



**FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF
PLUMSTEAD TOWNSHIP**

BUCKS COUNTY

COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD

JANUARY 1, 2009 TO DECEMBER 31, 2011

RELEASED MARCH 2014

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE - AUDITOR GENERAL

DEPARTMENT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL



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EUGENE A. DePASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. Charles Rumble, President
PLUMSTEAD VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
Bucks County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Plumstead Volunteer Firefighters' 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, 2009 to December 31, 2011.

We conducted this compliance audit in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* applicable to performance audits, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our audit results and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our audit results and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

The objectives of the audit were:

1. To determine if the volunteer firefighters' relief association took appropriate corrective action to address the finding contained in our prior audit report; and
2. To determine if the volunteer firefighters' 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.

Volunteer firefighters' relief association officers are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the Plumstead Volunteer Firefighters' 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. In conducting our audit, we obtained an understanding of the volunteer firefighters' relief association's internal controls as they relate to the association's compliance with those requirements and that we considered to be significant within the context of the audit objectives, and assessed whether those significant controls were properly designed and implemented. Our audit procedures also included tests of documentary evidence supporting the Plumstead Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's recorded financial transactions, tests of the physical existence of inventories, interviews of selected officials and direct confirmation of the Plumstead Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's cash, investments, and certain other assets and liabilities as of December 31, 2011, with the custodians of the funds, debtors, creditors, and financial institutions to the extent necessary to satisfy the audit objectives. Additionally, we performed procedures to provide a reasonable assurance of detecting instances of violations of legal and regulatory requirements or violations of provisions of contracts that are significant within the context of the audit objectives.

The results of our audit, for the period January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2011, found the Plumstead Volunteer Firefighters' 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. In addition, the results of our audit found the Plumstead Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association did not, in all significant respects, receive state aid and expend state aid and accumulated relief funds in compliance with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws and administrative procedures, as noted in the findings listed below and discussed in detail in the Findings and Recommendations section of this report. Therefore, the Plumstead Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association will be subject to the potential withhold of its upcoming state aid distribution, as discussed in the Potential Withhold of State Aid section of this report. The results of our tests also indicated the Plumstead Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the Accompanying Expenditure Information and, as of December 31, 2011, had a cash balance of \$97,747 and an investment balance with a fair value of \$1,105,170.

Finding No. 1 – Noncompliance with Prior Audit Recommendation –
Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster

Finding No. 2 – Unauthorized Expenditures

Finding No. 3 – Untimely Deposit of State Aid

The contents of this report were discussed with the management of the Plumstead Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association and, where appropriate, their responses have been included in the report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eugene A. DePasquale". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE
Auditor General

October 9, 2012

CONTENTS

Background.....	1
Status of Prior Finding.....	3
Findings and Recommendations:	
Finding No. 1 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster.....	4
Finding No. 2 – Unauthorized Expenditures	6
Finding No. 3 – Untimely Deposit of State Aid	8
Potential Withhold of State Aid.....	10
Accompanying Expenditure Information	11
Report Distribution List	12

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 Firefighters' Relief Association of Plumstead Township, herein referred to as Plumstead Volunteer Firefighters' 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 the volunteer firefighters' relief association. The relief association's bylaws define the specific operational procedures by which the volunteer firefighters' 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 volunteer firefighters' 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, which is or are recognized as providing the service to the municipality.

BACKGROUND (Continued)

The Plumstead Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipalities:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>
Bedminster Township	Bucks	\$ 23,968	\$ 26,977	\$ 42,440
Plumstead Township	Bucks	\$130,043	\$146,372	\$225,507
Solebury Township	Bucks	\$ 28,887	\$ 32,514	\$ 48,240
Tinicum Township	Bucks	\$ 545	\$ 613	\$ 878*

*The 2011 state aid from Tinicum Township, in the amount of \$878, was not deposited until March 12, 2012. This issue is discussed in Finding No. 2 contained in this report.

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

Plumsteadville Volunteer Fire Company
Point Pleasant Fire Company No. 1
Point Pleasant/Plumsteadville EMS

PLUMSTEAD VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDING

NONCOMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

The Plumstead Volunteer Firefighters' 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:

- Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –
Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster

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

PLUMSTEAD VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 1 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –
Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster

Condition: As cited in our two prior audit reports, the relief association officials 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 by officials during the current audit period, this listing was incomplete and only included equipment purchased during 2009. During the current audit period, the relief association purchased \$233,600 of equipment and equipment purchases amounting to \$96,991 were 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, nor whether such inventory accounted for all of the relief association's owned equipment.

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 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; and
- Evidence of the performance and results of an annual physical inventory.

Cause: Even though notified of this condition during our prior audit, relief association officials, again, neglected to establish adequate internal control procedures over equipment 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.

PLUMSTEAD VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (Continued)

Finding No. 1 – (Continued)

Furthermore, the relief association's continued failure to maintain a complete and accurate equipment roster and to ensure that annual physical inventories of relief association owned equipment are conducted, and the results properly documented, the relief association may be subject to a withholding of its state aid, unless appropriate corrective action is taken, as detailed on page 10 of this report.

Recommendation: We, again, recommend the relief association officials maintain a cumulative equipment roster of all relief association owned equipment. 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.

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.

PLUMSTEAD VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (Continued)

Finding No. 2 – Unauthorized Expenditures

Condition: The relief association expended funds during the audit period, for the following items that are not authorized by Act 118:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Check No.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
03/12/11	5404	Funeral expenses for member	\$ 12,086
04/05/11	5408	Members' license plates	735
11/01/11	5474	Pediatric medical supplies	<u>128</u>
Total			<u>\$ 12,949</u>

Criteria: Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7416(f)(1 and 3) 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.

