



**PLEASANTVILLE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT RELIEF ASSOCIATION INC.  
OF THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA**

**HEREIN REFERRED TO AS:**

**PLEASANTVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION**

**VENANGO COUNTY**

**COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT**

**FOR THE PERIOD**

**JANUARY 1, 2005 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 Pleasantville 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.

BACKGROUND (Continued)

The Pleasantville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipalities:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>
Oil Creek Township	Crawford	\$3,028	\$3,043	\$3,148
Allegheny Township	Venango	\$1,891	\$1,914	\$1,968
Oilcreek Township	Venango	\$4,456	\$4,505	\$4,785
Pleasantville Borough	Venango	\$4,093	\$4,134	\$4,173
Southwest Township	Warren	\$1,390	\$1,400	\$1,430

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

Pleasantville Volunteer Fire Department

Ms. Mary Longiotti, President  
PLEASANTVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'  
RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
Venango County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Pleasantville 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, 2005 to December 31, 2007. 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.

Volunteer firefighters' relief association officers are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the Pleasantville 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 Pleasantville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's cash balance as of December 31, 2007, with the custodian of the funds, and interviewed selected officials to the extent necessary to satisfy the audit objective.

The results of our audit for the period January 1, 2005 to December 31, 2007, found, in all significant respects, the Pleasantville 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 Pleasantville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the accompanying information and as of December 31, 2007, had a cash balance of \$11,922 and no investments.

Finding No. 1 – Unauthorized Expenditures

Finding No. 2 – Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster

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

November 19, 2008

JACK WAGNER  
Auditor General

PLEASANTVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 1 – 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>
04/27/06	315	Maintenance on fire department truck	\$ 523
10/18/07	335	Fire department officer's bond	<u>250</u>
Total			<u>\$ 773</u>

While repairs and maintenance of equipment are considered authorized by Act 84, the expenses are limited to equipment owned by the relief association. Similarly, insurance premiums are considered authorized provided the insurance is to benefit the relief association or its members. Here, the repair expenses were related to a vehicle that was not owned by the relief association and the officer's bond policy was for the benefit of the fire company, not the relief association or its members; consequently, the \$523 expenditure for maintenance on a fire department owned vehicle and the \$250 expenditure for the fire department bond are not considered authorized under Act 84.

Criteria: Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8506(e)(1,2,8 and 12) 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.
- (2) To purchase contracts of insurance which shall at the least afford financial assistance to active members of the fire service represented by the association against losses due to injury suffered in the fire service and which may also provide in the order named, (i) for payments to the widow or other dependents of a member in the event of his death, (ii) for protection of active firefighters against disease, (iii) for the replacement or purchase of prosthetic devices such as visual aids, hearing aids, dentures, braces, crutches, and the like, where such devices have been lost or damaged while the owner was

PLEASANTVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 1 – (Continued)

engaged in the fire service or where the need for such devices arises because of functional impairment attributable to participation in the fire service, (iv) for the repair or replacement if necessary of articles of clothing or pocket pagers damaged in the course of participation in the fire service, and (v) for disability incurred after service for a minimum of 20 years as a volunteer firefighter.

- (8) To contribute or to purchase contracts of insurance which will contribute towards the costs of rehabilitating and retraining volunteer firefighters who by reason of their participation in the fire service have suffered a major impairment of their ability to continue their vocation.
  
- (12) To secure insurance against the legal liability of the volunteer firefighters for loss and expense from claims arising out of the performance of their official, authorized duties while going to, returning from or attending fires or while performing their duties as special fire police.

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 safeguards and safeguard equipment, including maintenance and repairs of equipment as long as the equipment is owned by the relief association. Similarly, the DCED has determined that the relief association may expend funds for various types of insurance as long as the insurance is for the benefit of the relief association or its members. However, the DCED has deemed that repairs of equipment not owned by the relief association and insurance that is not for the benefit of its members are not considered permissible under Act 84.

Cause: Relief association officials were unaware that the aforementioned expenditures 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.

However, subsequent to the period under review, on December 22, 2008, the relief association received reimbursement, in the amount of \$773, from the affiliated fire department for the above unauthorized expenditures.

PLEASANTVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 1 – (Continued)

Recommendation: We recommend that the 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.

PLEASANTVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 2 – Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster

Condition: The relief association officials did not maintain a complete and accurate roster of equipment owned by the relief association. During the current audit, the relief association provided a roster of equipment owned by the relief association but it was incomplete as it only contained equipment purchased during the year 2005 and did not contain any of the equipment purchased by the relief association prior to 2005. In addition, there was no indication that the relief association had performed an annual inventory of its equipment 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: Relief association officials failed 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.

Recommendation: We 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.

PLEASANTVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 2 – (Continued)

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.

PLEASANTVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
 ACCOMPANYING EXPENDITURE INFORMATION  
 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2005 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	\$ 3,745
Relief benefits	176
Total Benefit Services	\$ 3,921
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 40,663
Equipment maintenance	5,391
Training expenses	50
Fire prevention materials	441
Total Fire Services	\$ 46,545

PLEASANTVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Edward G. Rendell  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Pleasantville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Officers:

Ms. Mary Longiotti, President

Ms. Bonnie Whitman, Secretary

Mr. John Paulich, Treasurer

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

Ms. Jody Davison, Secretary  
Oil Creek Township

Ms. Jody Lavery, Secretary  
Allegheny Township

Ms. Anna Marie Larkin, Secretary  
Oilcreek Township

Ms. Stephanie Drake, Secretary  
Pleasantville Borough

Ms. Barbara A. Kemp, Secretary  
Southwest 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](http://www.auditorgen.state.pa.us).