



**CONCORD TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREMAN'S
RELIEF ASSOCIATION**

DELAWARE COUNTY

COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD

JANUARY 1, 2009 TO DECEMBER 31, 2011

RELEASED DECEMBER 2013

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE - AUDITOR GENERAL

DEPARTMENT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL



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EUGENE A. DePASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. Lee Weersing, President
CONCORD TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
Delaware County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Concord Township 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 objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our audit results and conclusions based on our audit objective.

The objective of the audit was 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 objective identified above.

Volunteer firefighters' relief association officers are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the Concord Township 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 objective, and assessed whether those significant controls were properly designed

and implemented. Our audit procedures also included tests of documentary evidence supporting the Concord Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's recorded financial transactions, tests of the physical existence of inventories, interviews of selected officials and direct confirmation of the Concord Township 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 objective. 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 objective.

The results of our audit, for the period January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2011, found the Concord Township 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 findings listed below and discussed later in this report. The results of our tests also indicated the Concord Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the Accompanying Expenditure Information and, as of December 31, 2011, had a cash balance of \$566,094 and an investment balance with a fair value of \$391,806.

Finding No. 1 – Unauthorized Expenditures

Finding No. 2 – Insufficient Surety (Fidelity) Bond Coverage

Finding No. 3 – Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster

Furthermore, we noted another matter that has been detailed in the Observation section of this report.

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

May 23, 2013



EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE
Auditor General

CONTENTS

Background.....	1
Findings and Recommendations:	
Finding No. 1 – Unauthorized Expenditures	3
Finding No. 2 – Insufficient Surety (Fidelity) Bond Coverage	4
Finding No. 3 – Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster.....	5
Observation:	
Observation – Scope Limitation	6
Accompanying Expenditure Information	7
Report Distribution List	8

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 Concord Township Volunteer Fireman's Relief Association, herein referred to as Concord Township 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 Concord Township 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>
Birmingham Township	Chester	\$ 25,226	\$ 28,394	\$ 43,281
Chadds Ford Township	Delaware	\$ 44,372	\$ 49,943	\$ 79,921
Concord Township	Delaware	\$134,060	\$ 150,893	\$274,395
Thornbury Township	Chester	\$ 2,993	\$ 3,369	\$ 5,532
Thornbury Township	Delaware	\$ 18,841	\$ 21,206	\$ 35,683

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

Concord Fire and Protective Association

CONCORD TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 1 – Unauthorized Expenditures

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

<u>Date</u>	<u>Check No.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
08/13/09	2432	Ambulance equipment	\$ 275
08/13/09	2432	Rearview backup camera	1050
08/13/09	2432	Rearview backup camera	1050
Total			<u>\$ 2,375</u>

Criteria: Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7416(f)(11) states:

- (11) To purchase safeguards for preserving life, health and safety of volunteer firefighters to ensure their availability to participate in the volunteer fire service.

Costs associated with the purchase of ambulance equipment for public use 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.

However, subsequent to the period under review, on June 28, 2012, the fire company reimbursed the relief association \$2,375 for the unauthorized expenditures.

Recommendation: We recommend that the 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.

CONCORD TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (Continued)

Finding No. 2 – Insufficient Surety (Fidelity) Bond Coverage

Condition: The relief association failed to maintain a Surety (Fidelity) bond in a sufficient amount to cover the relief association's authorized disbursing officer. The relief association's Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage amount was \$500,000; however, as of December 31, 2011, the relief association's cash assets totaled \$566,094.

Criteria: Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7415(c)(4) states, in part, that:

. . . the disbursing officer, whether designated treasurer, comptroller, financial secretary or otherwise, shall be bonded by corporate surety for faithful performance of duty. The amount of the bond shall be at least as great as the maximum cash balance in current funds of the association at any time during the fiscal year, and the premium on the bond shall be a proper charge against the funds of the association.

Cause: Relief association officials failed to monitor the relief association's cash balance to ensure that the Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage on the relief association's authorized disbursing officer was in compliance with Act 118 provisions.

Effect: As a result of the authorized disbursing officer of the relief association being insufficiently bonded, the relief association's cash assets were not adequately safeguarded.

However, on June 13, 2012, relief association officials reduced the balance of cash assets to an amount less than the Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage.

Recommendation: We recommend that the relief association officials continue to ensure that its Surety (Fidelity) bond sufficiently covers the relief association's authorized disbursing officer, as required by Act 118. This requirement may be accomplished by increasing the Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage on the relief association's authorized disbursing officer to an amount greater than the expected maximum balance of the relief association's cash assets, or by decreasing the relief association's cash assets to an amount anticipated to remain below the policy coverage amount. Relief association officials should monitor the relief association's cash balance to ensure that unexpected events affecting the relief association's current funds do not again result in insufficient Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage on the relief association's authorized disbursing officer. 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.

CONCORD TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (Continued)

Finding No. 3 – Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster

Condition: The relief association officials failed to maintain a complete and accurate roster of equipment owned by the relief association. While a cumulative equipment roster was provided, it was impossible to match most of the items purchased during the current audit period with the items listed on the equipment roster. In many instances, dates of purchase and costs of items were omitted from the equipment roster. However, evidence did exist that annual inventories were performed.

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 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: Relief association officials failed to establish adequate internal control procedures over equipment requiring the maintenance of a cumulative equipment roster.

Effect: The failure to properly record dates and costs of equipment purchases in a detailed equipment roster prevents officials from effectively monitoring the relief association's equipment purchases.

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

CONCORD TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
OBSERVATION

Observation – Scope Limitation

The Concord Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association does not maintain canceled or imaged checks. Without copies of canceled or imaged checks, we could not determine whether two relief association officers authorized and signed the checks in accordance with the requirements of Act 118. While the relief association provided bank statements, the relief association failed to provide copies of canceled or imaged checks.

Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7415(c)(3) states, in part, that the signatures of at least two officers, one of whom shall be the disbursing officer, shall be required to bind the association by formal contract or to issue a negotiable instrument.

Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7418(a) states, in part, that 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 . . . 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.

Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS) Section No. 6.56 states, "Auditors must obtain sufficient appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for their findings and conclusions." GAGAS Section No. 6.61(f) states, "Evidence obtained from a knowledgeable, credible, and unbiased third party is generally more reliable than evidence from management of the audited entity or others who have a direct interest in the audited entity."

Our inability to review canceled checks or imaged checks constitutes a scope limitation on our audit.

CONCORD TOWNSHIP 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	\$ 105,164
Relief benefits	20,490
Total Benefit Services	\$ 125,654
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 381,138
Equipment maintenance	55,737
Training expenses	41,358
Fire prevention materials	7,296
Total Fire Services	\$ 485,529
Administrative Services:	
Other administrative expenses	\$ 4,508
Total Administrative Services	\$ 4,508
Total Investments Purchased:	\$ 270,482

CONCORD TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom Corbett
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Concord Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Governing Body:

Mr. Lee Weersing, President

Mr. Robert Griffin, Jr., Vice President

Mr. Joshua Turner, Secretary

Mr. Timothy O'Leary, Treasurer

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

Ms. Quina Nelling, Secretary
Birmingham Township

Mr. Matthew B. DiFilippo, Secretary
Chadds Ford Township

Ms. Brenda L. Lamanna, Secretary
Concord Township

Mr. Geoffrey Corbett, Secretary
Thornbury Township, Delaware County

Mr. Brody Bovero, Secretary
Thornbury Township, Chester County

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