COMPLIANCE AUDIT

Bernville Volunteer Firefighter's Relief Association

Berks County, Pennsylvania

For the Period

January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2014

June 2015

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General

Eugene A. DePasquale • Auditor General

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EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL

Ms. Elizabeth Ann Shalters, President
BERNVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
Berks County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Bernville 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, 2012 to December 31, 2014.

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 Bernville 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. Volunteer firefighters' relief association officers are responsible for complying with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures. It is our responsibility to perform procedures to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to the extent necessary to satisfy the audit objective. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our conclusions.

Based on our audit procedures, we concluded that, for the period January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2014:

- The Bernville 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.

- The Bernville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the Accompanying Expenditure Information and, as of December 31, 2014, had a cash balance of $29,101 and no investments.

The contents of this report were discussed with the management of the Bernville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association. We would like to thank the relief association officials for the cooperation extended to us during the conduct of the audit.

May 26, 2015

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 Bernville Volunteer Firefighter's Relief Association, herein referred to as the Bernville 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.

BACKGROUND – (Continued)

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

Municipality	County	2012	2013	2014
Bernville Borough	Berks	$4,799	$5,439	$5,153
Jefferson Township	Berks	$5,500	$6,250	$6,000
North Heidelberg Township	Berks	$2,960	$3,348	$3,157
Penn Township	Berks	$6,944	$7,987	$7,593

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

Bernville Volunteer Fire Company

BERNVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
ACCOMPANYING EXPENDITURE INFORMATION
FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2012 TO DECEMBER 31, 2014

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	$	18,994
Fire Services:		
Equipment purchased	$	26,820
Equipment maintenance		13,139
Training expenses		9,371
Fire prevention materials		84
Total Fire Services	$	49,414
Administrative Services:		
Other administrative expenses	$	2,782

BERNVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom W. Wolf
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Bernville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Governing Body:

Ms. Elizabeth Ann Shalters	President
Mr. J. David Bossard	Vice President
Ms. Denise Luckenbill	Secretary
Mr. James O. Moyer Sr.	Treasurer
Mr. Jeremy Nutter	Trustee
Mr. James Latshaw Jr.	Trustee
Mr. Thomas Eberhart	Trustee

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

Ms. Brenda Strunk, Secretary Bernville Borough	Ms. May L. Blatt, Secretary North Heidelberg Township
Ms. Lori A. Deck, Secretary Jefferson Township	Ms. Denise M. Klopp, Secretary Penn Township

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at www.PaAuditor.gov. Media questions about the report can be directed to the Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General, Office of Communications, 229 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120; via email to: news@PaAuditor.gov.