



THE RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF THE CENTRAL BERKS
FIRE COMPANY NO. 1,
CENTERPORT, PENNSYLVANIA

BERKS COUNTY

COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD

JANUARY 1, 2009 TO DECEMBER 31, 2011

RELEASED SEPTEMBER 2013

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. Dennis Kunkle, President
CENTRAL BERKS VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
Berks County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Central Berks 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 findings contained in our prior audit report; and
2. To determine if the volunteer firefighters' relief association received 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 Central Berks 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 Central Berks Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's recorded financial transactions, tests of the physical existence of inventories, interviews of selected officials and direct confirmation of the Central Berks 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 Central Berks Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association took appropriate corrective action to address one of the three findings contained in our prior audit report. However, the Central Berks Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association failed to take appropriate corrective action to address the two remaining findings 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 Central Berks Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association, in all significant respects, did not receive 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 Central Berks Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's state aid will be withheld if appropriate corrective action is not taken, as discussed in the Potential Withhold of State section of this report. The results of our tests also indicated the Central Berks Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the Accompanying Expenditure Information and, as of December 31, 2011, had a cash balance of \$91,109 and an investment balance with a fair value of \$6,050.

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

Finding No. 2 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –
Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster

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

April 25, 2012

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

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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 of the Central Berks Fire Company No. 1, Centerport, Pennsylvania, herein referred to as Central Berks 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 Central Berks 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>
Centerport Borough	Berks	\$ 1,729	\$ 1,946	\$ 3,354
Centre Township	Berks	\$24,410	\$27,475	\$44,259

BACKGROUND (Continued)

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

Central Berks Fire Company No. 1

CENTRAL BERKS VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDINGS

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

The Central Berks Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association has complied with the following prior audit finding and recommendation:

- Untimely Deposit of State Aid

By adopting internal control procedure to ensure the timely deposit of all income received.

NONCOMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Central Berks Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association has not complied with two of the three prior audit findings. These findings are 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 Membership Roster

- 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 findings. The association management should strive to implement the recommendations and corrective actions noted in this audit report.

CENTRAL BERKS VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Condition: As cited in our prior three audit reports, the relief association officials, again, failed to maintain a complete and accurate roster of relief association members. While the relief association provided a membership roster for the current audit period, the roster did not provide dates of membership and membership classifications.

Criteria: Relief association officials should maintain a complete and accurate roster of the relief association's membership, as identified by criteria set forth in the relief association's bylaws. A comprehensive roster of all relief association members should include the following:

- Names of each member;
- Members' mailing addresses;
- Dates of births;
- Dates of memberships; and
- Membership classifications.

In addition, when warranted, a notation should be made on the roster identifying the date of a member's resignation or death.

Cause: Even though notified of this condition during our prior three audits, relief association officials, again, neglected to maintain a comprehensive roster of relief association members.

Effect: The failure to maintain a comprehensive membership roster could result in the payment of benefits to nonmembers, or deprive eligible relief association members from receiving authorized benefit payments.

Furthermore, this inappropriate, incomplete, and inaccurate membership roster may lead to a total withholding of state aid, unless appropriate corrective action is taken by the relief association, as detailed on page 7 of this report.

Recommendation: We, again, recommend the relief association officials compile and maintain a complete and accurate roster of the relief association's membership. For additional 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.

CENTRAL BERKS VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 2 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –
Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster

Condition: As cited in our prior audit report, the relief association officials, again, failed to maintain a complete and accurate roster of equipment owned by the relief association. While a listing of relief association owned equipment was provided, it was incomplete since it did not contain the names of suppliers (vendors), all dates of purchase, and unit costs to accurately identify equipment owned by the relief association. As such, it was impossible to determine if all equipment purchased during the audit period was appropriately recorded. 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 fixed assets.

Criteria: Prudent business practice dictates 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 fixed assets. 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 fixed assets 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 fixed assets prevents adequate accountability for, and safeguarding of, relief association fixed assets. Furthermore, due to 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 is subject to the withhold of its state aid, if appropriate corrective action is not taken, as detailed on page 7 of this report.

CENTRAL BERKS VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 2 – (Continued)

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.

CENTRAL BERKS VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
POTENTIAL WITHHOLD OF STATE AID

Conditions reported in Findings Nos. 1 and 2 may lead to a total withholding of state aid in the future unless these findings are corrected. However, such action will not be considered if sufficient documentation is provided within 60 days to verify 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.

CENTRAL BERKS 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	\$ 13,770
Death benefits	9,159
Total Benefit Services	\$ 22,929
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 14,815
Equipment maintenance	14,741
Training expenses	1,176
Total Fire Services	\$ 30,732
Administrative Services:	
Officer compensation	\$ 476
Other administrative expenses	658
Total Administrative Services	\$ 1,134
Total Investments Purchased:	\$ 6,000

CENTRAL BERKS VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom Corbett
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Central Berks Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Governing Body:

Mr. Dennis Kunkle, President

Mr. Mike Zimmerman, Vice President

Mr. Dennis Savage, Recording Secretary

Ms. Darlene Savage, Treasurer

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

Ms. Ruth A. Borkey, Secretary
Centerport Borough

Ms. Gloria Grim, Secretary
Centre 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.