FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF STATE COLLEGE, PENNSYLVANIA

CENTRE COUNTY

COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD

JANUARY 1, 2009 TO DECEMBER 31, 2010

JACK WAGNER

AUDITOR GENERAL

CONTENTS

Background 1

Letter From the Auditor General 3

Status of Prior Findings 5

Observation:

Observation – Diversification of Investments 6

Accompanying Expenditure Information 7

Report Distribution List 9

JACK WAGNER

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 Firemen's Relief Association of State College, Pennsylvania, herein referred to as State College 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 State College Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipalities:

Municipality	County	2009	2010
Benner Township	Centre	$ 1,467	$ 1,651
College Township	Centre	$ 79,312	$ 89,270
Ferguson Township	Centre	$117,843	$132,639
Patton Township	Centre	$ 94,428	$106,285
State College Borough	Centre	$193,494	$217,790

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

Alpha Fire Company of State College, Pennsylvania

Mr. Richard S. Harris, President
STATE COLLEGE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
Centre County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the State College 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 State College 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 State College Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's recorded financial transactions, tests of the physical existence of inventories, interviews of selected officials and direct confirmation of the State College 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 State College Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association took appropriate corrective action to address the findings contained in our prior audit report and, 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 also indicated the State College Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the Accompanying Expenditure Information and, as of December 31, 2010, had a cash balance of $890,684 and an investment balance with a fair value of $1,975,095.

However, we noted a matter that has been included in the following observation and detailed in the Observation section of this report.

Observation – Diversification of Investments

The contents of this report were discussed with the management of the State College Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association.

December 23, 2011

JACK WAGNER
Auditor General

STATE COLLEGE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDINGS

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- Unauthorized Expenditures

  By receiving reimbursement from Alpha Fire Company, in the amount of $1,100, 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.

- Overpayment of Relief Expenditures

  By receiving reimbursement from a vendor, in the amount of $611, for the duplicate payment.

- Insufficient Officer's Bond Coverage

  By increasing the officer's bond coverage to an amount greater than the balance of cash assets.

We commend the relief association management for its efforts in complying with the findings and recommendations contained in the prior audit report. The association management should strive to remain in compliance with all applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws and administrative procedures.

STATE COLLEGE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
OBSERVATION

Observation – Diversification of Investments

Within the parameters established by the Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Act[1], it is the responsibility of the volunteer firefighters' relief association to invest its funds in a proper and prudent manner.

As these investments typically provide an income stream to the relief association for annual operations, it is generally sensible not to invest all VFRA money in one asset or asset class that places the principal at risk. In fact, state law requires VFRA's to "reasonably diversify investments, unless the [VFRA] reasonably determines that it is in the interest of the beneficiaries not to diversify…"[2].

By diversifying investments, the VFRA can help preserve capital, increase liquidity and decrease volatility. Diversification means spreading one's money among different investments; asset allocation diversifies total investments among different investment classes, such as stocks, bonds, government securities, and cash equivalents.

As of December 31, 2010, the VFRA had $779,909 (fair value) or 27% of the VFRA's cash and investments in equities.

The VFRA management should periodically review its specific cash needs and investment goals and ensure that its investments are allocated and diversified to prudently meet those needs and goals.

[1] 53 P.S. § 8506(c)(1997). This provision incorporates the "prudent investor rule" of the Probate, Estates, and Fiduciaries Code, 20 Pa. C.S.A. §7201 et seq.

[2] 20 Pa. C.S.A. § 7204(a) (Supp. 2005).

STATE COLLEGE 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	$	335,120
Death benefits		156,899
Relief benefits		58,217
Tokens of sympathy and goodwill		2,020
Total Benefit Services	$	552,256
Fire Services:		
Equipment purchased	$	785,938
Equipment maintenance		48,835
Training expenses		42,374
Fire prevention materials		1,444
Total Fire Services	$	878,591
Administrative Services:		
Officer compensation	$	450
Other administrative expenses		42,060
Total Administrative Services	$	42,510
Total Investments Purchased:	$	1,300,000

STATE COLLEGE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
ACCOMPANYING EXPENDITURE INFORMATION
FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2009 TO DECEMBER 31, 2010 (Continued)

Other Expenditures:		
Principal payments on loan	$	121,200
Interest payments on loan		24,051
Total Other Expenditures	$	145,251

STATE COLLEGE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom Corbett
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

State College Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Governing Body:

Mr. Richard S. Harris, President

Mr. Carmine Prestia, Jr., Vice President

Mr. Richard Fitzgerald, Secretary

Mr. Dennis E. Hampton, Treasurer

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

Ms. Sharon Royer, Secretary
Benner Township

Mr. Adam T. Brumbaugh, Secretary
College Township

Mr. Mark A. Kunkle, Secretary
Ferguson Township

Mr. Douglas J. Erickson, Secretary
Patton Township

Ms. Sharon K. Ergler, Secretary
State College 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.