



**SHEAKLEYVILLE COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER FIRE
DEPARTMENT RELIEF ASSOCIATION**

MERCER COUNTY

COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD

JANUARY 1, 2010 TO DECEMBER 31, 2012

RELEASED APRIL 2014

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE - AUDITOR GENERAL

DEPARTMENT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0018
Facebook: Pennsylvania Auditor General
Twitter: @PAAuditorGen

EUGENE A. DePASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL

Robert Buck, President
SHEAKLEYVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
Mercer County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Sheakleyville 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, 2010 to December 31, 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 findings 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.

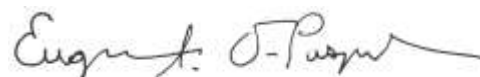
Volunteer firefighters' relief association officers are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the Sheakleyville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's administration of state aid and accumulated relief funds complies with applicable 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 Sheakleyville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's recorded financial transactions, tests of the physical existence of inventories, interviews of selected officials and direct confirmation of the Sheakleyville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's cash, investments, and certain other assets and liabilities as of December 31, 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, 2010 to December 31, 2012, found the Sheakleyville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association took appropriate corrective action to address one of the two findings contained in our prior audit report. However, the Sheakleyville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association failed to take appropriate corrective action to address the remaining finding contained in our prior audit report, as listed below and discussed in the Status of Prior Findings section of this report. In addition, the results of our audit found the Sheakleyville 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, except as noted in the finding listed below and discussed later in this report. The results of our tests also indicated the Sheakleyville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the Accompanying Expenditure Information and, as of December 31, 2012, had a cash balance of \$31,199 and no investments.

Finding – Noncompliance with Prior Audit Recommendation- Undocumented Expenditures

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

October 16, 2013



EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE
Auditor General

CONTENTS

Background.....	1
Status of Prior Findings	3
Finding and Recommendation	4
Finding – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Undocumented Expenditures	4
Accompanying Expenditure Information	6
Report Distribution List	7

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 Sheakleyville Community Volunteer Fire Department Relief Association, herein referred to as Sheakleyville 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 Sheakleyville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipalities:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Deer Creek Township	Mercer	\$2,929	\$ 4,650	\$2,631
New Vernon Township	Mercer	\$3,487	\$ 4,938	\$2,776
Otter Creek Township	Mercer	\$3,676	\$ 5,414	\$3,083
Perry Township	Mercer	\$8,342	\$12,727	\$7,246
Salem Township	Mercer	\$4,338	\$ 6,544	\$3,716
Sandy Creek Township	Mercer	\$4,813	\$ 7,144	\$4,063
Sheakleyville Borough	Mercer	\$ 775	\$ 1,028	\$ 583

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

Sheakleyville Community Volunteer Fire Department

SHEAKLEYVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDINGS

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Sheakleyville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association has complied with one of the two prior audit findings and recommendations, as follows:

Unauthorized Expenditures

By receiving reimbursement in the amount of \$2,893, on May 4, 2010, from the affiliated fire company for the unauthorized expenditure made in the prior audit period.

NONCOMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Sheakleyville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association has not complied with one of the two prior audit findings. This finding is noted below and discussed in detail in the Finding and Recommendation section of this report:

Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –Undocumented Expenditures

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 recommendation and corrective action noted in this audit report.

SHEAKLEYVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –
Undocumented Expenditures

Condition: As disclosed in the prior audit report, the relief association was unable to provide adequate supporting documentation for expenditures made in the prior audit period. A similar condition occurred in the current audit period, the relief association was again, unable to provide adequate supporting documentation for the following expenditures:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Check No.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
01/04/07	992	Credit Card Company	\$ 32
03/19/07	1000	Training Provider	30
03/19/07	1002	Fire Police Association	24
07/16/07	1016	Relief Member	100
12/18/07	1042	Firemen's Association	15
02/18/08	1049	Fire Police Association	24
02/25/08	1052	Vender	60
05/30/09	1121	Fire Police Association	24
06/15/09	1122	Fire Chief Association	30
Total			<u>\$ 339</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 invoices, 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: Even though notified of this condition during our prior audit, relief association officials, again, failed to establish adequate internal control procedures to ensure supporting documentation is maintained for all expenditures.

SHEAKLEYVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION – (Continued)

Finding – (Continued)

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.

However, as a result of our audit, and subsequent to the audit period, on June 12, 2013, the relief association received reimbursement in the amount of \$339 from the affiliated fire department for the undocumented expenditure.

Recommendation: We 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.

SHEAKLEYVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
 ACCOMPANYING EXPENDITURE INFORMATION
 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2010 TO DECEMBER 31, 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	\$ 28,803
Tokens of sympathy and goodwill	337
Total Benefit Services	\$ 29,140
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 54,271
Equipment maintenance	9,492
Training expenses	721
Fire prevention materials	912
Total Fire Services	\$ 65,396
Administrative Services:	
Other administrative expenses	\$ 495
Total Administrative Services	\$ 495

SHEAKLEYVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom Corbett
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Sheakleyville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Governing Body:

Mr. Robert Buck, President

Ms. Nicole Buck, Vice President

Ms. Tammi Buck, Secretary

Ms. Carolyn Chess, Treasurer

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

Ms. Pat Campbell, Secretary
Deer Creek Township

Ms. Kathleen Elder, Secretary
New Vernon Township

Ms. Paulette L. Young, Secretary
Otter Creek Township

Ms. Bonnie S. McCartney, Secretary
Perry Township

Ms. Pamela Smith, Secretary
Salem Township

Ms. Susanne Larimer, Secretary
Sandy Creek 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.