

COMPLIANCE AUDIT

Relief Association of Blooming Grove Township Volunteer Fire Department No. 1, Inc. Pike County, Pennsylvania For the Period January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2022

June 2023



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General
Timothy L. DeFoor • Auditor General



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TIMOTHY L. DEFOOR
AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. Robert Donahue, President
Relief Association of Blooming
Grove Township Volunteer
Fire Department No. 1, Inc.
Pike County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Relief Association of Blooming Grove Township Volunteer Fire Department No. 1, Inc. (relief association) for the period January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2022. The audit was conducted pursuant to authority derived from Article VIII, Section 10 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; Section 403 of The Fiscal Code, 72 P.S. § 403; and the Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Act ("VFRA Act"), see 35 Pa.C.S. § 7418.

The objectives of the audit were:

1. To determine if the relief association took appropriate corrective action to address the finding contained in our prior audit report.
2. To determine if the relief association complied with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures as they relate to the receipt of state aid and the expenditure of relief association funds.

Our audit was limited to the areas related to the objectives identified above and was not, nor was it required to be, conducted in accordance with Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

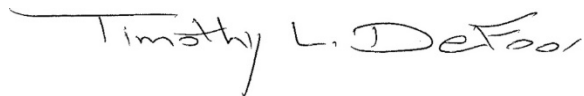
Relief association officers are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the relief association's administration of state aid and accumulated relief funds complies with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures, including the safeguarding of assets. 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 conclude that, for the period January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2022:

- The relief association took appropriate corrective action to address the finding contained in our prior audit report.
- The relief association, in all significant respects, complied with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures as they relate to the receipt of state aid and the expenditure of relief association funds, except as noted in the finding listed below and discussed later in this report.

Finding – Duplicate Payment

The contents of this report were discussed with the management of the relief association and, where appropriate, their response has been included in the report. We would like to thank the relief association officials for the cooperation extended to us during the conduct of the audit.



Timothy L. DeFoor
Auditor General
June 8, 2023

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BACKGROUND

Pursuant to Article VIII, Section 10 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Section 403 of The Fiscal Code¹, and the Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Act² ("VFRA Act"), 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 Law³ (commonly referred to as Act 205) are properly expended.

The 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.

The VFRA Act governs the overall operation of volunteer firefighters' relief associations. Relief association bylaws define the specific operational procedures by which relief associations conduct business. To fulfill its primary purpose, the VFRA Act authorizes specific types of expenditures and prescribes appropriate volunteer firefighters' relief association investment options. Within the parameters established by the VFRA Act, it is the responsibility of relief associations 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 that is or are recognized as providing the service to the municipality.

The relief association was allocated state aid from the following municipality:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>
Blooming Grove Township	Pike	\$18,442	\$16,213	\$20,838

¹ 72 P.S. § 403 (as last amended by Act 44 of 2017).

² 35 Pa.C.S. § 7411 *et seq.* See specifically, 35 Pa.C.S. § 7418 (amended by Act 91 of 2020).

³ 53 P.S. § 895.701 *et seq.* (Act 205 of 1984, as amended by Act 119 of 1990).

BACKGROUND – (Continued)

Based on the relief association’s records, its total cash and investments as of December 31, 2022, were \$109,664, as illustrated below:

Cash	\$ 35,786
Fair Value of Investments	<u>73,878</u>
Total Cash and Investments	<u>\$ 109,664</u>

Based on the relief association’s records, its total expenditures for the period January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2022, were \$70,387, as noted below. The accuracy of these expenditures was evaluated as part of the Department’s audit to conclude on the relief association’s compliance with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures as they relate to the receipt of state aid and the expenditure of relief association funds.⁴ **The scope of the Department’s audit does not include the issuance of an opinion on the accuracy of these amounts.**

Expenditures:

Benefit Services:	
Insurance premiums	\$ 10,398
Tokens of sympathy and goodwill	<u>75</u>
Total Benefit Services	<u>\$ 10,473</u>
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 41,274
Equipment maintenance	13,040
Training expenses	<u>4,339</u>
Total Fire Services	<u>\$ 58,653</u>
Administrative Services:	
Other administrative expenses	<u>\$ 81</u>
Other Expenditures:	
Duplicate expenditure	<u>\$ 1,180</u>
Total Expenditures	<u>\$ 70,387</u>

⁴ Accuracy was evaluated for a selection of transactions based on dollar amount, category, and/or random selection.

BACKGROUND – (Continued)

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

Blooming Grove Township Volunteer Fire Department No. 1

RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF BLOOMING GROVE TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER
FIRE DEPARTMENT NO. 1, INC.
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDING

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

The relief association has complied with the prior audit finding and recommendation, as follows:

- Failure To Segregate Relief Association Officers' Duties

By ensuring that there is segregation of duties between the offices of the secretary and treasurer.

RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF BLOOMING GROVE TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER
FIRE DEPARTMENT NO. 1, INC.
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – Duplicate Payment

Condition: On April 13, 2021, the relief association expended \$1,180 for mobile radios. On December 14, 2021, the relief association erroneously made a duplicate payment for the same mobile radios. As such, the second payment is considered an unauthorized disbursement because no goods or services were received for the payment.

Criteria: Adequate accounting and internal control procedures should be implemented to prevent duplicate payment of invoices and to ensure duplicate payments are recouped.

Cause: The relief association officials stated that there was a miscommunication with the fire company treasurer.

Effect: As a result of the erroneous payment, the relief association was unable to use these funds for other general operating expenses or for investment purposes.

Recommendation: We recommend that the relief association be reimbursed \$1,180 for the erroneous duplicate payment. The relief association officials should consider contacting the vendor to recover the duplicate payment. In addition, the relief association officials should establish accounting and internal control procedures to monitor future relief association expenditures. 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, as a result of our audit, the affiliated fire company reimbursed the relief association \$1,180 for the duplicate payment on March 3, 2023.

Auditor's Conclusion: We reviewed documentation verifying that the reimbursement of \$1,180 was received. Compliance for expenditures made during the next audit period will be subject to verification through our next audit.

RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF BLOOMING GROVE TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER
FIRE DEPARTMENT NO. 1, INC.
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Joshua D. Shapiro
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Relief Association of Blooming Grove Township Volunteer Fire Department No. 1, Inc.
Governing Body:

Mr. Robert Donahue
President

Mr. Shawn Longhenry
Vice President

Ms. Nickole Kazes
Secretary

Ms. Jo-Anna M. Donahue
Treasurer

A report was also distributed to the following municipality, which allocated foreign fire insurance tax monies to this relief association:

Ms. Jo-Anna M. Donahue
Secretary
Blooming Grove 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.