

**THE FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF LANSDOWNE, PA**

**HEREIN REFERRED TO AS:**

**LANSDOWNE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION**

**DELAWARE COUNTY**

**COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT**

**FOR THE PERIOD**

**JANUARY 1, 2004 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007**



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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, 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 Lansdowne 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 Lansdowne Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipality:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>
Lansdowne Borough	Delaware	\$56,609	\$62,978	\$63,226	\$64,673

BACKGROUND (Continued)

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

Lansdowne Fire Company

Mr. Thomas C. Young Sr., President  
LANSDOWNE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'  
RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
Delaware County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Lansdowne 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, 2007.

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 Lansdowne 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 objectives. We also tested transactions, confirmed the Lansdowne Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's investment balance and the cash balance as of December 31, 2007, with the custodians of the funds, and interviewed selected officials to the extent necessary to satisfy the audit objectives.

The results of our audit for the period January 1, 2004 to December 31, 2007, found, in all significant respects, the Lansdowne Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association received and expended funds in compliance with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws and administrative procedures, except as noted in the following findings discussed later in this report. The results of our tests indicated the Lansdowne Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the accompanying information and as of December 31, 2007, had a cash balance of \$223,911 and an investment balance with a fair value of \$785,502.

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

Finding No. 2 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –  
Failure to Maintain Minutes of Meetings

Finding No. 3 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –  
Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster

Finding No. 4 – Inadequate Financial Record-Keeping System

We also noted another matter that has been included in the following observation discussed later in this report.

Observation – Diversification of Investments

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

July 8, 2008

JACK WAGNER  
Auditor General

LANSDOWNE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDINGS

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Lansdowne Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association has complied with the following prior audit finding and recommendation:

- Insufficient Officer's Bond Coverage

By decreasing the balance of cash assets below the amount of the officer's bond coverage.

NONCOMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Lansdowne Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association has not complied with several prior audit findings. These issues are further discussed in the following findings noted in the Findings and Recommendations section of this report:

- Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –  
Undocumented Expenditures
  
- Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –  
Failure to Maintain Minutes of Meetings
  
- 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 several previously reported audit findings. The association management should strive to implement the recommendations and corrective actions noted in this audit report.

LANSLOWNE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Condition: As cited in the prior audit report, the relief association was unable to provide adequate supporting documentation for \$1,337 in expenditures made in the prior audit period. In addition, during the current audit period, the relief association was unable to provide adequate supporting documentation for the following expenditure:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Check No.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
09/10/07	1597	Relief association member	\$ 750

The relief association indicated that the above expenditure was for a member to attend an annual convention. However, at the time of the audit, documentation was not available to determine the validity of the expenditure made to the relief association member.

Criteria: Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8507(a) states, in part:

The Department of the Auditor General shall have the power, and its duty shall be, to audit the accounts and records of every volunteer firefighters' relief association receiving any money under Chapter 7 of the Act of December 18, 1984 (P.L. 1005, No 205), known as the "Municipal Pension Plan Funding Standard and Recovery Act," as amended, as far as may be necessary to satisfy the department that the money received was expended or is being expended for no purpose other than that authorized by this act.

Cause: While notified in the prior audit report of the necessity to maintain supporting documentation, relief association officials failed to establish adequate internal control procedures to ensure supporting documentation for expenditures is maintained.

Effect: Lack of supporting documentation, such as invoices, training certificates, and detailed minutes of meetings, made it impossible to determine if the expenditures were made in accordance with Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8506(e).

However, subsequent to the audit period, on May 6, 2008, the relief association received reimbursement from the affiliated fire company in the amount of \$1,337 for the undocumented expenditures detected during the prior audit. As of the date of this report, \$750 of the relief association's current period expenditure remains undocumented and unreimbursed.

LANSDOWNE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 1 – (Continued)

Recommendation: We recommend the relief association provide this department with adequate supporting documentation, such as invoices, to determine the validity of the expenditure or that the relief association be reimbursed \$750 for the remaining undocumented expenditure. We also recommend that the 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 indicated they will take action to comply with the recommendation.

LANSDOWNE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 2 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –  
Failure to Maintain Minutes of Meetings

Condition: As cited in the prior audit report, the relief association did not maintain minutes of meetings, as required by Act 84. While the relief association began to maintain minutes of meetings beginning January 2007, the meeting minutes maintained were those of meetings held by the Board of Directors and not the minutes of meetings conducted by the relief association membership.

Criteria: Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8505(a) states, in part, that the relief association:

. . . must provide for the taking and preserving of minutes of all meetings, and the maintenance of such books of account as may be necessary and appropriate to afford a permanent record of its financial affairs.

Cause: While notified of this condition in the prior audit report, relief association officials neglected to maintain minutes of meetings, as required by Act 84.

Effect: The failure to maintain minutes of meetings prevented the verification as to whether relief association business was presented before the membership for approval.

