



**VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF
PORTER TOWNSHIP (SCHUYLKILL COUNTY)
PENNSYLVANIA**

SCHUYLKILL COUNTY

COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD

JANUARY 1, 2009 TO DECEMBER 31, 2011

RELEASED JANUARY 2014

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE - AUDITOR GENERAL

DEPARTMENT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL



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EUGENE A. DePASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. Larry A. Shutt, Jr., President
PORTER TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
Schuylkill County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Porter Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association pursuant to authority derived from Article VIII, Section 10 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Section 403 of The Fiscal Code, Act of April 9, 1929, (P.L. 343, No. 176), and mandated by the Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Act, as consolidated by the Act of November 23, 2010 (P.L. 1181, No. 118), at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7411 *et seq.*, for the period January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2011.

We conducted this compliance audit in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* applicable to performance audits, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our audit results and conclusions based on our audit objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our audit results and conclusions based on our audit objective.

The objective of the audit was to determine if the volunteer firefighters' relief association received state aid and expended state aid and accumulated relief funds in compliance with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws and administrative procedures.

Our audit was limited to the areas related to the objective identified above.

Volunteer firefighters' relief association officers are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the Porter Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's administration of state aid and accumulated relief funds complies with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws and administrative procedures including the safeguarding of assets. In conducting our audit, we obtained an understanding of the volunteer firefighters' relief association's internal controls as they relate to the association's compliance with those requirements and that we considered to be significant within the context of the audit objective, and assessed whether those significant controls were properly designed

and implemented. Our audit procedures also included tests of documentary evidence supporting the Porter Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's recorded financial transactions, tests of the physical existence of inventories, interviews of selected officials and direct confirmation of the Porter Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's cash, investments, and certain other assets and liabilities as of December 31, 2011, with the custodians of the funds, debtors, creditors, and financial institutions to the extent necessary to satisfy the audit objective. Additionally, we performed procedures to provide a reasonable assurance of detecting instances of violations of legal and regulatory requirements or violations of provisions of contracts that are significant within the context of the audit objective.

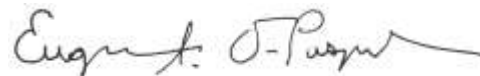
The results of our audit, for the period January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2011, found the Porter Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association, in all significant respects, received state aid and expended state aid and accumulated relief funds in compliance with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws and administrative procedures, except as noted in the findings listed below and discussed later in this report. The results of our tests also indicated the Porter Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the Accompanying Expenditure Information and, as of December 31, 2011, had a cash balance of \$28,016 and no investments.

Finding No. 1 – Untimely Deposit of State Aid

Finding No. 2 – Insufficient Officer's Bond Coverage

The contents of this report were discussed with the management of the Porter Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association and, where appropriate, their responses have been included in the report.

April 24, 2012



EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE
Auditor General

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BACKGROUND

Pursuant to Article VIII, Section 10 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Section 403 of The Fiscal Code, Act of April 9, 1929, (P.L. 343, No. 176), and the Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Act, as consolidated by the Act of November 23, 2010, (P.L. 1181, No. 118), at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7411 *et seq.*, the Department of the Auditor General's duty is to audit the accounts and records of every volunteer firefighters' relief association to determine that funds received under the Foreign Fire Insurance Tax Distribution Law, Act of December 18, 1984, (P.L. 1005, No. 205), as amended, 53 P.S. § 895.701 *et seq.* (commonly referred to as Act 205), are properly expended.

The Volunteer Firemen's Relief Association of Porter Township (Schuylkill County) Pennsylvania, herein referred to as Porter Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association, is a charitable organization that was formed primarily to afford financial protection to volunteer firefighters and to encourage individuals to participate in volunteer fire service.

Act 118 governs the overall operation of the volunteer firefighters' relief association. The relief association's bylaws define the specific operational procedures by which the volunteer firefighters' relief association conducts business. To fulfill its primary purpose, Act 118 authorizes specific types of expenditures and prescribes appropriate volunteer firefighters' relief association investment options. Within the parameters established by Act 118, it is the responsibility of the volunteer firefighters' relief association to choose investments in a proper and prudent manner.

Volunteer firefighters' relief associations receive public tax monies, and the association officers therefore have a responsibility to the public to conduct the association's financial affairs in a businesslike manner and to maintain sufficient financial records to support the propriety of all association transactions. Volunteer firefighters' relief association officers are also responsible for ensuring that the association operates in accordance with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws and administrative procedures.

Act 205 sets forth the computation of the Foreign Fire Insurance Tax Distribution paid to each applicable municipality throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The amount of the distribution is based upon the population of each municipality and the market value of real estate within the municipality. Upon receipt of this distribution, the municipality must allocate the funds to the volunteer firefighters' relief association of the fire service organization or fire service organizations, which is or are recognized as providing the service to the municipality.

The Porter Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipalities:

| <u>Municipality</u> | <u>County</u> | <u>2009</u> | <u>2010</u> | <u>2011</u> |
|---------------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Porter Township | Schuylkill | \$10,407 | \$11,714 | \$18,676 |
| Tremont Township | Schuylkill | \$ 622 | \$ 699 | \$ 992* |

BACKGROUND (Continued)

*The 2011 state aid allocation for Tremont Township was not deposited timely into the relief association account. See Finding No. 1 in the Findings and Recommendations section of this report.

