

# COMPLIANCE AUDIT

---

## Washington Township Volunteer Fire Department Relief Association Clarion County, Pennsylvania For the Period January 1, 2013 to December 31, 2015

---

May 2016



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](http://www.PaAuditor.gov)

**EUGENE A. DePASQUALE**  
**AUDITOR GENERAL**

Mr. Justin M. Nale, President  
Washington Township Volunteer Fire Department  
Relief Association  
Clarion County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Washington Township Volunteer Fire Department 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 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.

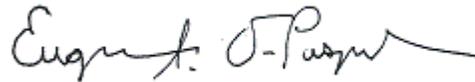
Relief association officers are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the relief association's administration of state aid and accumulated relief funds complies with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures, 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, 2013 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 – Undocumented Expenditures

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 9, 2016

# CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Background .....	1
Finding and Recommendation:	
Finding – Undocumented Expenditures .....	3
Supplementary Financial Information .....	5
Report Distribution List .....	6

## 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>
Knox Township	Clarion	\$ 2,926	\$ 2,796	\$ 2,586
Washington Township	Clarion	\$14,181	\$13,484	\$12,069

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:

Washington Township Volunteer Fire Department

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT  
RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

**Finding – Undocumented Expenditures**

Condition: The relief association was unable to provide adequate supporting documentation for the following expenditures made during the current audit period:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Check No.</u>	<u>Payee Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
08-13-13	779	Training vendor	\$ 180
09-02-14	806	Training vendor	200
09-02-14	807	Training vendor	119
		Total	<u>\$ 499</u>

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, 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 invoices and detailed minutes of meetings, made it impossible to determine if the expenditures were 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.

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT  
RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

**Finding – (Continued)**

Recommendation: We recommend that the relief association officials provide this department with adequate supporting documentation, such as invoices, to ensure the propriety of the expenditures or that the relief association be reimbursed \$499 for the undocumented expenditures. 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.

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT  
RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION  
FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2013 TO DECEMBER 31, 2015

Cash Balance:	\$	20,480
Expenditures:		
Benefit Services:		
Insurance premiums	\$	<u>15,203</u>
Fire Services:		
Equipment purchased	\$	18,130
Equipment maintenance		2,917
Training expenses		<u>1,436</u>
Total Fire Services	\$	<u><u>22,483</u></u>
Administrative Services:		
Officer compensation	\$	840
Other administrative expenses		950
Bond premiums		<u>200</u>
Total Administrative Services	\$	<u><u>1,990</u></u>
Other Expenditures:		
Undocumented expenditures	\$	<u><u>499</u></u>

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT  
RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

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

Washington Township Volunteer Fire Department Relief Association Governing Body:

**Mr. Justin M. Nale**  
President

**Mr. Edward Hoffman**  
Vice President

**Mr. Jason Hoffman**  
Secretary

**Mr. Douglas J. Smerkar**  
Treasurer

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

**Ms. Jacqui Blose**  
Secretary  
Knox Township

**Ms. Jacqui Blose**  
Secretary  
Washington 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).