

State of Minnesota



**Office of the State Auditor**

Julie Blaha  
State Auditor

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**Tri-County Solid Waste  
Management Commission  
St. Cloud, Minnesota**

Year Ended December 31, 2022

## Description of the Office of the State Auditor

The Office of the State Auditor (OSA) helps ensure financial integrity and accountability in local government financial activities. The OSA is the constitutional office that oversees more than \$40 billion in annual financial activity by local governments and approximately \$20 billion of federal funding financial activity.

The OSA performs around 90 financial and compliance audits per year and has oversight responsibilities for over 3,300 local units of government throughout the state. The office maintains the following seven divisions:

- **Audit Practice:** Helps ensure fiscal integrity by conducting financial and compliance audits of local governments and the federal compliance audit of the State of Minnesota.
- **Constitution:** Connects with the public via external communication, media relations, legislative coordination, and public engagements for the State Auditor.

This division also supports the State Auditor's service on the State Executive Council, State Board of Investment, Land Exchange Board, Public Employees Retirement Association Board, Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, the Minnesota Historical Society, and the Rural Finance Authority Board.

- **Government Information:** Collects, analyzes, and shares local government financial data to assist in policy and spending decisions; administers and supports financial tools including the Small Cities and Towns Accounting System (CTAS) software and infrastructure comparison tools.
- **Legal/Special Investigations:** Provides legal analysis and counsel to the OSA and responds to outside inquiries about Minnesota local law relevant to local government finances; investigates local government financial records in response to specific allegations of theft, embezzlement, or unlawful use of public funds or property.
- **Operations:** Ensures the office runs efficiently by providing fiscal management and technology support to the office.
- **Pension:** Analyzes investment, financial, and actuarial reporting for Minnesota's local public pension plans and monitors pension plan operations.
- **Tax Increment Financing (TIF):** Promotes compliance and accountability in local governments' use of tax increment financing through education, reporting, and compliance reviews.

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[www.osa.state.mn.us](http://www.osa.state.mn.us)

**Tri-County Solid Waste  
Management Commission  
St. Cloud, Minnesota**

Year Ended December 31, 2022



**Office of the State Auditor**

**Audit Practice Division  
Office of the State Auditor  
State of Minnesota**

# Tri-County Solid Waste Management Commission St. Cloud, Minnesota

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## **Introductory Section**

# Tri-County Solid Waste Management Commission St. Cloud, Minnesota

## Organization 2022

<u>Board of Directors</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Term Expires</u>
Scott Johnson	Secretary-Treasurer	Benton	December 31, 2022
Ed Popp	Member	Benton	December 31, 2022
Raeanne Danielowski	Member	Sherburne	December 31, 2022
Felix Schmiesing	Chair	Sherburne	December 31, 2022
Leigh Lenzmeier	Member	Stearns	December 31, 2022
Tarryl Clark	Member	Stearns	December 31, 2022
Jeff Mergen	Member	Stearns	December 31, 2022
Joe Perske	Vice Chair	Stearns	December 31, 2022
<u>Coordinator</u>			
Timothy Oswald			Resigned May 2023
Gabrielle Batzko			Indefinite

## **Financial Section**



## Independent Auditor's Report

Board of Directors  
Tri-County Solid Waste Management Commission  
St. Cloud, Minnesota

### Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

#### *Opinion*

We have audited the financial statements of Tri-County Solid Waste Management Commission as of and for the year ended December 31, 2022, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the Commission's basic financial statements, as listed in the table of contents.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Tri-County Solid Waste Management Commission as of December 31, 2022, and the changes in financial position, and its cash flows thereof for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

#### *Basis for Opinion*

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. 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 the Commission, 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 these 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.

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 the Commission'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 opinion. 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 auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America 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 auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, 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 the Commission'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; and
- conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Commission'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.

***Required Supplementary Information***

Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require that the management's discussion and analysis 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.

*/s/Julie Blaha*

Julie Blaha  
State Auditor

January 31, 2024

*/s/Chad Struss*

Chad Struss, CPA  
Deputy State Auditor

## **Management's Discussion and Analysis**

# Tri-County Solid Waste Management Commission St. Cloud, Minnesota

## Management's Discussion and Analysis December 31, 2022 (Unaudited)

The Tri-County Solid Waste Management Commission's (Commission) Management's Discussion and Analysis (MD&A) provides an overview of the Commission's financial activities for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2022. Since this information is designed to focus on the current year's activities, resulting changes, and currently known facts, it should be read in conjunction with the Commission's financial statements.

The Commission is a joint powers enterprise operation of Benton, Sherburne, and Stearns Counties, created with the intention of the counties to cooperate in a joint venture to provide the greatest public benefit possible for the entire contiguous three-county area in planning, management, and implementation of methods to deal with solid waste in central Minnesota.

