STOWE TOWNSHIP GENERAL VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT RELIEF ASSOCIATION

ALLEGHENY COUNTY

COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD

JANUARY 1, 2009 TO DECEMBER 31, 2011

RELEASED SEPTEMBER 2013

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE - AUDITOR GENERAL

DEPARTMENT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

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EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. James Gallagher, President
STOWE TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
Allegheny County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Stowe 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 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 finding 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 Stowe 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 objectives, and assessed whether those significant controls were properly designed and implemented. Our audit procedures also included tests of documentary evidence supporting the Stowe 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 Stowe 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 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 Stowe Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association did not take appropriate corrective action to address the finding contained in our prior audit report, as detailed below and discussed in the Status of Prior Finding section of this report. In addition, the results of our audit found the Stowe Township 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 Stowe 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 $64,886 and no investments.

Finding – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –
Unauthorized Expenditure

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

June 13, 2013

EUGENE A. 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 Stowe Township General Volunteer Fire Department Relief Association, herein referred to as Stowe 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. The Stowe Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipality:

Municipality	County	2009	2010	2011
Stowe Township	Allegheny	$28,602	$32,194	$46,471

BACKGROUND (Continued)

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

Stowe Township General Volunteer Fire Department

STOWE TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDING

NONCOMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

The Stowe Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association has not complied with the following prior audit finding. This finding is noted below and discussed in detail in the Finding and Recommendation section of this report:

- Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Unauthorized Expenditure

While the relief association was reimbursed $3,961 on February 18, 2010, for the unauthorized expenditure made during the prior audit period, the relief association again expended funds for the purchase of an unauthorized item (see the Finding in the Finding and Recommendation section of the report).

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

STOWE TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Unauthorized Expenditure

Condition: As cited in our prior audit report, the relief association expended $2,098 for a fire dog robot car which is not authorized by Act 118.

Criteria: Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7416(f)(1 and 16) states:

> The funds of any volunteer firefighters' relief association may be spent:
>
> (1) To pay for such normal and reasonable running expenses as may be appropriate to the businesslike conduct of the affairs of the association, including legal fees, rental or purchase of offices, payment of reasonable compensation of employees and purchase of office equipment and supplies.
>
> (16) To purchase fire prevention materials for public distribution.

Costs associated with the purchase of a fire dog robot car do not qualify as an authorized volunteer firefighters' relief association expenditure; consequently, this disbursement is not authorized under Act 118.

Cause: Even though notified of this condition during our prior audit, relief association officials, again, neglected the fact that the expenditure for the fire dog robot car was not authorized by Act 118.

Effect: As a result of this improper expenditure, relief association funds were not available for investment purposes or to pay for expenditures authorized by Act 118.

However, as a result of our audit and subsequent to the audit period, on August 17, 2012, the fire department reimbursed the relief association $2,098.

Recommendation: We again, recommend that 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.

STOWE 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	$	60,771
Relief benefits		1,081
Total Benefit Services	$	61,852
Fire Services:		
Equipment purchased	$	32,275
Equipment maintenance		2,841
Fire prevention materials		2,788
Total Fire Services	$	37,904
Administrative Services:		
Officer compensation	$	2,150
Other administrative expenses		1,844
Total Administrative Services	$	3,994
Total Investments Purchased:	$	40,000

EUGENE DEPASQUALE

AUDITOR GENERAL

STOWE TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom Corbett
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Stowe Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Governing Body:

Mr. James Gallagher, President

Mr. Richard Mlynarski, Vice President

Ms. Danean Harsh, Secretary

Mr. Donald Brandt, Jr., Treasurer

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

Ms. Marie B. Incorvati, Secretary
Stowe 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.