



Retirement Plan Committee
Howard County Retirement Plan
Howard County, Maryland

We have audited the financial statements of the Howard County Retirement Plan (the Plan) as of and for the year ended June 30, 2020, and have issued our report thereon dated October 23, 2020. We have previously communicated to you information about our responsibilities under auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and *Government Auditing Standards*, as well as certain information related to the planned scope and timing of our audit. Professional standards also require that we communicate to you the following information related to our audit.

Significant audit findings

Qualitative aspects of accounting practices

Accounting policies

Management is responsible for the selection and use of appropriate accounting policies. The significant accounting policies used by the Plan are described in Note 2 to the financial statements.

No new accounting policies were adopted and the application of existing policies was not changed during June 30, 2020.

We noted no transactions entered into by the Plan during the year for which there is a lack of authoritative guidance or consensus. All significant transactions have been recognized in the financial statements in the proper period.

Accounting estimates

Accounting 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 and because of the possibility that future events affecting them may differ significantly from those expected. The most sensitive estimates affecting the financial statements were:

- The valuation of alternative investments are a management estimate which is primarily based upon net asset values reported by the investment managers. The values for these investments are reported based upon the most recent financial data available. Our audit procedures validated this approach through the use of confirmations sent directly to a sample of investment managers and the review of the most recent audited financial statements for these funds. Furthermore, we reviewed management's estimate and found it to be reasonable in relation to the financial statements taken as a whole.
- Management's estimate of the net pension liability is based on computations performed by outside specialists, including actuarial computations and assumptions that were relied upon. We evaluated the key factors and assumptions used to develop the net pension liability in determining that it is reasonable in relation to the financial statements taken as a whole.

Financial statement disclosures

Certain financial statement disclosures are particularly sensitive because of their significance to financial statement users. There were no particularly sensitive financial statement disclosures.

The financial statement disclosures are neutral, consistent, and clear.

Difficulties encountered in performing the audit

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

Uncorrected misstatements

Professional standards require us to accumulate all misstatements identified during the audit, other than those that are clearly trivial, and communicate them to the appropriate level of management. Management did not identify and we did not notify them of any uncorrected financial statement misstatements.

Corrected misstatements

Management did not identify and we did not notify them of any financial statement misstatements detected as a result of audit procedures.

Disagreements with management

For purposes of this letter, a disagreement with management is a financial accounting, reporting, or auditing matter, whether or not resolved to our satisfaction, that could be significant to the financial statements or the auditors' report. No such disagreements arose during our audit.

Management representations

We have requested certain representations from management that are included in the attached management representation letter dated October 23, 2020.

Management consultations with other independent accountants

In some cases, management may decide to consult with other accountants about auditing and accounting matters, similar to obtaining a "second opinion" on certain situations. If a consultation involves application of an accounting principle to the Plan's financial statements or a determination of the type of auditors' opinion that may be expressed on those statements, our professional standards require the consulting accountant to check with us to determine that the consultant has all the relevant facts. To our knowledge, there were no such consultations with other accountants.

Significant issues discussed with management prior to engagement

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

Other information in documents containing audited financial statements

With respect to the required supplementary information (RSI) accompanying the financial statements, we made certain inquiries of management about the methods of preparing the RSI, including whether the RSI has been measured and presented in accordance with prescribed guidelines, whether the methods of measurement and preparation have been changed from the prior period and the reasons for any such changes, and whether there were any significant assumptions or interpretations underlying the measurement or presentation of the RSI. We compared the RSI for consistency with management's responses to the foregoing inquiries, the basic financial statements, and other knowledge obtained during the audit of the basic financial statements. Because these limited procedures do not provide sufficient evidence, we did not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the RSI.

Our auditors' opinion, the audited financial statements, and the notes to financial statements should only be used in their entirety. Inclusion of the audited financial statements in a document you prepare, such as an annual report, should be done only with our prior approval and review of the document.

* * *

This communication is intended solely for the information and use of the Retirement Plan Committee and management of Howard County Retirement Plan and is not intended to be, and should not be, used by anyone other than these specified parties.



CliftonLarsonAllen LLP

Baltimore, Maryland
October 23, 2020



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

3430 Court House Drive Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

410-313-2195

Rafiu O. Ighile, CPA, CGMA, MBA
Director of Finance
righile@howardcountymd.gov

FAX 410-313-4064
TDD 410-313-2323

October 23, 2020

CliftonLarsonAllen LLP
1966 Greenspring Drive, Suite 300
Timonium, Maryland 21093

This representation letter is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of Howard County Retirement Plan (the Plan), which comprise the fiduciary net position as of June 30, 2020 and 2019, and the related changes in fiduciary net position for the years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements, for the purpose of expressing opinions on whether the financial statements are presented fairly, in all material respects, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America (U.S. GAAP).

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 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.

We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, as of October 23, 2020, the following representations made to you during your audits.

Financial Statements

1. We have fulfilled our responsibilities, as set out in the terms of the audit engagement letter dated April 14, 2020, for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with U.S. GAAP.
2. We acknowledge and have fulfilled 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.
3. We acknowledge our responsibility for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud.
4. Significant assumptions used by us in making accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value, are reasonable.
5. Related party relationships and transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the requirements of U.S. GAAP.