### Overview of the Financial Statements

This MD&A is intended to serve as an introduction to the basic financial statements. The Commission's basic financial statements consist of two parts: the financial statements and the notes to the financial statements. The MD&A (this section) is required to accompany the basic financial statements and, therefore, is included as required supplementary information.

The financial statements present different views of the Commission's financial activities and consist of the following:

- The statement of net position reports the assets, deferred outflows of resources, liabilities, and deferred inflows of resources to give an overall view of the financial health of the Commission.
- The statement of revenues, expenses, and changes in net position provides information on an aggregate view of the Commission's finances. All of the current year's revenues and expenses are taken into account regardless of when the cash was received or paid.
- The statement of cash flows provides sources and uses of cash for the Commission.

### Financial Analysis

	Net Position – December 31	
	2022	2021
Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 425,877	\$ 557,115
Due from other governments	154,072	14,808
Total Assets	<u>\$ 579,949</u>	<u>\$ 571,923</u>
Net Position		
Unrestricted	<u>\$ 579,949</u>	<u>\$ 571,923</u>
Total Net Position, as reported	<u>\$ 579,949</u>	<u>\$ 571,923</u>

The Commission’s total net position for the year ended December 31, 2022, was \$579,949. Unrestricted net position, totaling \$579,949, is available to finance the day-to-day operations of the Commission.

**Change in Net Position – For the Year Ended December 31**

	2022	2021
Operating Revenues		
Miscellaneous	\$ 843	\$ 485
Grants provided by State of Minnesota	119,353	14,808
Total Revenues	<u>\$ 120,196</u>	<u>\$ 15,293</u>
Operating Expenses		
Administration and Overhead	\$ 282,350	\$ 164,952
Depreciation	-	364
Total Operating Expenses	<u>\$ 282,350</u>	<u>\$ 165,316</u>
Operating Income (Loss)	\$ (162,154)	\$ (150,023)
Nonoperating Revenues (Expenses)		
Contributions from Counties	170,180	172,986
Increase (Decrease) in Net Position	<u>\$ 8,026</u>	<u>\$ 22,963</u>

In 2021 the Commission was awarded a grant from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to conduct a pilot trial of organic waste diversion to anaerobic digestion. As of December 31, 2022, the Commission had expended \$134,161 of the \$168,495 grant awarded.

**Contacting the Commission’s Financial Management**

This financial report is designed to provide our citizens, taxpayers, customers, and creditors with a general overview of the Commission’s finances and to show the Commission’s accountability for the money it receives. If you have questions about this report or need additional financial information, contact the Tri-County Solid Waste Management Commission’s Coordinator, Gabrielle Batzko, 3601 – 5th Street South, Waite Park, Minnesota 56387.

## **Basic Financial Statements**

**Tri-County Solid Waste Management Commission  
St. Cloud, Minnesota**

***Exhibit 1***

**Statement of Net Position  
December 31, 2022**

**Assets**

**Current assets**

Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 425,877
Due from other governments	<u>154,072</u>

<b>Total Assets</b>	<b><u>\$ 579,949</u></b>
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**Net Position**

Unrestricted	<u>\$ 579,949</u>
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<b>Total Net Position</b>	<b><u>\$ 579,949</u></b>
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**Tri-County Solid Waste Management Commission  
St. Cloud, Minnesota**

*Exhibit 2*

**Statement of Revenues, Expenses, and Changes in Net Position  
For the Year Ended December 31, 2022**

<b>Operating Revenues</b>	
Miscellaneous	\$ 843
Grant provided from State of Minnesota	<u>119,353</u>
<b>Total Operating Revenues</b>	<b>\$ 120,196</b>
<b>Operating Expenses</b>	
Administration and overhead	<u>282,350</u>
<b>Operating Income (Loss)</b>	<b>\$ (162,154)</b>
<b>Nonoperating Revenues (Expenses)</b>	
Contributions from counties	<u>170,180</u>
<b>Change in Net Position</b>	<b>\$ 8,026</b>
<b>Net Position – January 1</b>	<u>571,923</u>
<b>Net Position – December 31</b>	<b><u><u>\$ 579,949</u></u></b>

