting for Pension Plans. We have reviewed the information provided by GRS for inclusion in the Authority's financial statements.

38. We have evaluated and considered all debt reported as defeased in substance and believe all material amounts held in trust that are not expressly prohibited from substitution in monetary assets that are not essentially risk-free are properly disclosed.

39. We are responsible for the estimation methods and assumptions used in measuring assets and liabilities reported or disclosed at fair value, including information obtained from brokers, pricing services or third parties. Our valuation methodologies have been consistently applied from period to period. The fair value measurements reported or disclosed represent our best estimate of fair value as the measurement date in accordance with the requirements of GASB 72 – Fair Value Measurement. In addition, our disclosures related to fair value measurements are consistent with the objectives outlined in GASB 72. We have evaluated the fair value information provided to us by brokers, pricing services or other parties that has been used in the financial statements and believe this information to be reliable and consistent with the requirements.

40. We have evaluated the existing outstanding debt for potential arbitrage liability. Any potential liability has been properly recorded.

41. We have evaluated existing contracts and agreements and are responsible for the accounting and financial reporting of any related capital or intangible assets, liabilities, receivables or deferred items in compliance with generally accepted accounting principles.

42. We are responsible for compliance with the funding requirements and the flow of funds as outlined in the Master Bond Ordinance.
43. With respect to federal award programs:
- a. We are responsible for understanding and complying with and have complied with the requirements of the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996, *OMB's Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards* (Uniform Guidance), including requirements relating to preparation of the schedule of expenditures of federal awards (SEFA).
 - b. We acknowledge our responsibility for presenting the SEFA in accordance with the requirements of the Uniform Guidance and we believe the SEFA, including its form and content, is fairly presented in accordance with the Uniform Guidance. The methods of measurement and presentation of the SEFA have not changed from those used in the prior period and we have disclosed to you any significant assumptions and interpretations underlying the measurement and presentation of the SEFA.
 - c. If the SEFA is not presented with the audited financial statements, we will make the audited financial statements readily available to the intended users of the SEFA no later than the date we issue the SEFA and the auditors' report thereon.
 - d. We have identified and disclosed to you all of our government programs and related activities subject to the Uniform Guidance and included in the SEFA, expenditures made during the audit period for all awards provided by federal agencies in the form of grants, federal cost reimbursement contracts, loans, loan guarantees, property (including donated surplus property), cooperative agreements, interest subsidies, insurance, food commodities, direct appropriations, and other direct assistance.
 - e. We are responsible for understanding and complying with, and have complied with the requirements of laws, regulations, and the provisions of contracts and grant agreements related to each of our federal programs and have identified and disclosed to you the requirements of laws, regulations, and the provisions of contracts and grant agreements that are considered to have a direct and material effect on each major federal program.
 - f. We are responsible for establishing and maintaining, and have established and maintained, effective internal control over compliance for federal programs that provide reasonable assurance that we are administering our federal awards in compliance with laws, regulations, and the provisions of contracts and grant agreements that could have a material effect on our federal programs. We believe the internal control system is adequate and is functioning as intended. Also, no changes have been made in the internal control over compliance or other factors to the date of this letter that might significantly affect internal control, including any corrective action taken with regard to control deficiencies reported in the schedule of findings and questioned costs.
 - g. We have made available to you all contracts and grant agreements (including amendments, if any) and any other correspondence with federal agencies or passthrough entities relevant to the programs and related activities.

- h. We have received no requests from a federal agency to audit one or more specific programs as a major program.
- i. We have complied with the direct and material compliance requirements including when applicable, those set forth in the OMB Compliance Supplement relating to federal awards.
- j. We have disclosed any communications from grantors and passthrough entities including communications received from the end of the period covered by the compliance audit to the date of the auditors' report.
- k. Amounts claimed or used for matching were determined in accordance with relevant guidelines in the Uniform Guidance.
- l. We have disclosed to you our interpretation of compliance requirements that may have varying interpretations.
- m. We have made available to you all documentation related to the compliance with the direct and material compliance requirements, including information related to federal program financial reports and claims for advances and reimbursements.
- n. We have disclosed to you the nature of any subsequent events that provide additional evidence about conditions that existed at the end of the reporting period affecting noncompliance during the reporting period.
- o. We are not aware of any instances of noncompliance with direct and material compliance requirements that occurred subsequent to the period covered by the auditors' report.
- p. No changes have been made in internal control over compliance or other factors that might significantly affect internal control subsequent to the date as of which compliance was audited.
- q. Federal program financial reports and claims for advances and reimbursements are supported by the books and records from which the financial statements have been prepared.
- r. The copies of federal program financial reports provided you are true copies of the reports submitted, or electronically transmitted, to the respective federal agency or passthrough entity, as applicable.
- s. We have monitored subrecipients to determine that they have expended passthrough assistance in accordance with applicable laws and regulations and have met the requirements of the Uniform Guidance.
- t. We have taken appropriate action, including issuing management decisions, on a timely basis after receipt of subrecipients' auditors' reports that identified noncompliance with laws, regulations, or the provisions of contracts or grant agreements to ensure that subrecipients have taken the appropriate and timely corrective action on findings.