- (3) To maintain a beneficiary or death benefit fund and to pay a sum certain from that fund to the beneficiary of a participant in that fund upon death. If a beneficiary is not designated or a designated one has predeceased the participant, the sum certain shall be paid to the estate of the participant.

Costs associated with the purchase of funeral expenses, members' license plates, and pediatric medical supplies do not qualify as authorized volunteer firefighters' relief association expenditures; consequently, these disbursements are not authorized under Act 118.

Cause: Relief association officials were unaware that the aforementioned expenditures were not authorized by Act 118.

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

PLUMSTEAD VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (Continued)

Finding No. 2 – (Continued)

Furthermore, as a result of these unauthorized expenditures, the relief association may be subject to a total withholding of its state aid, unless appropriate corrective action is taken, as detailed on page 10 of this report.

Recommendation: We recommend the relief association be reimbursed \$12,949 for the unauthorized expenditures 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.

PLUMSTEAD VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (Continued)

Finding No. 3 – Untimely Deposit of State Aid

Condition: The relief association failed to deposit its 2011 state aid allocation received from Tincum Township, in the amount of \$878, into the relief association's account until March 12, 2012, representing 154 days after receipt.

Criteria: Section 706 (b)(2) of the Act of December 18, 1984, (P.L. 1005, No. 205), states:

The foreign fire insurance premium tax amount applicable to a municipality served solely by volunteer firefighters shall be paid to the municipality, which shall within 60 days of the date of the receipt of the moneys from the State Treasurer pay the amount received to the relief association fund of the fire department or departments, or fire company or companies, now existing or hereafter organized, inside or outside of the municipality, which is or are actively engaged in the service of the municipality and duly recognized by the governing body of the municipality.

Furthermore, prudent business practice dictates that, upon receipt of its state aid allocation, the relief association should ensure the funds are deposited in a timely manner.

Cause: The foreign fire insurance tax allocation was distributed to the municipal treasurer on September 26, 2011, who forwarded this state aid to the volunteer firefighters' relief association on October 10, 2011, which is within 60 days of receipt, as required by Section 706 (b)(2) of the Act of December 18, 1984, (P.L. 1005, No. 205). However, the relief association failed to establish internal control procedures to ensure that all income received was recorded and deposited in a timely manner. Relief association officials indicated that the check was inadvertently deposited into an affiliated fire company's account.

Effect: As a result of the untimely deposit of state aid, funds were not available to pay general operating expenses or for investment purposes. In addition, an untimely deposit of receipts increases the risk that funds could be lost or misappropriated.

As a result of our audit, and subsequent to the audit period, on March 12, 2012, the 2011 state aid allocation from Tincum Township, in the amount of \$878, was appropriately deposited into the relief association's brokerage account.

Recommendation: We recommend the relief association officials adopt internal control procedures to ensure the timely deposit of all future income received. For further guidance, please refer to the Auditor General's publication, MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATIONS.

PLUMSTEAD VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (Continued)

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.

PLUMSTEAD VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
POTENTIAL WITHHOLD OF STATE AID

A condition of a repeat finding such as that reported in Finding No. 1 and a condition such as that reported in Finding No. 2 contained in this report, may lead to a total withholding of state aid in the future unless these findings are corrected. However, such action will not be taken if sufficient documentation is provided within 60 days to evidence compliance with this department's recommendations. Such documentation should be submitted by the volunteer firefighters' relief association to: Department of the Auditor General, Bureau of Firefighters' Relief Association Audits, Room 316-D Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120.

PLUMSTEAD VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
 ACCOMPANYING EXPENDITURE INFORMATION
 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2009 TO DECEMBER 31, 2011

Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7412 states: a volunteer firefighters' relief association is an organization formed primarily for the purpose of affording financial protection to volunteer firefighters against the consequences of misfortune suffered as a result of their participation in the fire service. The organization may contain within its membership the members of one or more fire companies and may serve secondary purposes, as set forth in this subchapter, but only if adequate provisions have been first made to serve the primary purpose.

Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7416 authorizes the investment of relief association funds and outlines the types of benefits and services that can be provided with volunteer firefighters' relief association funds.

Furthermore, all expenditures must be properly authorized as prescribed in the volunteer firefighters' relief association bylaws and approved at an association meeting.

USES OF FUNDS:

Benefit Services:	
Insurance premiums	\$ 71,840
Death benefits	12,086
Relief benefits	18,649
Total Benefit Services	\$ 102,575
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 233,600
Equipment maintenance	50,231
Training expenses	9,073
Fire prevention materials	1,829
Total Fire Services	\$ 294,733
Administrative Services:	
Officer compensation	\$ 1,200
Other administrative expenses	78,314
Total Administrative Services	\$ 79,514
Total Investments Purchased:	\$ 96,512

PLUMSTEAD VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom Corbett
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Plumstead Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Governing Body:

Mr. Charles Rumble, President

Mr. Scott Fleisher, Vice President

Mr. J. Dalton Kulp, Secretary

Mr. Darin Bodisch, Treasurer

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

Ms. Jean L. Herstline, Secretary
Bedminster Township

Mr. Wayne A. Stork, Secretary
Plumstead Township

Ms. Gretchen K. Rice, Secretary
Solebury Township

Ms. Linda McNeill, Secretary
Tinicum Township

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at www.auditorgen.state.pa.us. Media questions about the report can be directed to the Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General, Office of Communications, 231 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120; via email to: news@auditorgen.state.pa.us.