



**NEVERSINK FIREMAN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION
LEBANON 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
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EUGENE A. DePASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. David Ceresini, President
NEVERSINK VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
Lebanon County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Neversink 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.

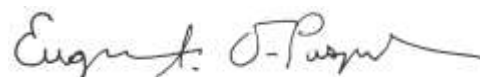
Volunteer firefighters' relief association officers are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the Neversink Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's administration of state aid and accumulated relief funds complies with applicable 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 Neversink Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's recorded financial transactions, tests of the physical existence of inventories, interviews of selected officials and direct confirmation of the Neversink 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 Neversink Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association took appropriate corrective action to address one of the two findings contained in our prior audit report. However, the Neversink 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 Neversink 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 Neversink Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the Accompanying Expenditure Information and, as of December 31, 2012, had a cash balance of \$53,124 and an investment balance with a fair value of \$163,387.

Finding – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Inadequate Relief
Association Bylaws

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

October 22, 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 Neversink Fireman's Relief Association, herein referred to as Neversink 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. The Neversink Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipality:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
North Cornwall Township	Lebanon	\$55,573	\$93,044	\$52,944

BACKGROUND (Continued)

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

Neversink Fire Company

NEVERSINK VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDINGS

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

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

Failure to Maintain a Federal Tax Identification Number

By obtaining a federal tax identification number and furnishing it to the financial institution in which the relief association maintains funds.

NONCOMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

The Neversink 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 – Inadequate Relief Association Bylaws

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.

NEVERSINK VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –
Inadequate Relief Association Bylaws

Condition: As cited in the prior four audit reports, the existing bylaws of the Neversink Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association do not contain all of the provisions required by Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7415(c). Specifically, the bylaws do not address the following:

- procedures for the approval and payment of expenditures; and
- procedures for the investment of funds and sale of investments.

Criteria: Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7415(c)(6) states, that the relief association's bylaws shall:

- (6) Establish procedures for the approval and payment of expenditures, investment of funds and sale of investments.

Cause: Even though notified of this condition during our prior four audits, there was a turnover in officials responsible for administering the affairs of the relief association. And as such, current relief officials were unaware that relief association bylaws require amending to ensure compliance with Act 118.

Effect: As a result of the mandatory provisions not being included in the bylaws, the relief association may have conducted its affairs without proper authorization.

Recommendation: We, again, recommend that relief association officials review and update the bylaws governing their organization so that the bylaws meet the requirements set forth in Act 118 and properly authorize the operating procedures of the relief association. For further guidance, please refer to the Auditor General's publication, MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATIONS.

Management's Response: Current 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.

NEVERSINK 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	\$ 11,204
Total Benefit Services	<u>\$ 11,204</u>
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 90,353
Equipment maintenance	17,273
Training expenses	6,631
Fire prevention materials	1,743
Total Fire Services	<u>\$ 116,000</u>
Administrative Services:	
Officer compensation	\$ 800
Other administrative expenses	981
Total Administrative Services	<u>\$ 1,781</u>
Total Investments Purchased:	<u>\$ 161,000</u>
Other Expenditures:	
Principal payments on loan	\$ 1,515
Interest payments on loan	1,046
Total Other Expenditures	<u>\$ 2,561</u>

NEVERSINK VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom Corbett
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Neversink Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Governing Body:

Mr. David Ceresini, President

Mr. Henry Steckbeck, Vice President

Ms. Barbara Finck-Krampitz, Secretary

Mr. Christopher M. Lux, Treasurer

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

Ms. Robin Getz, Secretary
North Cornwall 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.