# LONGWOOD FIREFIGHTER'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION

## CHESTER COUNTY

## COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT

## FOR THE PERIOD

## JANUARY 1, 2009 TO DECEMBER 31, 2010

Released June 2013

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Eugene A. DePasquale - Auditor General

Department of the Auditor General

COUNCIL 90
AFSCME
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**LONGWOOD FIREFIGHTER'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION**

**CHESTER COUNTY**

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EUGENE DEPASQUALE

AUDITOR GENERAL

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EUGENE DEPASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL

## 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 Longwood Firefighter's Relief Association, herein referred to as Longwood 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 Longwood Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipalities:

| Municipality | County | 2009 | 2010 |
|---|---|---|---|
| East Marlborough Township | Chester | $14,441 | $16,254 |
| Kennett Township | Chester | $39,368 | $44,311 |
| Pennsbury Township | Chester | $41,810 | $47,060 |
| Pocopson Township | Chester | $26,592 | $29,931 |

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

Longwood Fire Company

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

EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. Bradford Bowman, President
LONGWOOD VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
Chester County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Longwood 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, 2010.

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 Longwood 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 Longwood Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's recorded financial transactions, tests of the physical existence of inventories, interviews of selected officials and direct confirmation of the Longwood Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's cash, investments, and certain other assets and liabilities as of December 31, 2010, 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, 2010, found the Longwood Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association took appropriate corrective action to address three of the four findings contained in our prior audit report. However, the Longwood 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 Longwood 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, except as noted in the finding listed below and discussed in detail in the Finding and Recommendation section of this report. The results of our tests also indicated the Longwood Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the Accompanying Expenditure Information and, as of December 31, 2010, had a cash balance of $181,883 and no investments.

Finding – 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 Longwood Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association and, where appropriate, their response has been included in the report.

August 22, 2011

EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE
Auditor General

LONGWOOD VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDINGS

## COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Longwood Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association has complied with the following prior audit findings and recommendations:

- Unauthorized Expenditures

  By receiving reimbursement on November 17, 2009, in the amount of $3,227, from the Longwood Fire Company for the unauthorized expenditures made during the prior audit period. In addition, we did not detect any additional unauthorized expenditures during the current audit period.

- Undocumented Expenditures

  By receiving reimbursement on November 17, 2009, in the amount of $1,487, from the Longwood Fire Company for the undocumented expenditures made during the prior audit period. In addition, we did not detect any additional undocumented expenditures during the current audit period.

- Failure to Secure Ownership Interest in Jointly Purchased Equipment

  By executing a written formal agreement with the affiliated fire company that adequately secures the relief association's proportional ownership interest in the jointly purchased equipment.

## NONCOMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

The Longwood Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association has not complied with one of the four 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 –
  Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster

We are concerned with the volunteer firefighters' relief association's failure to correct a previously reported audit finding. The association management should strive to implement the recommendation and corrective action noted in this audit report.

LONGWOOD VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – 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 cumulative roster of relief association owned equipment was provided and included all equipment purchased during the current audit period, it was incomplete as it did not include $46,608 of equipment purchases made during the prior audit period. 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: Sound 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: While 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 all 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.

Finding – (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.

LONGWOOD VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
ACCOMPANYING EXPENDITURE INFORMATION
FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2009 TO DECEMBER 31, 2010

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 | $ | 47,995 |
| Tokens of sympathy and goodwill | | 502 |
| Total Benefit Services | $ | 48,497 |
| | | |
| Fire Services: | | |
| Equipment purchased | $ | 145,602 |
| Equipment maintenance | | 24,730 |
| Training expenses | | 53,614 |
| Fire prevention materials | | 3,315 |
| Total Fire Services | $ | 227,261 |
| | | |
| Administrative Services: | | |
| Miscellaneous administrative expenses | $ | 2,825 |
| Total Administrative Services | $ | 2,825 |

LONGWOOD VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom Corbett
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Longwood Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Governing Body:

Mr. Bradford Bowman, President

Ms. Marianne McCarthy, Vice President

Mr. Mike Leventry, Secretary

Mr. Joseph Deckman, Treasurer

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

Ms. Jane R. Laslo, Secretary
East Marlborough Township

Ms. Lisa M. Moore, Secretary
Kennett Township

Ms. Kathleen M. Howley, Secretary
Pennsbury Township

Ms. Susan Simone, Secretary
Pocopson 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.