

# COMPLIANCE AUDIT

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## Po Mar Lin Firefighter's Relief Association

Chester County, Pennsylvania

For the Period

January 1, 2013 to December 31, 2015

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August 2016



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of the Auditor General

Eugene A. DePasquale • Auditor General



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EUGENE A. DePASQUALE  
AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. Richard Hicks, President  
Po Mar Lin Firefighter's  
Relief Association  
Chester County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Po Mar Lin Firefighter's Relief Association (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.

Based on our audit procedures, we conclude that, 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, except as noted in the findings listed below and discussed later in this report.

Finding No. 1 – Unauthorized Expenditure

Finding No. 2 – 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 responses have 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.

August 11, 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 municipalities:

| <u>Municipality</u>       | <u>County</u> | <u>2013</u> | <u>2014</u> | <u>2015</u> |
|---------------------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| East Marlborough Township | Chester       | \$66,026    | \$56,570    | \$49,238    |
| Newlin Township           | Chester       | \$ 7,462    | \$ 7,055    | \$ 6,917    |
| Pocopson Township         | Chester       | \$ 7,784    | \$ 7,354    | \$ 7,238    |
| West Marlborough Township | Chester       | \$ 5,977    | \$ 5,552    | \$ 5,446    |

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:

Po Mar Lin Fire Company

PO MAR LIN FIREFIGHTER'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
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:

- Insufficient Surety (Fidelity) Bond Coverage

By decreasing the relief associations' cash assets to an amount below the maximum protection of the Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage.

PO MAR LIN FIREFIGHTER'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Finding No. 1 – Unauthorized Expenditure**

Condition: The relief association expended \$12,183 for engine room doors during the current audit period that is not authorized by Act 118.

Criteria: Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7416(f)(1&11) states:

The funds of any volunteer firefighters' relief association may be spent:

- (1) To pay for such normal and reasonable running expenses as may be appropriate to the businesslike conduct of the affairs of the association, including legal fees, rental or purchase of offices, payment of reasonable compensation of employees and purchase of office equipment and supplies.
  
- (11) To purchase safeguards for preserving life, health and safety of volunteer firefighters to ensure their availability to participate in the volunteer fire service.

Costs associated with the engine room doors do not qualify as an authorized volunteer firefighters' relief association expenditure; consequently, this disbursement is not authorized under Act 118.

Cause: Relief association officials indicated that they were unaware that the expenditure for the engine room doors was not authorized by Act 118.

Effect: As a result of this improper expenditure, relief association funds were not available for investment purposes or to pay for expenditures authorized by Act 118.

Recommendation: We recommend that the relief association be reimbursed \$12,183 for the unauthorized expenditure and that relief association officials become familiar with Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7416(f) to aid them in determining the propriety of future 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 \$12,183 on May 10, 2016 for the unauthorized expenditure.

Auditor's Conclusion: We reviewed documentation verifying that the reimbursement of \$12,183 was received. Compliance for expenditures made during the next audit period will be subject to verification through our next audit.



PO MAR LIN FIREFIGHTER'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Finding No. 2 – Failure To Maintain A Complete And Accurate Equipment Roster**

Condition: The relief association failed to maintain a complete and accurate roster of equipment owned by the relief association. Although a listing of relief association owned equipment was provided during the current audit period, this listing was incomplete and did not accurately identify all of the equipment owned by the relief association. In addition, there was no indication that a physical inventory of equipment was conducted on an annual basis to account for the equipment owned by the relief association.

Criteria: 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: Relief association officials 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 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 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.

Recommendation: We 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.

PO MAR LIN FIREFIGHTER'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Finding No. 2 – (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.

PO MAR LIN FIREFIGHTER'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION  
CASH BALANCES  
AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2015

|      |                   |
|------|-------------------|
| Cash | <u>\$ 196,004</u> |
|------|-------------------|

PO MAR LIN FIREFIGHTER'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
 SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION  
 SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES  
 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2013 TO DECEMBER 31, 2015

Expenditures:

|                               |            |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| Benefit Services:             |            |
| Insurance premiums            | \$ 17,956  |
|                               |            |
| Fire Services:                |            |
| Equipment purchased           | \$ 186,613 |
| Equipment maintenance         | 32,177     |
| Training expenses             | 25,127     |
| Fire prevention materials     | 1,645      |
| Total Fire Services           | \$ 245,562 |
|                               |            |
| Administrative Services:      |            |
| Other administrative expenses | \$ 274     |
| Bond premiums                 | 750        |
| Total Administrative Services | \$ 1,024   |
|                               |            |
| Other Expenditures:           |            |
| Unauthorized expenditure      | \$ 12,183  |
|                               |            |
| Total Expenditures            | \$ 276,725 |

PO MAR LIN FIREFIGHTER'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

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

Po Mar Lin Firefighter's Relief Association Governing Body:

**Mr. Richard Hicks**  
President

**Mr. Kevin Gosselin**  
Vice President

**Ms. Robin Nuse**  
Secretary

**Mr. William W. Crouse**  
Treasurer

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

**Ms. Jane R. Laslo**  
Secretary  
East Marlborough Township

**Ms. Gail A. Abel**  
Secretary  
Newlin Township

**Ms. Susan Simone**  
Secretary  
Pocopson Township

**Ms. Shirley K. Walton**  
Secretary  
West Marlborough Township

PO MAR LIN FIREFIGHTER'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

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