**Tri-County Solid Waste Management Commission  
St. Cloud, Minnesota**

**Exhibit 3**

**Statement of Cash Flows  
For the Year Ended December 31, 2022**

<b>Cash Flows from Operating Activities</b>	
Receipts from customers and users	\$ 843
Payments to suppliers	(131,850)
Payments to member county	(150,500)
	<hr/>
<b>Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities</b>	<b>\$ (281,507)</b>
<b>Cash Flows from Noncapital Financing Activities</b>	
Contributions from counties	150,269
	<hr/>
<b>Net Increase (Decrease) in Cash and Cash Equivalents</b>	<b>\$ (131,238)</b>
<b>Cash and Cash Equivalents at January 1</b>	<b>557,115</b>
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<b>Cash and Cash Equivalents at December 31</b>	<b>\$ 425,877</b>
	<hr/> <hr/>
<b>Reconciliation of operating income (loss) to net cash provided by (used in) operating activities</b>	
<b>Operating income (loss)</b>	<b>\$ (162,154)</b>
<b>Adjustments to reconcile operating income (loss) to net cash provided by (used in) operating activities</b>	
Increase (decrease) in due from other governments	(119,353)
	<hr/>
<b>Net Cash Provided by (Used in) Operating Activities</b>	<b>\$ (281,507)</b>
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# Tri-County Solid Waste Management Commission St. Cloud, Minnesota

## Notes to the Financial Statements As of and for the Year Ended December 31, 2022

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### **Note 1 – Summary of Significant Accounting Policies**

The Tri-County Solid Waste Management Commission's (Commission) financial statements are prepared in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAP) as of and for the year ended December 31, 2022. The Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) is responsible for establishing GAAP for state and local governments through its pronouncements (statements and interpretations). The more significant accounting policies established in GAAP and used by the Commission are discussed below.

#### **Financial Reporting Entity**

The Tri-County Solid Waste Management Commission is a joint powers authority between Benton, Sherburne, and Stearns Counties (the Counties) formed under a joint powers agreement entered into pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 471.59, the Joint Powers Act.

Each of the Counties is authorized and obligated pursuant to Minn. Stat. chs. 115A and 400 to provide for the management and disposal of solid waste. It is the intention of the Counties to cooperate in a joint venture to provide the greatest public benefit possible for the entire contiguous three-county area in planning, management, and implementation of methods to deal with solid waste in central Minnesota.

The Commission is governed by a Board of Directors composed of eight members. Each county is entitled to no less than two and no more than four of its own Commissioners on the Board. Population of the member counties determines how many Commissioners sit on the Board. Each member county chooses its respective members and one staff person as an ex officio (non-voting) member.

The Commission is a separate entity independent of the counties which formed it. No single county retains control over the operations or is financially accountable for the Commission. In accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, the Commission's financial statements are not included as a component unit in any member county's financial statements. However, Stearns County accounts for all transactions of the Commission and presents the Commission as a custodial fund in its financial statements.

#### **Basic Financial Statements**

The accounts of the Commission are organized as an enterprise fund. The fund operating revenues result from exchange transactions associated with the principal activity of the fund. Exchange transactions are those in which each party receives and gives up essentially equal values. Nonoperating revenues, such as intergovernmental revenues and contributions from counties, result from nonexchange transactions or incidental activities. The Commission's net position is reported as unrestricted. The Commission first utilizes restricted resources, if any, to finance qualifying activities.

#### **Measurement Focus and Basis of Accounting**

The Commission's financial statements are reported using the economic resources measurement focus and the full accrual basis of accounting. Revenues are recorded when earned, and expenses are recorded when a liability

# Tri-County Solid Waste Management Commission

## St. Cloud, Minnesota

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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.

When both restricted and unrestricted resources are available for use, it is the Commission's policy to use restricted resources first and then unrestricted resources as needed.

### Assets, Liabilities, Deferred Outflows/Inflows of Resources, and Net Position

#### Cash and Cash Equivalents

For the purposes of the statement of cash flows, cash and cash equivalents includes all cash. The Commission's cash is held by Stearns County. The County obtains collateral to cover deposits in excess of insurance coverage.

#### Capital Assets

Capital assets, which include property, plant, and equipment, are reported in the financial statements. The Commission defines capital assets as assets with an estimated useful life in excess of one year and with an individual cost of more than \$1,000. Such assets are recorded at historical cost or estimated historical cost if purchased or constructed. Donated capital assets are recorded at acquisition value at the date of donation.

The costs of normal maintenance and repairs that do not add to the value of the asset or materially extend assets' lives are not capitalized.

Major outlays for capital assets and improvements are capitalized as projects are constructed. Interest incurred during the construction phase of capital assets is included as part of the capitalized value of the assets constructed. During the current period, the Commission did not have any capitalized interest.

Property, plant, and equipment of the Commission are depreciated using the straight-line method over the following estimated useful lives:

<b>Estimated Useful Lives of Capital Assets</b>	
<u>Assets</u>	<u>Years</u>
Furniture	7
Equipment	5
Buildings	15

As of December 31, 2022, all of the Commission's assets were fully depreciated.

