

COMPLIANCE AUDIT

The Relief Association of the Jennerstown Volunteer Fire Department Somerset County, Pennsylvania For the Period January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2015

May 2016



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General

Eugene A. DePasquale • Auditor General



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EUGENE A. DePASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. Robert Friedline, President
The Relief Association of the Jennerstown
Volunteer Fire Department
Somerset County

We have conducted a compliance audit of The Relief Association of the Jennerstown Volunteer Fire Department (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, 2015.

The objective of the audit was 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 objective identified above.

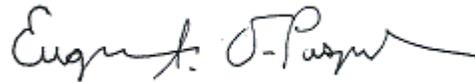
Relief association officers are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the relief association's administration of state aid and accumulated relief funds complies with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures, 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 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, 2012 to December 31, 2015, 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, except as noted in the finding listed below and discussed later in this report.

Finding – Failure To Deposit State Aid

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 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.



EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE
Auditor General

May 12, 2016

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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 municipalities:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>
Jenner Township	Somerset	\$6,181	\$7,054	\$6,685	\$6,472
Jennerstown Borough	Somerset	\$4,056	\$4,671	\$4,435	\$4,237*

* The 2015 state aid allocation received from Jennerstown Borough was not deposited by the relief association into a relief association account until March 14, 2016 as further disclosed in the finding in this report.

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:

Jennerstown Volunteer Fire Department

THE RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF THE JENNERSTOWN VOLUNTEER
FIRE DEPARTMENT
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – Failure To Deposit State Aid

Condition: The relief association did not deposit the 2015 state aid distributed by Jennerstown Borough, in the amount of \$4,237 into a relief association account. The foreign fire insurance tax allocation was distributed to the municipal treasurer on September 23, 2015, who forwarded this state aid to the volunteer firefighters’ relief association on November 5, 2015, 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 deposit the 2015 state aid received from the borough into a relief association account until March 14, 2016.

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 into an appropriate relief association account.

Cause: Relief association officials failed to establish adequate internal control procedures to ensure that all state aid received is appropriately deposited into a relief association account in a timely manner. These funds were inadvertently deposited into a fire company account and this oversight was not discovered until notified by the auditor during the conduct of the audit. The funds were deposited into a relief association account on March 14, 2016.

Effect: As a result of the state aid not being deposited timely, the relief association was unable to use the funds for general operating expenses or for investment purposes. In addition, the failure to deposit receipts in a timely manner can lead to a greater risk that funds could be lost or misappropriated.

Recommendation: We recommend that relief association officials establish adequate accounting and internal control procedures to ensure that all future state aid is received timely and deposited into a relief association account. For further guidance, please refer to the Auditor General’s publication, MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS’ RELIEF ASSOCIATIONS.

THE RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF THE JENNERSTOWN VOLUNTEER
FIRE DEPARTMENT
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding (Continued)

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.

Auditor's Conclusion: Compliance will be subject to verification through our next audit.

THE RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF THE JENNERSTOWN VOLUNTEER
FIRE DEPARTMENT
SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION
FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2012 TO DECEMBER 31, 2015

Cash Balance:	\$	46,883
Expenditures:		
Benefit Services:		
Insurance premiums	\$	<u>9,635</u>
Fire Services:		
Equipment purchased	\$	<u>15,506</u>
Administrative Services:		
Other administrative expenses	\$	133
Bond premiums		<u>375</u>
Total Administrative Services	\$	<u><u>508</u></u>

THE RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF THE JENNERSTOWN VOLUNTEER
FIRE DEPARTMENT
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom W. Wolf
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

The Relief Association of the Jennerstown Volunteer Fire Department Governing Body:

Mr. Robert Friedline
President

Mr. Seth Kaufman
Vice President

Mr. Deron Koontz
Secretary

Ms. Tina Forney
Treasurer

Ms. Tiffiany Forney
Assistant Secretary

Ms. Joyce Barnett
Financial Secretary

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

Ms. Caroline Felesky
Secretary
Jenner Township

Ms. Sandra L. Hubbard
Secretary
Jennerstown Borough

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.