

# COMPLIANCE AUDIT

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## Bloomsburg Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association of Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania Columbia County For the Period January 1, 2013 to December 31, 2015

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October 2016



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of the Auditor General

Eugene A. DePasquale • Auditor General



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EUGENE A. DePASQUALE  
AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. Hugh Gross, President  
Bloomsburg Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association  
of Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania  
Columbia County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Bloomsburg Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association of Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania (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, 2013 to December 31, 2015.

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 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 objectives identified above.

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 objectives. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our conclusions.

We were not able to obtain independent confirmations of a portion of the cash and a portion of the investment balances directly from the financial institutions. Therefore, while the relief association provided bank and investment statements that indicated that, as of December 31, 2015, the relief association had a cash balance of \$436,668 and an investment balance with a fair value of \$766,720, we were not able to verify portions of those cash and investment balances.


Based on our audit procedures, we conclude that, except for the effects, if any, of the matter described in the preceding paragraph, for the period January 1, 2013 to December 31, 2015:

- The relief association took appropriate corrective action to address the finding contained in our prior audit report.
- The 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 supplementary financial information contained in this report is presented for purposes of additional disclosure and analysis. We performed only limited procedures on the supplementary financial information and, accordingly, express no form of assurance on it.

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

October 3, 2016

  
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 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 volunteer firefighters' relief associations. The relief association's bylaws define the specific operational procedures by which the 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 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 that is or are recognized as providing the service to the municipality.

**BACKGROUND – (Continued)**

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

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>
Bloomsburg Town	Columbia	\$75,777	\$71,858	\$69,413

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:

Bloomsburg Fire Department

BLOOMSBURG VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF  
BLOOMSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA  
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:

- Inadequate Relief Association Bylaws (Discretionary Benefits)

By revising the relief association bylaws to meet the minimum requirements of Act 118 and properly authorize the operating procedures of the relief association.

We commend the relief association management for its efforts in complying with the finding and recommendation contained in the prior audit report. The association management should strive to remain in compliance with all applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws and administrative procedures.

BLOOMSBURG VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF  
BLOOMSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA  
SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION  
CASH AND INVESTMENT BALANCES  
AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2015

Cash	\$ 436,668
Fair Value of Investments	<u>766,720</u>
Total Cash and Investments	<u>\$ 1,203,388</u>



BLOOMSBURG VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF  
 BLOOMSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA  
 SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION  
 SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES  
 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2013 TO DECEMBER 31, 2015

Expenditures:

Benefit Services:	
Insurance premiums	\$ 8,634
Death benefits	48,000
Total Benefit Services	\$ 56,634
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 139,538
Equipment maintenance	16,454
Training expenses	100
Total Fire Services	\$ 156,092
Administrative Services:	
Officer compensation	\$ 10,191
Other administrative expenses	5,186
Bond premiums	1,255
Total Administrative Services	\$ 16,632
Total Expenditures	\$ 229,358

BLOOMSBURG VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF  
BLOOMSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

**The Honorable Tom W. Wolf**  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Bloomsburg Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association of Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania Governing  
Body:

**Mr. Hugh Gross**  
President

**Mr. Todd Thomas**  
Vice President

**Ms. Michelle Frye**  
Secretary

**Mr. Todd Davis**  
Treasurer

**Mr. Daniel Kile**  
Trustee

**Mr. John T. Mahon**  
Trustee

**Mr. Robert W. Rupp**  
Trustee

**Mr. Herbert Kline**  
Financial Secretary

BLOOMSBURG VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF  
BLOOMSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

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

**Ms. Lauren Martz**  
Secretary  
Town of Bloomsburg

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at [www.PaAuditor.gov](http://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](mailto:news@PaAuditor.gov).