#### Use of Estimates

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make certain estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets, deferred outflows of resources, liabilities, and deferred inflows of resources; and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

# Tri-County Solid Waste Management Commission

## St. Cloud, Minnesota

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### Deferred Outflows/Inflows of Resources

In addition to assets, the statement of financial position will sometimes report a separate section for deferred outflows of resources. This separate financial statement element, deferred outflows of resources, represents a consumption of net position that applies to a future period(s) and will not be recognized as an outflow of resources (expense) until that time. Currently, the Commission has no items that qualify for reporting in this category.

In addition to liabilities, the statement of financial position will sometimes report a separate section for deferred inflows of resources. This separate financial statement element, deferred inflows of resources, represents an acquisition of net position that applies to a future period(s) and will not be recognized as an inflow of resources (revenue) until that time. Currently, the Commission has no items that qualify for reporting in this category.

### Classification of Net Position

Net position in the financial statements is classified in the following categories:

Investment in capital assets – the amount of net position representing capital assets, net of accumulated depreciation.

Restricted net position – the amount of net position for which external restrictions have been imposed by creditors, grantors, contributors, or laws or regulations of other governments and restrictions imposed by law through constitutional provisions or enabling legislation.

Unrestricted net position – the amount of net position that does not meet the definition of restricted or investment in capital assets.

## Note 2 – Detailed Notes

### Assets

#### Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash transactions are administered by the Stearns County Auditor/Treasurer, who is, according to Minn. Stat. §§ 118A.02 and 118A.04, authorized to deposit cash in financial institutions designated by the County Board. Minnesota statutes require that all county deposits be covered by insurance, surety bond, or collateral.

#### Receivables

In 2021, the Commission was awarded a grant from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to conduct a pilot trial of organic waste diversion to anaerobic digestion. As of December 31, 2022, the Commission had expended \$134,161 of the \$168,495 grant awarded.

The Commission contracts with Stearns County for the use of their employees and reimburses the county for the related payroll expenses. Each County is allocated a portion of the expense incurred, to which it pays the Commission. As of December 31, 2022, Sherburne County owed the Commission \$19,911 for their portion of this expense. The County paid the Commission the outstanding balance in 2023.

# Tri-County Solid Waste Management Commission

## St. Cloud, Minnesota

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### Note 3 – Risk Management

The Commission is exposed to various risks of loss related to torts; theft of, damage to, or destruction of assets; errors or omissions; injuries to employees; or natural disasters for which the Commission carries commercial insurance. To cover these risks, the Commission has entered into a joint powers agreement with Minnesota counties to form the Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust (MCIT) to protect against liabilities from workers' compensation and property and casualty. There were no significant reductions in insurance from the previous year or settlements in excess of insurance for any of the past three years.

The Workers' Compensation Division of MCIT is self-sustaining based on the contributions charged, so that total contributions plus compounded earnings on these contributions will equal the amount needed to satisfy claims liabilities and other expenses. MCIT participates in the Workers' Compensation Reinsurance Association with coverage at \$500,000 per claim in 2022 and 2023. Should the MCIT Workers' Compensation Division liabilities exceed assets, MCIT may assess the Commission in a method and amount to be determined by MCIT.

The Property and Casualty Division of MCIT is self-sustaining, and the Commission pays an annual premium to cover current and future losses. MCIT carries reinsurance for its property lines to protect against catastrophic losses. Should the MCIT Property and Casualty Division liabilities exceed assets, MCIT may assess the Commission in a method and amount to be determined by MCIT.

## **Management and Compliance Section**



**Independent Auditor's Report on  
Minnesota Legal Compliance**

Board of Directors  
Tri-County Solid Waste Management Commission  
St. Cloud, Minnesota

We have audited, in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, the accompanying financial statements of the Tri-County Solid Waste Management Commission, as of and for the year ended December 31, 2022, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the Commission's basic financial statements, and have issued our report thereon dated January 31, 2024.

In connection with our audit, nothing came to our attention that caused us to believe that Tri-County Solid Waste Management Commission failed to comply with the provisions of the contracting – bid laws, depositories of public funds and public investments, conflicts of interest, claims and disbursements, and miscellaneous provisions sections of the *Minnesota Legal Compliance Audit Guide for Other Political Subdivisions*, promulgated by the State Auditor pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 6.65, insofar as they relate to accounting matters. However, our audit was not directed primarily toward obtaining knowledge of such noncompliance. Accordingly, had we performed additional procedures, other matters may have come to our attention regarding the Commission's noncompliance with the above referenced provisions, insofar as they relate to accounting matters.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of the Board of Directors and management of the Tri-County Solid Waste Management Commission and the State Auditor, and is not intended to be, and should not be, used by anyone other than those specified parties.

*/s/Julie Blaha*

Julie Blaha  
State Auditor

January 31, 2024

*/s/Chad Struss*

Chad Struss, CPA  
Deputy State Auditor