

# COMPLIANCE AUDIT

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## Parks Township Volunteer Firemen's Relief Association of Parks Township, Armstrong County, PA

For the Period  
January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2016

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June 2017



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of the Auditor General

Eugene A. DePasquale • Auditor General



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**EUGENE A. DePASQUALE  
AUDITOR GENERAL**

Mr. Stuart Lamison, President  
Parks Township Volunteer Firemen's Relief Association  
of Parks Township, Armstrong County, PA

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Parks Township Volunteer Firemen's Relief Association of Parks Township, Armstrong County, PA (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, 2014 to December 31, 2016.

The objectives of the audit were:

1. To determine if the relief association took appropriate corrective action to address the findings 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.

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 an independent confirmation of a portion of the investment balance directly from the financial institutions. Therefore, while the relief association provided copies of investment statements that indicated that, as of December 31, 2016, the relief association had an investment balance of \$ 42,804, we were not able to verify a portion of this investment balance.

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, 2014 to December 31, 2016:

- The relief association took appropriate corrective action to address 3 of the 4 findings contained in our prior audit report. However, the relief association failed to take appropriate corrective action to address the one remaining finding contained in our prior audit report, as listed below and discussed in the Status of Prior Findings section of this 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 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Failure To  
Maintain A Complete And Accurate Equipment Roster

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.

June 16, 2017



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. Relief association bylaws define the specific operational procedures by which relief associations conduct 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 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.

### **BACKGROUND – (Continued)**

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

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>
Parks Township	Armstrong	\$ 13,804	\$ 13,528	\$ 13,509

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:

Parks Township Volunteer Fire Department No.1

PARKS TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF  
PARKS TOWNSHIP, ARMSTRONG COUNTY, PA  
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDINGS

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The relief association has complied with 3 of the 4 prior audit findings and recommendations, as follows:

- Insufficient Surety (Fidelity) Bond Coverage

By increasing the Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage to an amount greater than the balance of the relief association's cash assets.

- Failure To Secure Ownership Rights Of Assets

By registering all bank and investment accounts in the name of the relief association.

- Inappropriate Presigning Of Blank Checks

By prohibiting the presigning of blank checks.

NONCOMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

The relief association has not complied with the following prior audit finding. This finding is noted below and discussed in detail in the Finding and Recommendation section of this report:

- Failure To Maintain A Complete And Accurate Equipment Roster

We are concerned by the relief association's failure to correct this previously reported audit finding. The association management should strive to implement the recommendation and corrective action noted in this audit report.

PARKS TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF  
PARKS TOWNSHIP, ARMSTRONG COUNTY, PA  
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

**Finding – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Failure To Maintain A Complete And Accurate Equipment Roster**

Condition: As disclosed in the prior audit report, the relief association again did not maintain a complete and accurate roster of equipment owned by the relief association. In addition, there was no indication that a physical inventory of equipment was conducted on an annual basis, nor whether such inventory accounted for all equipment owned by the relief association.

Criteria: As previously disclosed, prudent business practice dictates that the relief association should establish adequate internal control procedures to ensure the maintenance of a cumulative equipment roster of all items purchased by the relief association in order to provide an effective accounting control over the relief association's equipment. A cumulative equipment roster of all relief association equipment should include all of the following:

- Types of equipment purchased
- Dates of purchase
- Unit costs
- Names of suppliers
- Serial numbers, if applicable
- Current locations of items
- Final dispositions of sold or damaged equipment
- Evidence of the performance and results of an annual physical inventory

Cause: Even though notified of this condition during our prior audit, relief association officials again failed to establish adequate internal control procedures over equipment by requiring the maintenance of a cumulative equipment roster and the performance of an annual physical inventory of equipment.

Effect: The continued failure to properly record equipment purchases in a detailed equipment roster prevents officials from effectively monitoring the relief association's equipment purchases. In addition, the continued failure to maintain a detailed equipment roster and perform an annual physical inventory of equipment prevents adequate accountability for, and safeguarding of, relief association equipment.

PARKS TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF  
PARKS TOWNSHIP, ARMSTRONG COUNTY, PA  
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

**Finding – (Continued)**

Recommendation: We again recommend that the relief association officials maintain a cumulative equipment roster of all equipment owned by the relief association. Furthermore, the relief association should ensure it performs an annual physical inventory of all operable equipment and that the completion of the inventory be sufficiently documented. 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.

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

PARKS TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF  
PARKS TOWNSHIP, ARMSTRONG COUNTY, PA  
SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION  
CASH AND INVESTMENT BALANCES  
AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2016

Cash	\$ 141,462
Fair Value of Investments	<u>42,804</u>
Total Cash and Investments	<u><u>\$ 184,266</u></u>

PARKS TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF  
PARKS TOWNSHIP, ARMSTRONG COUNTY, PA  
SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION  
SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES  
FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2014 TO DECEMBER 31, 2016

Expenditures:

Fire Services:

Equipment purchased	\$ 19,235
Equipment maintenance	820
Training expenses	<u>651</u>
Total Fire Services	<u>\$ 20,706</u>

Administrative Services:

Other administrative expenses	\$ 674
Bond premiums	<u>969</u>
Total Administrative Services	<u>\$ 1,643</u>

Total Expenditures	<u><u>\$ 22,349</u></u>
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PARKS TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF  
PARKS TOWNSHIP, ARMSTRONG COUNTY, PA  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

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

Parks Township Volunteer Firemen's Relief Association of Parks Township, Armstrong County,  
PA Governing Body:

**Mr. Stuart Lamison**  
President

**Ms. Kellee Leasure**  
Treasurer

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

**Ms. Mary E. Ralston**  
Secretary  
Parks Township

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).