



**FERNDALE VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY'S
RELIEF ASSOCIATION**

CAMBRIA COUNTY

COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD

JANUARY 1, 2009 TO JUNE 5, 2012

RELEASED MAY 2013

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE - AUDITOR GENERAL

DEPARTMENT OF THE 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 Ferndale Volunteer Fire Company's Relief Association, herein referred to as Ferndale 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 Ferndale Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipality:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>
Ferndale Borough	Cambria	\$7,894	\$8,885	\$12,263

However, as of June 5, 2012, the Ferndale Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association dissolved its organization and merged with the West Hills Regional Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association. Monetary assets of \$1,494 were transferred from the Ferndale Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association to the West Hills Regional Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association. In addition, on July 17, 2010, the operable equipment of the Ferndale Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association, with a purchase value of \$90,644, was transferred to the West Hills Regional Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association. The Ferndale Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's bylaws did not contain any required provisions to formally close or dissolve the Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association.

The volunteer firefighters' relief association and the affiliated fire service organization were separate, legal entities. The Ferndale Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was affiliated with the Ferndale Volunteer Fire Company.



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EUGENE A. DePASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. William Cornell, Former President
FORMER FERNDAL VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
Cambria County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Former Ferndale 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 June 5, 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 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 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 Ferndale 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 Ferndale Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's recorded financial transactions, tests of the physical existence of inventories, interviews of selected officials and direct confirmation of the Ferndale Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's cash, investments, and certain other assets and liabilities as of June 5, 2012, 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 June 5, 2012, found the Ferndale Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association, in all significant respects, received and expended state aid and accumulated relief funds in compliance with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws and administrative procedures. The results of our tests indicated the Ferndale Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the Accompanying Expenditure Information Section of this report, and as of June 5, 2012, dissolved its operations, merged with the West Hills Regional Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association, and transferred all of its monetary assets and operable equipment to the West Hills Regional Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association.

The contents of this report were discussed with the management of the former Ferndale Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association; due to the merger with the West Hills Regional Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association, we are providing the officers of the West Hills Regional Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association copies of this report.

July 17, 2012



EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE
Auditor General

FERNDALE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
 ACCOMPANYING EXPENDITURE INFORMATION
 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2009 TO JUNE 5, 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	\$ 4,288
Total Benefit Services	\$ 4,288
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 31,683
Equipment maintenance	930
Total Fire Services	\$ 32,613
Administrative Services:	
Miscellaneous administrative expenses	\$ 18
Total Administrative Services	\$ 18
Other Expenditures:	
Transfer of monetary assets *	\$ 1,494
Total Other Expenditures	\$ 1,494

* As of June 5, 2012, the Ferndale VFRA dissolved and transferred all monetary and equipment assets to the West Hill Regional VFRA. Due to the dissolution of the Ferndale VFRA and the transfer of all assets to West Hills Regional VFRA, we are providing the officers of West Hill Regional VFRA copies of this report.



FERNDALE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom Corbett
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Former Ferndale Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Governing Body:

Mr. William Cornell, Former President

Mr. Gerald Katzenstein, Former Vice President

Mr. James T. Hammer, Former Secretary

Mr. Eric Baumbagh, Former Treasurer

West Hills Regional Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Governing Body:

Mr. Philip Christofes, President

Mr. Sean Simmons, Vice President

Mr. Brian A. Havas, Secretary

Mr. Kenneth St. Clair, Treasurer

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

Ms. Beverly E. Roth, Secretary
Ferndale Borough

This report is a matter of public record. Copies of this report may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General, Office of Communications, 318 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120. If you have any questions regarding this report or any other matter, you may contact the Department of the Auditor General by accessing our website at www.auditorgen.state.pa.us.