BECHTELSVILLE FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION

BERKS COUNTY

COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD

JANUARY 1, 2009 TO JANUARY 10, 2012

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. Ronald H. Kehl, President
BECHTELSVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
Berks County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the former Bechtelsville 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 January 10, 2012.

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 former Bechtelsville 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 former Bechtelsville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's recorded financial transactions, tests of the physical existence of inventories, interviews of selected officials and direct confirmation of the Bechtelsville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's cash, investments, and certain other assets and liabilities as of January 10, 2012, 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 January 10, 2012, found the former Bechtelsville Volunteer Firefighters' 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. The results of our tests also indicated the former Bechtelsville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the Accompanying Expenditure Information. However, as of January 10, 2012, Bechtelsville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association merged with Bally-Goodwill Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association and Barto Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association to form Eastern Berks Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association.

The contents of this report were discussed with the management of the former Bechtelsville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association on December 4, 2012. As a result of the merger, the former Bechtelsville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's monetary assets and equipment were transferred to the Eastern Berks Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association.

October 4, 2013

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 former Bechtelsville Firemen's Relief Association, herein referred to as Bechtelsville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association, was 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 former Bechtelsville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipalities:

Municipality	County	2009	2010	2011
Bechtelsville Borough	Berks	$5,188	$5,839	$9,076
District Township	Berks	$3,338	$3,758	$6,002
Pike Township	Berks	$3,154	$3,550	$5,541

However, as of January 10, 2012, the Bechtelsville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association dissolved its organization. Therefore, it did not receive any further state aid allocation (see Accompanying Expenditure Information on page 4.

The Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association and the affiliated fire service organization are separate legal entities. The former Bechtelsville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was affiliated with the following organization:

Keystone Fire Company No. 1 of Bechtelsville

BECHTELSVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDING

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

The officials of the former Bechtelsville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association complied with the following prior audit finding and recommendation:

- Insufficient Surety (Fidelity) Bond Coverage

  By dissolving its organization on January 10, 2012, and transferring the former relief association's monetary assets to Eastern Berks Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association, the existing Bechtelsville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was no longer required to maintain a Surety (Fidelity) bond.

BECHTELSVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
ACCOMPANYING EXPENDITURE INFORMATION
FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2009 TO JANUARY 10, 2012

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	$	4,449
Total Benefit Services	$	4,449
Fire Services:		
Equipment purchased	$	23,552
Equipment maintenance		6,063
Training expenses		1,779
Fire prevention materials		9,050
Total Fire Services	$	40,444
Administrative Services:		
Other administrative expenses	$	53
Total Administrative Services	$	53
Other Expenditures:		
Transfer of monetary assets*	$	19,994
Total Other Expenditures	$	19,994

*-Transfer of Monetary Assets/Dissolution of Bechtelsville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association

As of January 10, 2012, the former Bechtelsville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association completed the process of dissolution and merged with Bally-Goodwill Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association and Barto Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association to form the Eastern Berks Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association. Consequently, all remaining monetary assets were transferred to the Eastern Berks Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association.

As a result of the dissolution of the former Bechtelsville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association and subsequent merger, we are providing officials of the Eastern Berks Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association copies of this report.

BECHTELSVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom Corbett
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Bechtelsville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Governing Body:

Mr. Ronald H. Kehl, President

Mr. Scott Reitnauer, Vice President

Mr. Edward R. Bullard, Secretary

Mr. Dennis H. Moyer, Treasurer

A report was also distributed to officials of the Eastern Berks Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association.

Mr. Michael S. Mutter, President

Mr. Earnest E. Gehman, Vice President

Mr. Paul E. Bartlett, Treasurer

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

Ms. Valerie A. Moll, Secretary
Bechtelsville Borough

Ms. Susan B. Manwiller, Secretary
District Township

Ms. Susan E. Cramp, Secretary
Pike 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.