

# COMPLIANCE AUDIT

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## The Volunteer Firemen's Relief Association of Willow Grove Volunteer Fire Company No. 1 Montgomery County, Pennsylvania For the Period January 1, 2013 to December 31, 2015

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September 2016



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of the Auditor General

Eugene A. DePasquale • Auditor General



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EUGENE A. DePASQUALE  
AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. Charles L. Gysi Jr., President  
The Volunteer Firemen's Relief Association Of Willow Grove  
Volunteer Fire Company No. 1  
Montgomery County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Volunteer Firemen's Relief Association Of Willow Grove Volunteer Fire Company No. 1 (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 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, 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 – Insufficient Surety (Fidelity) Bond Coverage

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.

September 9, 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 municipality:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>
Upper Moreland Township	Montgomery	\$195,716	\$184,681	\$176,077

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:

Willow Grove Volunteer Fire Company No. 1

THE VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF WILLOW GROVE  
VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY NO.1  
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

**Finding – Insufficient Surety (Fidelity) Bond Coverage**

Condition: The relief association did not maintain a Surety (Fidelity) bond in a sufficient amount to cover the relief association's authorized disbursing officer. The relief association's Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage amount was \$500,000; however, as of December 31, 2015, the relief association's cash assets totaled \$863,404.

Criteria: Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7415(c)(4) states, in part, that:

. . . the disbursing officer, whether designated treasurer, comptroller, financial secretary or otherwise, shall be bonded by corporate surety for faithful performance of duty. The amount of the bond shall be at least as great as the maximum cash balance in current funds of the association at any time during the fiscal year, and the premium on the bond shall be a proper charge against the funds of the association.

Cause: Relief association officials failed to monitor the relief association's cash balance to ensure that the Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage on the relief association's authorized disbursing officer was in compliance with Act 118 provisions.

Effect: As a result of the authorized disbursing officer of the relief association being insufficiently bonded, the relief association's cash assets were not adequately safeguarded.

Recommendation: We recommend relief association officials should monitor the relief association's cash balance to ensure that unexpected events affecting the relief association's current funds do not again result in insufficient Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage on the relief association's authorized disbursing officer, as required by Act 118. This requirement may be accomplished by increasing the Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage on the relief association's authorized disbursing officer to an amount greater than the expected maximum balance of the relief association's cash assets, or by decreasing the relief association's cash assets to an amount anticipated to remain below the policy coverage amount. In addition, 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 and subsequent to the audit period, on June 15, 2016, the relief association increased its bond coverage to \$1,000,000.

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

THE VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF WILLOW GROVE  
VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY NO.1  
SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION  
CASH AND INVESTMENT BALANCES  
AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2015

Cash	\$ 863,404
Fair Value of Investments	<u>782,196</u>
Total Cash and Investments	<u>\$ 1,645,600</u>



THE VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF WILLOW GROVE  
VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY NO.1  
SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION  
SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES  
FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2013 TO DECEMBER 31, 2015

Expenditures:

Benefit Services:	
Insurance premiums	\$ 464,893
Relief benefits	34,771
Total Benefit Services	\$ 499,664
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 99,055
Equipment maintenance	14,678
Total Fire Services	\$ 113,733
Administrative Services:	
Other administrative expenses	\$ 12,909
Bond premiums	1,198
Total Administrative Services	\$ 14,107
Investments Purchased:	
Investments purchased	\$ 200,000
Transfer of cash to custodial account	252,481
Total Investments Purchased	\$ 452,481
Total Expenditures	\$ 1,079,985

THE VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF WILLOW GROVE  
VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY NO.1  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

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

The Volunteer Firemen's Relief Association Of Willow Grove Volunteer Fire Company No. 1  
Governing Body:

**Mr. Charles L. Gysi Jr.**  
President

**Mr. Brian Focht**  
Vice President

**Mr. James P. Lee Sr.**  
Secretary

**Mr. Christopher R. Blowitski**  
Treasurer

**Mr. Frank Kibler**  
Director

**Mr. James G. Hotchkiss Jr.**  
Director

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

**Mr. David A. Dodies**  
Secretary  
Upper Moreland 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).