



**SYKESVILLE FIREMAN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION INC.**

**JEFFERSON COUNTY**

**COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT**

**FOR THE PERIOD**

**JANUARY 1, 2010 TO DECEMBER 31, 2012**

**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. Jeremy Sedor, President  
SYKESVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'  
RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
Jefferson County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Sykesville 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, 2010 to December 31, 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 Sykesville 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

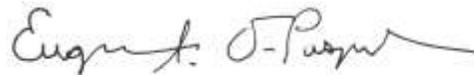
of the audit objective, and assessed whether those significant controls were properly designed and implemented. Our audit procedures also included tests of documentary evidence supporting the Sykesville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's recorded financial transactions, tests of the physical existence of inventories, interviews of selected officials and direct confirmation of the Sykesville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's cash, investments, and certain other assets and liabilities as of December 31, 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, 2010 to December 31, 2012, found the Sykesville 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 later in this report. The results of our tests also indicated the Sykesville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the Accompanying Expenditure Information and, as of December 31, 2012, had a cash balance of \$35,420 and no investments.

#### Finding – Failure to Adhere to Relief Association Bylaws

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

July 8, 2013



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 Sykesville Fireman's Relief Association Inc., herein referred to as Sykesville 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 Sykesville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipalities:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Henderson Township	Jefferson	\$4,512	\$7,052	\$4,025
Sykesville Borough	Jefferson	\$5,780	\$8,112	\$4,601
Winslow Township	Jefferson	\$5,390	\$7,895	\$4,649

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

Sykesville Volunteer Fire Department

SYKESVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – Failure to Adhere to Relief Association Bylaws

Condition: The relief association did not adhere to numerous provisions in the association's bylaws. Specifically, the relief association failed to abide by the following bylaw stipulations:

- Relief association officials failed to hold monthly meetings as stipulated in the relief association's bylaws. The relief association held only five meetings in 2010, five meetings in 2011, and only four meetings in 2012. However, expenditures were made throughout the entire audit period; and
- Based on our review of the relief association's minutes of the meetings that were held during the current audit period, the relief association's membership was not aware of, nor did they approve, all of the association's financial transactions.

Criteria: The relief association's bylaws stipulate the following:

- Article 2, Section 1 – Regular meetings of this association shall be held on the second Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m.
- Article 5, Section 1 – All expenditures must be approved by a majority vote at an association meeting and duly recorded in the minutes.

Furthermore, prudent business practice dictates that the relief association should adhere to all provisions stipulated in the relief association's bylaws to ensure that the relief association conducts its affairs with proper authorization.

Cause: Relief association officials were unaware of the stipulations in the relief association's bylaws.

Effect: As a result of the relief association not following the mandatory provisions stipulated in the bylaws, the relief association may have conducted its affairs without proper authorization.

Recommendation: We recommend that relief association officials review and evaluate the bylaws governing their organization and revise the bylaws, if warranted, establish guidelines and procedures to meet the provisions contained in the bylaws in order to assure that the association conducts its affairs with proper authorization. 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.

SYKESVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
 ACCOMPANYING EXPENDITURE INFORMATION  
 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2010 TO DECEMBER 31, 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	\$ 8,016
Total Benefit Services	\$ 8,016
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 24,139
Equipment maintenance	157
Training expenses	223
Total Fire Services	\$ 24,519
Other Expenditures:	
Undocumented expenditure*	\$ 57
Total Other Expenditures	\$ 57

\*Dollar amount deemed insignificant, and therefore, not selected for detailed testing.

SYKESVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom Corbett  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Sykesville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Governing Body:

Mr. Jeremy Sedor, President

Mr. Michael Yamrick, Vice President

Mr. Kevin Yamrick, Secretary

Mr. Brian Mowrey, Treasurer

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

Ms. Ruth A. Reitz, Secretary  
Henderson Township

Ms. Diane C. Gresock, Secretary  
Sykesville Borough

Ms. Mary M. Greeley, Secretary  
Winslow Township

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at [www.auditorgen.state.pa.us](http://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](mailto:news@auditorgen.state.pa.us).