

COMPLIANCE AUDIT

The South Bethlehem Volunteer
Firemen's Relief Association of the City
of Bethlehem, South Side, Pennsylvania
Northampton County
For the Period
January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2017

June 2018



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General

Eugene A. DePasquale • Auditor General



**Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0018
Facebook: Pennsylvania Auditor General
Twitter: @PAAuditorGen
www.PaAuditor.gov**

**EUGENE A. DePASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL**

Mr. Jack Vass, President
The South Bethlehem Volunteer
Firemen's Relief Association of
the City of Bethlehem,
South Side, Pennsylvania
Northampton County

We have conducted a compliance audit of The South Bethlehem Volunteer Firemen's Relief Association of the City of Bethlehem, South Side, 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, 2016 to December 31, 2017.

The objective of the audit was 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 objective identified above and was not required to be and was not 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.

We were not able to obtain independent confirmations for the cash balance and the investment balance directly from the financial institutions. Therefore, while the relief association provided bank statements that indicated that, as of December 31, 2017, the relief association had a cash balance of \$136,779 and an investment balance with a fair value of \$184,598, we were not able to verify 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, 2016 to December 31, 2017, the relief association, in all significant respects, complied with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures as they relate to the expenditure of relief association funds.

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.

May 31, 2018



EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE
Auditor General

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Background	1
Supplementary Financial Information	3
Report Distribution List	5

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 did not receive a state aid allocation during 2016 and 2017.

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

Lehigh Hook and Ladder Company No. 1

Liberty Fire Company No. 1

McIlvain Company No. 1

Protection Fire Company No. 1

THE SOUTH BETHLEHEM VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF THE
CITY OF BETHLEHEM, SOUTH SIDE, PENNSYLVANIA
SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION
CASH AND INVESTMENT BALANCES
AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2017

Cash	\$ 136,779
Fair Value of Investments	<u>184,598</u>
Total Cash and Investments	<u><u>\$ 321,377</u></u>

THE SOUTH BETHLEHEM VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF THE
 CITY OF BETHLEHEM, SOUTH SIDE, PENNSYLVANIA
 SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION
 SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES
 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2016 TO DECEMBER 31, 2017

Expenditures:

Benefit Services:	
Death benefits	\$ 31,500
Administrative Services:	
Officer compensation	\$ 4,000
Other administrative expenses	56
Bond premiums	718
Total Administrative Services	\$ 4,774
Total Expenditures	\$ 36,274

THE SOUTH BETHLEHEM VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF THE
CITY OF BETHLEHEM, SOUTH SIDE, PENNSYLVANIA
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom W. Wolf
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

The South Bethlehem Volunteer Firemen's Relief Association of the City of Bethlehem, South Side, Pennsylvania Governing Body:

Mr. Jack Vass
President

Mr. Gene Connell
Vice President

Mr. Andrew Krasnansky
Secretary

Mr. John Shivok
Treasurer

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

Ms. Louise M. Kelchner
City Clerk
City of Bethlehem

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.