

COMPLIANCE AUDIT

Upper Pottsgrove Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association

Montgomery County, Pennsylvania
For the Period
January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2016

March 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. George Harmansky, President
Upper Pottsgrove Township Volunteer
Firefighters' Relief Association
Montgomery County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Upper Pottsgrove Township Volunteer Firefighters' 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, 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 finding 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 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 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, 2014 to December 31, 2016:

- The relief association did not take appropriate corrective action to address the finding contained in our prior audit report, as detailed below and discussed in the Status of Prior Finding 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 findings listed below and discussed later in this report.

Finding No. 1 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –
Unauthorized Expenditure


Finding No. 2 Undocumented Expenditure

Finding No. 3 – 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.

March 7, 2018


EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE
Auditor General

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Background	1
Status of Prior Finding	3
Findings and Recommendations:	
Finding No. 1 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Unauthorized Expenditure	4
Finding No. 2 – Undocumented Expenditure.....	5
Finding No. 3 – Failure To Maintain A Complete And Accurate Equipment Roster.....	6
Supplementary Financial Information	8
Report Distribution List	10

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>
Upper Pottsgrove Township	Montgomery	\$37,191	\$35,298	\$35,209

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:

Upper Pottsgrove Fire Company No. 1

UPPER POTTSGROVE TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDING

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 Findings and Recommendations section of this report:

- Unauthorized Expenditure

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

UPPER POTTS GROVE TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 1 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Unauthorized Expenditure

Condition: As disclosed in the prior audit report, the relief association expended \$1,500 for a loan to a member that was not authorized by Act 118. During the current audit period, the relief association was reimbursed \$1,300 of the \$1,500 loan from the member; however, the relief association should be reimbursed the remaining \$200 to satisfy the loan.

Criteria: Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7416(f)(6) states:

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

- (6) To make cash payments to families in distressed circumstances by reason of age, infirmity or other disability suffered by one of the family members in the course of participation in the fire service as a volunteer firefighter.

Costs associated with a loan to a member do not qualify as an authorized volunteer firefighters' relief association expenditure; consequently, this disbursement is not authorized under Act 118.

Cause: Even though notified of this condition during our prior audit, relief association officials again neglected to seek reimbursement for the remaining \$200 expenditure that 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 again recommend that the relief association be reimbursed \$200 for the remaining 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 indicated they will take action to comply with the recommendation.

Auditor's Conclusion: We are concerned by the relief association's failure to correct this previously reported audit finding and strongly encourage timely implementation of the recommendation noted in this audit report.

UPPER POTTS GROVE TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 2 – Undocumented Expenditure

Condition: The relief association was unable to provide adequate supporting documentation for an expenditure amounting to \$350 for equipment maintenance on April 27, 2016.

Criteria: Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7418(a) states:

The Office of Auditor General shall have the power and its duty shall be to audit the accounts and records of every volunteer firefighters' relief association receiving money under Chapter 7 of the Act of December 18, 1984 (P.L. 1005, No. 205), known as the Municipal Pension Plan Funding Standard and Recovery Act, as far as may be necessary to satisfy the Auditor General that the money received was or is being expended for no purpose other than that authorized by this subchapter. Copies of all audits shall be furnished to the Governor.

Without adequate supporting documentation, such as an invoice and/or itemized receipt, this department is unable to determine whether relief association funds were expended for purposes authorized by Act 118. Furthermore, prudent business practice dictates that supporting documentation be maintained to evidence the propriety of all financial transactions.

Cause: Relief association officials failed to establish adequate internal control procedures to ensure supporting documentation is maintained for all expenditures.

Effect: Lack of supporting documentation, such as an invoice and/or itemized receipt, made it impossible to determine if the expenditure was made in accordance with Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7416(f). In addition, the failure to maintain adequate supporting documentation for relief association expenditures can lead to an increased risk of errors occurring and funds being misappropriated.

Recommendation: We recommend that the relief association officials provide this department with adequate supporting documentation, such as an invoice and/or itemized receipt, to ensure the propriety of the expenditure or that the relief association be reimbursed \$350 for the undocumented expenditure. We also recommend that the relief association officials maintain supporting documentation for all 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 indicated they will take action to comply with the recommendation.

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

UPPER POTTS GROVE TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 3 – 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. The relief association purchased \$94,472 of equipment during the current audit period, but the equipment for \$32,181 of those purchases was not properly accounted for on the relief association's equipment roster. 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.

UPPER POTTS GROVE TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 3 – (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.

UPPER POTTS GROVE TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION
CASH BALANCE
AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2016

Cash	<u>\$ 162,980</u>
------	-------------------

UPPER POTTS GROVE TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION
SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES
FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2014 TO DECEMBER 31, 2016

Expenditures:

Benefit Services:	
Insurance premiums	\$ 6,364
Relief benefits	1,264
Total Benefit Services	<u>\$ 7,628</u>
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 94,472
Equipment maintenance	11,485
Training expenses	4,517
Total Fire Services	<u>\$ 110,474</u>
Administrative Services:	
Other administrative expenses	\$ 257
Bond premiums	642
Total Administrative Services	<u>\$ 899</u>
Other Expenditures:	
Undocumented expenditure	<u>\$ 350</u>
Total Expenditures	<u><u>\$ 119,351</u></u>

UPPER POTTS GROVE TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom W. Wolf
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Upper Pottsgrove Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Governing Body:

Mr. George Harmansky
President

Mr. Martin Schreiber
Vice President

Mr. Thomas Wojton
Treasurer

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

Ms. Carol R. Lewis
Secretary
Upper Pottsgrove Township

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.