



**OLEY FIRE COMPANY RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF
OLEY, BERKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

BERKS COUNTY

COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD

JANUARY 1, 2009 TO DECEMBER 31, 2011

RELEASED MARCH 2014

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE - AUDITOR GENERAL

DEPARTMENT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL



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EUGENE A. DePASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. Allen Standhardt, President
OLEY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
Berks County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Oley 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 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 Oley 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 Oley Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's recorded financial transactions, tests of the physical existence of inventories, interviews of selected officials and direct confirmation of the Oley 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 Oley Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association took appropriate corrective action to address two of the four findings contained in our prior audit report. However, the Oley 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 Oley 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 in detail in the Findings and Recommendations section of this report. The results of our tests also indicated the Oley Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the Accompanying Expenditure Information and, as of December 31, 2011, had a cash balance of \$75,415 and no investments.

Finding No. 1 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –
Undocumented Expenditures

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 Oley Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association and, where appropriate, their responses have been included in the report.

April 27, 2012

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eugene A. DePasquale". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish 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 Oley Fire Company Relief Association of Oley, Berks County, Pennsylvania, herein referred to as Oley 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 Oley 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>
Oley Township	Berks	\$26,038	\$29,308	\$45,781
Pike Township	Berks	\$ 3,154	\$ 3,550	\$ 5,542

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

Oley Fire Company

OLEY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDINGS

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- Failure to Disclose Related Party Transactions

By adopting internal control procedures to ensure that any related party situation and/or transaction is disclosed. In addition, during the audit period, the relief association officer with the related party issue was replaced by another officer.

- Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Membership Roster

By maintaining a comprehensive listing of the relief association membership.

NONCOMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Oley Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association has not complied with two of the four 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 – Undocumented Expenditures
- 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.

OLEY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 1 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –
Undocumented Expenditures

Condition: As cited in our prior audit report, the relief association was unable to provide adequate supporting documentation for certain relief association expenditures. A similar condition occurred during the current audit period. The relief association was unable to provide adequate supporting documentation for the following expenditures:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Check No.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
08/22/06	753	Training	\$ 675
09/12/08	878	Training	980
09/26/09	925	Training	420
Total			<u>\$ 2,075</u>

Criteria: Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7418(a) states:

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 receiving money under Chapter 7 of the Act of December 18, 1984 (P.L. 1005, No. 205), [FN1] known as the Municipal Pension Plan Funding Standard and Recovery Act, 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.

Without adequate supporting documentation, such as invoices, this department is unable to determine whether relief association funds were expended for purposes authorized by Act 118. Furthermore, prudent business practices dictate that supporting documentation be maintained to verify the propriety of all financial transactions.

Cause: Even though notified of this condition during our prior audit, relief association officials neglected to establish adequate internal control procedures to ensure supporting documentation is maintained for all expenditures, which resulted in an additional undocumented expenditure.

OLEY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (Continued)

Finding No. 1 – (Continued)

Effect: Lack of supporting documentation, such as invoices and detailed minutes of meetings, made it impossible to determine if the expenditures were made in accordance with Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7416(f). In addition, the failure to maintain adequate supporting documentation for relief association expenditures can lead to an increased risk of errors occurring and funds being misappropriated.

As a result of our audit and subsequent to the audit period, the relief association received reimbursement of \$2,075 from the affiliated fire company on May 29, 2012.

Recommendation: We recommend that relief association officials maintain supporting documentation for all 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 has taken action to comply with the recommendation.

OLEY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (Continued)

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 did not maintain a complete and accurate roster of equipment owned by the relief association. The relief association has not provided a cumulative equipment roster since 2006. 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 owned equipment. Equipment purchases for the prior and current audit periods amounted to \$81,739.

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 owned 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: Even though notified of this condition during our prior audit, relief association officials failed again, to establish adequate internal control procedures over equipment 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 equipment prevents adequate accountability for, and safeguarding of, relief association equipment.

OLEY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (Continued)

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.

OLEY 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	\$ 23,486
Total Benefit Services	\$ 23,486
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 30,034
Equipment maintenance	13,591
Training expenses	8,335
Fire prevention materials	2,235
Total Fire Services	\$ 54,195
Administrative Services:	
Other administrative expenses	\$ 882
Total Administrative Services	\$ 882

OLEY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom Corbett
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Oley Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Governing Body:

Mr. Allen Standhardt, President

Mr. Jerry Sensenig, Vice President

Mr. Scott D. Weiser, Secretary

Mr. Harry Miller, Treasurer

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

Ms. Shirley M. Moyer, Secretary
Oley Township

Ms. Susan E. Cramp, Secretary
Pike 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.