Recommendation: We again recommend relief association officials maintain a permanent record of all relief association meetings, as required by Act 84. The minutes should include an adequate record of all financial-related business conducted by the relief association. 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.

LANSDOWNE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 3 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –  
Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster

Condition: As cited in the prior audit report, the relief association officials did not maintain a complete and accurate roster of equipment owned by the relief association. While a roster of relief association owned equipment was provided during the current audit, 8 out of the 11 equipment purchases we tested could not be traced to the equipment roster provided by the relief association. These equipment purchases not recorded included a thermal imaging camera, a rescue saw, a Hurst jaws of life rescue tool package, 4 digital air monitors, 4 Motorola radios, and 3 SCBA carbon cylinders. In addition, there was no indication that an annual inventory of the equipment was performed to account for the relief association's fixed assets.

Criteria: 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 fixed assets. A cumulative roster of all relief association equipment should include the following:

- Type of equipment purchased.
- Date of purchase.
- Unit cost.
- Name of supplier.
- Serial number, if applicable.
- Current location of item.
- Final disposition of sold or damaged equipment.
- Notation of the annual inventory.

Cause: While notified of this condition in the prior audit report, relief association officials neglected to establish adequate internal control procedures over fixed assets to include the maintenance of a cumulative equipment roster and the performance of an annual equipment inventory to account for the relief association's fixed assets.

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 equipment inventory prevents adequate accountability and safeguarding of relief association assets.

LANSDOWNE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 3 – (Continued)

Recommendation: We again recommend the relief association officials maintain a cumulative roster of all relief association owned equipment. Furthermore, the relief association should ensure it performs an annual inventory of all operable equipment and that 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.

LANSDOWNE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 4 – Inadequate Financial Record-Keeping System

Condition: The relief association's financial record-keeping system did not provide effective control over cash receipts, disbursements, and monetary assets, and does not meet the minimum requirements of maintaining financial records established by this department. The following are the noted deficiencies:

- A journal was not maintained to record the receipts and disbursements of the relief association.
- Ledgers were not utilized to record the transactions of the relief association accounts.
- Documentation to support a \$750 expenditure made during the current audit period was not available for examination at the time of the audit.

Criteria: Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8505 (a) states, in part, that the relief association:

. . . must provide for the taking and preserving of minutes of all meetings, and the maintenance of such books of account as may be necessary and appropriate to afford a permanent record of its financial affairs.

In addition, an adequate system of accounting and record keeping is a prerequisite for sound administration of relief association assets.

Cause: While the minimum record-keeping requirements of this department were not met, the treasurer believed his maintaining of a checkbook was sufficient record keeping.

Effect: The failure of relief association officials to maintain adequate records prohibits the membership from effectively monitoring the relief association's financial operations.

Recommendation: We recommend the relief association establish and maintain a financial record-keeping system, which meets the minimum record-keeping requirements of this department. 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.

LANSDOWNE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
OBSERVATION

Observation – Diversification of Investments

Within the parameters established by the Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Act<sup>1</sup>, 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..."<sup>2</sup>.

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, 2007, the VFRA had \$785,502 (fair value) or 78% of the VFRA's cash and investments in mutual funds.

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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 20 Pa. C.S.A. § 7204(a) (Supp. 2005).

LANSDOWNE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
 ACCOMPANYING EXPENDITURE INFORMATION  
 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2004 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007

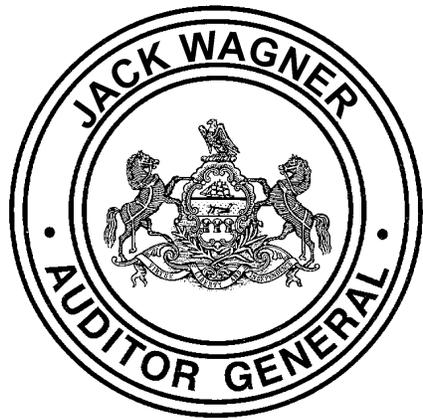
Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8502(1) states, in part, that:

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	\$ 203,117
Relief benefits	515
Tokens of sympathy and goodwill	980
Total Benefit Services	\$ 204,612
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 509,669
Equipment maintenance	28,051
Training expenses	2,270
Total Fire Services	\$ 539,990
Administrative Services:	
Officer compensation	\$ 2,400
Other administrative expenses	1,175
Total Administrative Services	\$ 3,575
Other Expenditures:	
Undocumented expenditure	\$ 750
Total Other Expenditures	\$ 750



LANSDOWNE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Edward G. Rendell  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Lansdowne Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Officers:

Mr. Thomas C. Young Sr., President

Mr. John LeSage, Treasurer

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

Ms. Barbara Ann Henry, Secretary  
Lansdowne 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](http://www.auditorgen.state.pa.us).