- u. We have considered the results of subrecipient audits and made any necessary adjustments to our books and records.
- v. We have charged costs to federal awards in accordance with applicable cost principles.
- w. We are responsible for and have accurately prepared the summary schedule of prior audit findings to include all findings required to be included by the Uniform Guidance and we have provided you with all information on the status of the follow-up on prior audit findings by federal awarding agencies and passthrough entities, including all management decisions.
- x. We are responsible for and have accurately prepared the auditee section of the Data Collection Form as required by the Uniform Guidance.


Sincerely,



Sue F. McCormick
Chief Executive Officer



Nicolette N. Bateson, CPA
Chief Financial Officer/ Treasurer

A close-up photograph of a person's arm and hand writing on a document. The person is wearing a light blue long-sleeved shirt and a black watch with a brown leather strap. They are holding a black pen. The document is on a dark wooden table. In the background, another person's hands are visible, gesturing during a conversation. The text "Appendix C: Two-way communication regarding your audit" is overlaid in white.

Appendix C: Two-way communication regarding your audit

As part of our audit of your financial statements, we are providing communications to you throughout the audit process. Auditing requirements provide for two-way communication and are important in assisting the auditor and you with more information relevant to the audit.

As this past audit is concluded, we use what we have learned to begin the planning process for next year's audit. It is important that you understand the following points about the scope and timing of our next audit:

- a. We address the significant risks of material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, through our detailed audit procedures.
- b. We will obtain an understanding of the five components of internal control sufficient to assess the risk of material misstatement of the financial statements whether due to error or fraud, and to design the nature, timing, and extent of further audit procedures. We will obtain a sufficient understanding by performing risk assessment procedures to evaluate the design of controls relevant to an audit of financial statements and to determine whether they have been implemented. We will use such knowledge to:
 - Identify types of potential misstatements.
 - Consider factors that affect the risks of material misstatement.
 - Design tests of controls, when applicable, and substantive procedures.
- c. We will not express an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting or compliance with laws, regulations, and provisions of contracts or grant programs. For audits performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, our report will include a paragraph that states that the purpose of the report is solely to describe the scope of testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the result of that testing and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting or on compliance and that the report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering internal control over financial reporting and compliance. The paragraph will also state that the report is not suitable for any other purpose.
- d. The concept of materiality recognizes that some matters, either individually or in the aggregate, are important for fair presentation of financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles while other matters are not important. In performing the audit, we are concerned with matters that, either individually or in the aggregate, could be material to the financial statements. Our responsibility is to plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance that material misstatements, whether caused by errors or fraud, are detected.

Our audit will be performed in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and *Government Auditing Standards*, OMB's *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards* (Uniform Guidance).

We will not express an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting or compliance with laws, regulations, and provisions of contracts or grant programs. For audits done in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, the Uniform Guidance, our report will include a paragraph that states that the purpose of the report is solely to describe (a) the scope of testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the result of that testing and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting or on compliance, (b) the scope of testing internal control over compliance for major programs and major program compliance and the result of that testing and to provide an opinion on compliance but not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control over compliance and, (c) that the report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the Uniform Guidance, in considering internal control over compliance and major program compliance. The paragraph will also state that the report is not suitable for any other purpose.

We are very interested in your views regarding certain matters. Those matters are listed here:

- a. We typically will communicate with your top level of management unless you tell us otherwise.
- b. We understand that the governing board has the responsibility to oversee the strategic direction of your organization, as well as the overall accountability of the entity. Management has the responsibility for achieving the objectives of the entity.
- c. We need to know your views about your organization's objectives and strategies, and the related business risks that may result in material misstatements.
- d. We anticipate that the Authority will receive an unmodified opinion on its financial statements.
- e. Which matters do you consider warrant particular attention during the audit, and are there any areas where you request additional procedures to be undertaken?
- f. Have you had any significant communications with regulators or grantor agencies?
- g. Are there other matters that you believe are relevant to the audit of the financial statements?

Also, is there anything that we need to know about the attitudes, awareness, and actions of the governing body concerning:

- a. The entity's internal control and its importance in the entity, including how those charged with governance oversee the effectiveness of internal control?
- b. The detection or the possibility of fraud?

We also need to know if you have taken actions in response to developments in financial reporting, laws, accounting standards, governance practices, or other related matters, or in response to previous communications with us.

With regard to the timing of our audit, here is some general information. If necessary, we may do preliminary financial audit work during the months of August or September. Our final financial fieldwork is scheduled during the fall to best coincide with your readiness and report deadlines. After fieldwork, we wrap up our financial audit procedures at our office and may issue drafts of our report for your review. Final copies of our report and other communications are issued after approval by your staff. This is typically 6-12 weeks after final fieldwork, but may vary depending on a number of factors.

Keep in mind that while this communication may assist us with planning the scope and timing of the audit, it does not change the auditor's sole responsibility to determine the overall audit strategy and the audit plan, including the nature, timing, and extent of procedures necessary to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence.

We realize that you may have questions on what this all means, or wish to provide other feedback. We welcome the opportunity to hear from you.