The volunteer firefighters' relief association and the affiliated fire service organizations are separate, legal entities. The Porter Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association is affiliated with the following fire service organizations:

Joliett Volunteer Fire Company
Muir Volunteer Fire Company
Orwin Volunteer Fire Company
Reinerton Volunteer Fire Company
West End Fire Company No. 3

PORTER TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 1 – Untimely Deposit of State Aid

Condition: The volunteer firefighters' relief association failed to deposit the 2011 state aid allocation it received from Tremont Township, in the amount of \$992, until February 10, 2012.

Criteria: Section 706 (b)(2) of the Act of December 18, 1984, (P.L. 1005, No. 205), states:

The foreign fire insurance premium tax amount applicable to a municipality served solely by volunteer firefighters shall be paid to the municipality, which shall within 60 days of the date of the receipt of the moneys from the State Treasurer pay the amount received to the relief association fund of the fire department or departments, or fire company or companies, now existing or hereafter organized, inside or outside of the municipality, which is or are actively engaged in the service of the municipality and duly recognized by the governing body of the municipality.

Furthermore, prudent business practice dictates that, upon receipt of its state aid allocation, the relief association should ensure the funds are deposited in a timely manner.

Cause: The foreign fire insurance tax allocation was distributed to the municipal treasurer on September 26, 2011, who forwarded this state aid to the volunteer firefighters' relief association on October 4, 2011, which is within 60 days of receipt, as required by Section 706 (b)(2) of the Act of December 18, 1984, (P.L. 1005, No. 205). However, the relief association failed to establish internal control procedures to ensure that all income received was recorded and deposited in a timely manner. Additionally, the relief association's treasurer indicated that he inadvertently misplaced the state aid check before appropriately depositing the funds on February 10, 2012.

Effect: As a result of the untimely deposit, funds were not available to pay general operating expenses or for investment purposes. In addition, an untimely deposit of receipts increases the risk that funds could be lost or misappropriated.

Recommendation: We recommend the relief association officials adopt internal control procedures to ensure the timely deposit of all income received. For further guidance, please refer to the Auditor General's publication, MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATIONS.

Management's Response: Relief association management agreed with the finding as presented at the audit exit conference and indicated they will take action to comply with the recommendation.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (Continued)

Finding No. 2 – Insufficient Surety (Fidelity) Bond Coverage

Condition: The relief association failed to maintain a Surety (Fidelity) bond in a sufficient amount to cover the relief association's authorized disbursing officer. The relief association's Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage amount was \$20,000; however, as of December 31, 2011, the relief association's cash assets totaled \$28,016.

Criteria: Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7415(c)(4) states, in part, that:

. . . the disbursing officer, whether designated treasurer, comptroller, financial secretary or otherwise, shall be bonded by corporate surety for faithful performance of duty. The amount of the bond shall be at least as great as the maximum cash balance in current funds of the association at any time during the fiscal year, and the premium on the bond shall be a proper charge against the funds of the association.

Cause: Relief association officials failed to monitor the relief association's cash balance to ensure that the Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage on the relief association's authorized disbursing officer was in compliance with Act 118 provisions.

Effect: As a result of the authorized disbursing officer of the relief association being insufficiently bonded, the relief association's cash assets were not adequately safeguarded.

Recommendation: We recommend that the relief association officials ensure that its Surety (Fidelity) bond sufficiently covers the relief association's authorized disbursing officer, as required by Act 118. This requirement may be accomplished by increasing the Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage on the relief association's authorized disbursing officer to an amount greater than the expected maximum balance of the relief association's cash assets, or by decreasing the relief association's cash assets to an amount anticipated to remain below the policy coverage amount. Relief association officials should monitor the relief association's cash balance to ensure that unexpected events affecting the relief association's current funds do not again result in insufficient Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage on the relief association's authorized disbursing officer. For further guidance, please refer to the Auditor General's publication, **MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATIONS**.

Management's Response: Relief association management agreed with the finding as presented at the audit exit conference and indicated they will take action to comply with the recommendation. The relief association is looking into increasing its bond coverage.

PORTER TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
 ACCOMPANYING EXPENDITURE INFORMATION
 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2009 TO DECEMBER 31, 2011

Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7412 states: a volunteer firefighters' relief association is an organization formed primarily for the purpose of affording financial protection to volunteer firefighters against the consequences of misfortune suffered as a result of their participation in the fire service. The organization may contain within its membership the members of one or more fire companies and may serve secondary purposes, as set forth in this subchapter, but only if adequate provisions have been first made to serve the primary purpose.

Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7416 authorizes the investment of relief association funds and outlines the types of benefits and services that can be provided with volunteer firefighters' relief association funds.

Furthermore, all expenditures must be properly authorized as prescribed in the volunteer firefighters' relief association bylaws and approved at an association meeting.

USES OF FUNDS:

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Benefit Services: | |
| Insurance premiums | \$ 4,707 |
| Tokens of sympathy and goodwill | 50 |
| Total Benefit Services | \$ 4,757 |
| | |
| Fire Services: | |
| Equipment purchased | \$ 21,477 |
| Equipment maintenance | 7,257 |
| Training expenses | 1,160 |
| Total Fire Services | \$ 29,894 |

PORTER TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom Corbett
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Porter Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Governing Body:

Mr. Larry A. Shutt, Jr., President

Mr. David Koppenhaver, Vice President

Mr. Troy A. Wolfgang, Secretary

Mr. Robert J. McEntee, Treasurer

The following municipalities allocated foreign fire insurance tax monies to this relief association and received a copy of this report.

Mr. William Schaeffer, Jr., Secretary
Porter Township

Ms. Margaret Davenport, Secretary
Tremont Township

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at www.auditorgen.state.pa.us. Media questions about the report can be directed to the Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General, Office of Communications, 231 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120; via email to: news@auditorgen.state.pa.us.