6. All significant plan amendments adopted during the period or subsequent to the date of the financial statements, and their effects on benefits and fiduciary net position have been disclosed in the financial statements.
7. No 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 financial statements.
8. We have not identified or been notified of any uncorrected financial statement misstatements.
9. We are not aware of any pending or threatened litigation, claims, or assessments or unasserted claims or assessments that are required to be accrued or disclosed in the financial statements in accordance with U.S. GAAP, and we have not consulted a lawyer concerning litigation, claims, or assessments.
10. Guarantees, whether written or oral, under which the Plan is contingently liable, if any, have been properly recorded or disclosed in accordance with U.S. GAAP.
11. Receivables recorded in the financial statements represent valid claims against debtors for transactions arising on or before the financial statement date and have been reduced to their estimated net realizable value.
12. The methods and significant assumptions used result in a measure of fair value appropriate for financial statement measurement and disclosure purposes.
13. We have no plans or intentions that may materially affect the carrying value or classification of assets, liabilities, or equity.
14. With respect to actuarial assumptions and valuations:
 - a. We agree with the actuarial methods and assumptions used by the actuary for funding purposes and for determining the total pension liability and have no knowledge or belief that would make such methods or assumptions inappropriate in the circumstances. We did not give any, nor cause any, instructions to be given to the actuary with respect to values or amounts derived, and we are not aware of any matters that have impacted the independence or objectivity of the actuary.
 - b. There were no omissions from the participant data provided to the actuary for the purpose of determining the total pension liability and other actuarially determined amounts in the financial statements.
 - c. There have been no changes in the actuarial methods or assumptions used in calculating the amounts recorded or disclosed in the financial statements, except as made known to you and disclosed in the financial statements.
 - d. There have been no changes in plan provisions between the actuarial valuation date and the date of this letter.

15. We believe the plan and trust established under the plan are qualified under the appropriate section of the Internal Revenue Code, and we intend to continue them as a qualified plan and trust.
16. We are not aware of any present legislative intentions to terminate the Plan.
17. All material concentrations have been properly disclosed in accordance with U.S. GAAP. We understand that concentrations include the nature and type of investments held by the Plan, or markets for which events could occur which would significantly disrupt normal finances within the next year.

Information Provided

1. 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 records, documentation, and other matters.
 - b. Additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit.
 - c. Unrestricted access to persons within the Plan from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence.
 - d. Complete minutes of the meetings of the governing board and related committees, or summaries of actions of recent meetings for which minutes have not yet been prepared..
 - e. All actuarial valuation reports prepared for the Plan during the year.
2. All material transactions have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements.
3. We have disclosed to you the results of our assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.
4. We have no knowledge of any fraud or suspected fraud that affects the Plan and involves:
 - a. Management;
 - b. Employees who have significant roles in internal control; or
 - c. Others when the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements.
5. We have no knowledge of any allegations of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting the Plan's financial statements communicated by employees, former employees, regulators, or others.
6. We have no knowledge of any instances of noncompliance or suspected noncompliance with laws and regulations and provisions of contracts or abuse whose effects should be considered when preparing financial statements.

7. We are not aware of any pending or threatened litigation, claims, or assessments, or unasserted claims or assessments, that are required to be accrued or disclosed in the financial statements in accordance with U.S. GAAP, and we have not consulted a lawyer concerning litigation, claims, or assessments.
8. There are no other material liabilities or gain or loss contingencies that are required to be accrued or disclosed in accordance with U.S. GAAP.
9. We have disclosed to you the identity of the Plan's related parties and all the related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware.
10. We have a process to track the status of audit findings and recommendations.
11. We have identified to you any previous audits, attestation engagements, and other studies related to the audit objectives and whether related recommendations have been implemented.
12. We are responsible for compliance with the laws, regulations, and provisions of contracts applicable to the Plan; and we have identified and disclosed to you all laws, regulations, and provisions of contracts 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.
13. The Plan has complied with all aspects of contractual agreements that would have a material effect on the financial statements in the event of noncompliance.
14. We have followed all applicable laws and regulations in adopting, approving, and amending budgets.
15. Investments and derivative instruments are properly valued.
16. The values of non-readily marketable investments represent good faith estimates of fair value. The methods and significant assumptions used result in a measure of fair value appropriate for financial measurement and disclosure purposes.
17. Deposits and investment securities and derivative instruments are properly classified as to risk and are properly valued and disclosed.
18. 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.
19. As part of your audit, you prepared the draft financial statements and related notes, as needed. We have designated an individual who possesses suitable skill, knowledge, and/or experience to understand and oversee your services; have made all management judgments and decisions; and have assumed all management responsibilities. We have evaluated the adequacy and results of the service. We have reviewed, approved, and accepted responsibility for those financial

statements and related notes. We have also ensured that the Plan's data and records are complete and received sufficient information to oversee the service.

20. In regards to the any non-attest services performed by you, we have:

- a. Made all management judgments and decisions and assumed all management responsibilities.
- b. Designated an individual who possesses suitable skill, knowledge, and/or experience to understand and oversee the services.
- c. Evaluated the adequacy and results of the services performed.
- d. Accepted responsibility for the results of the services.

Signature:  Title: Director of Finance

Signature:  Title: HR Administrator