



CHAPMANVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION

HEREIN REFERRED TO AS:

CHAPMANVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION

VENANGO COUNTY

COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD

JANAURY 1, 2004 TO DECEMBER 31, 2006



CONTENTS

Background.....	1
Letter From the Auditor General	3
Finding and Recommendation:	
Finding – Unauthorized Expenditures	5
Accompanying Expenditure Information	7
Report Distribution List.....	9



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, Act of June 11, 1968, (P.L. 149, No. 84), as amended, 53 P.S. § 8501 et seq. (commonly referred to as Act 84), 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 Chapmanville 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 84 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 84 authorizes specific types of expenditures and prescribes appropriate volunteer firefighters' relief association investment options. Within the parameters established by Act 84, 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 Chapmanville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipalities:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>
Troy Township	Crawford	\$1,969	\$2,216	\$2,235
Plum Township	Venango	\$4,835	\$5,368	\$5,417

BACKGROUND (Continued)

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

Chapmanville Volunteer Fire Department

Mr. Samuel J. Firster, President
CHAPMANVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
Venango County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Chapmanville 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, Act of June 11, 1968, (P.L. 149, No. 84), as amended, 53 P.S. § 8501 *et seq.* (commonly referred to as Act 84), for the period January 1, 2004 to December 31, 2006. The audit was conducted in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* applicable to performance audits, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

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.

The Department of the Auditor General (Department) is mandated by state statute to calculate state aid provided to volunteer firefighters' relief associations and to audit volunteer firefighters' relief associations having received such aid. An administrative unit of the Department's Comptroller's Office that is not involved in the audit process calculates state aid and submits requests to the Commonwealth's Treasury Department for the disbursement of state aid to the municipality. The Department has implemented procedures to ensure that Department audit personnel are not directly involved in the calculation and disbursement processes. The Department's mandatory responsibilities are being disclosed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*.

Volunteer firefighters' relief association officers are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the Chapmanville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's administration of state aid and accumulated 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 applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws and administrative procedures significant within the context of the audit objective. We also tested transactions, confirmed the Chapmanville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's cash balance as of December 31, 2006, with the custodian of the funds, and interviewed selected officials to the extent necessary to satisfy the audit objective.

The results of our audit found that for the period January 1, 2004 to December 31, 2006, the Chapmanville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the accompanying information and as of December 31, 2006, had a cash balance of \$6,877 and no investments. Additionally, the results of our tests indicated that, in all significant respects, the Chapmanville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association received and expended state aid and accumulated relief association funds in compliance with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws and administrative procedures, except as noted in the following finding discussed later in this report:

Finding – Unauthorized Expenditures

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

June 6, 2007

JACK WAGNER
Auditor General

CHAPMANVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – Unauthorized Expenditures

Condition: The relief association expended funds for the following items, which are not authorized by Act 84:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Check No.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
04/01/04	167	Ladies Auxiliary Bond Premium	\$ 170
03/14/05	185	Ladies Auxiliary Bond Premium	170
12/14/05	199	Ladies Auxiliary Bond Premium	170
03/15/07	213	Ladies Auxiliary Bond Premium	170
Total			<u>\$ 680</u>

Criteria: Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8506(e)(1) 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 its affairs including legal fees and including but not by way of limitation the rental or purchase of offices, the payment of reasonable compensation of any needed employees, and the purchase of office equipment and supplies.

Since the Department of the Auditor General is legislatively prohibited from giving pre-audit advice, an interagency agreement with the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) had been established whereby the DCED provided interpretation of Act 84 of 1968, the "Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Act." The DCED has determined that the relief association may expend funds for various types of insurance. Here, however, the above expenditures are for the ladies auxiliary, not the relief association. Consequently, the expenditures are not considered permissible under Act 84.

Cause: Relief association officials were unaware that the expenditures for the ladies auxiliary bond coverage were not authorized by Act 84.

Effect: As a result of these improper expenditures, relief association funds were not available for investment purposes, or to pay for expenditures authorized by Act 84.

CHAPMANVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding (Continued)

Recommendation: We recommend the relief association be reimbursed \$680 for the unauthorized expenditures and that relief association officials become familiar with Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8506(e) 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.

CHAPMANVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
 ACCOMPANYING EXPENDITURE INFORMATION
 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2004 TO DECEMBER 31, 2006

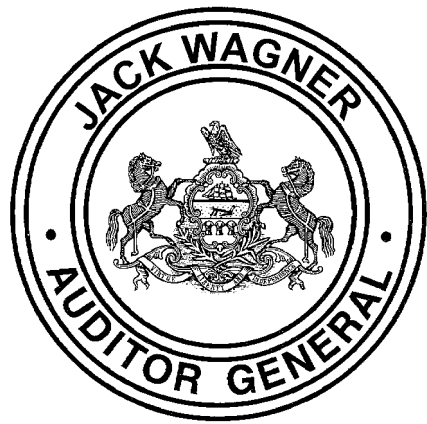
Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8502(1) states, in part, that:

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. Such an association may also serve other purposes, . . . provided only that adequate provisions be first made to serve its primary purpose. . . .

Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8506, 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. 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	\$ 4,239
Total Benefit Services	\$ 4,239
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 18,464
Equipment maintenance	1,865
Training expenses	271
Total Fire Services	\$ 20,600
Administrative Services:	
Miscellaneous administrative expenses	179
Total Administrative Services	\$ 179



CHAPMANVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Edward G. Rendell
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Chapmanville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Officers:

Mr. Samuel J. Firster, President

Ms. Kimberly A. Baker, Secretary

Mr. Scott B. Baker, Treasurer

Reports were also distributed to each municipality, which allocated foreign fire insurance tax monies to this relief association.

Ms. Sandra R. Whitman, Secretary
Plum Township

Mr. John T. Strawbridge, Secretary
Troy Township

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.