

COMPLIANCE AUDIT

Biglerville Hose & Truck Co. #1 Volunteer Firefighter's Relief Association

Adams County, Pennsylvania
For the Period
January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2019

November 2020



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General
Eugene A. DePasquale • Auditor General



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EUGENE A. DePASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. Brandon Huff, President
Biglerville Hose & Truck Co. #1 Volunteer
Firefighter's Relief Association
Adams County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Biglerville Hose & Truck Co. #1 Volunteer Firefighter's Relief Association (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, 2017 to December 31, 2019.

The objectives of the audit were:

1. To determine if the relief association took appropriate corrective action to address the finding contained in our prior audit report.
2. To determine if the relief association complied with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures as they relate to the receipt of state aid and the expenditure of relief association funds.

Our audit was limited to the areas related to the objectives identified above and was not, nor was it required to be, conducted in accordance with Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

Relief association officers are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the 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. Relief association officers are responsible for complying with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures. It is our responsibility to perform procedures to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to the extent necessary to satisfy the audit objectives. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our conclusions.

Based on our audit procedures, we conclude that, for the period January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2019:

- The relief association took appropriate corrective action to address the finding contained in our prior audit report.
- The relief association, in all significant respects, complied with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures as they relate to the receipt of state aid and the expenditure of relief association funds, except as noted in the finding listed below and discussed later in this report.

Finding – Insufficient Surety (Fidelity) Bond Coverage

The contents of this report were discussed with the management of the relief association and, where appropriate, their response has been included in the report. We would like to thank the relief association officials for the cooperation extended to us during the conduct of the audit.

October 29, 2020



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 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 volunteer firefighters' relief associations. Relief association bylaws define the specific operational procedures by which relief associations conduct 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 relief associations 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 that is or are recognized as providing the service to the municipality.

The relief association was allocated state aid from the following municipalities:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>
Biglerville Borough	Adams	\$ 6,235	\$ 5,683	\$ 6,047
Butler Township	Adams	\$13,250	\$12,058	\$12,825
Straban Township	Adams	\$ 295	\$ 269	\$ 288

BACKGROUND – (Continued)

Based on the relief association’s records, its total cash as of December 31, 2019 was \$81,691, as illustrated below:

Cash	<u>\$ 81,691</u>
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Based on the relief association’s records, its total expenditures for the period January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2019 were \$37,785, as noted below. The accuracy of these expenditures was evaluated as part of the Department’s audit to conclude on the relief association’s compliance with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures as they relate to the receipt of state aid and the expenditure of relief association funds.¹ **The scope of the Department’s audit does not include the issuance of an opinion on the accuracy of these amounts.**

Expenditures:

Benefit Services:	
Insurance premiums	\$ 11,686
Death benefits	600
Total Benefit Services	<u>\$ 12,286</u>
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 7,191
Equipment maintenance	12,852
Training expenses	2,740
Total Fire Services	<u>\$ 22,783</u>
Administrative Services:	
Other administrative expenses*	\$ 2,288
Bond premiums	300
Total Administrative Services	<u>\$ 2,588</u>
Other Expenditures:	
Unauthorized expenditures**	<u>\$ 128</u>
Total Expenditures	<u>\$ 37,785</u>

*A portion of the other administrative expenses represents finalizing tax returns/preparation of Form 990 in the amount of \$2,255.

** During 2017 and 2019, the relief association made insignificant disbursements amounting to \$128 which were not authorized by Act 118. We disclosed these issues to relief association officials on July 20, 2020 and the relief association received reimbursement on July 23, 2020.

¹ Accuracy was evaluated for a selection of transactions based on dollar amount, category, and/or random selection.

BACKGROUND – (Continued)

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

Biglerville Hose & Truck Co. #1

BIGLERVILLE HOSE & TRUCK CO. #1 VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER'S
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDING

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

The relief association has complied with the prior audit finding and recommendation, as follows:

- Failure To Maintain A Complete And Accurate Equipment Roster

By maintaining a cumulative inventory roster of all relief association owned equipment and by performing and documenting an annual physical inventory of this equipment.

BIGLERVILLE HOSE & TRUCK CO. #1 VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER'S
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – Insufficient Surety (Fidelity) Bond Coverage

Condition: The relief association did not maintain a Surety (Fidelity) bond in a sufficient amount to cover the relief association's authorized disbursing officer. The relief association's Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage amount was \$80,000; however, as of December 31, 2019, the relief association's cash assets totaled \$81,691.

Criteria: Section 7415(c)(4) of Act 118 states, in part, that:

. . . the disbursing officer, whether designated treasurer, comptroller, financial secretary or otherwise, shall be bonded by corporate surety for faithful performance of duty. The amount of the bond shall be at least as great as the maximum cash balance in current funds of the association at any time during the fiscal year, and the premium on the bond shall be a proper charge against the funds of the association.

Cause: Relief association officials failed to monitor the relief association's cash balance to ensure that the Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage on the relief association's authorized disbursing officer was in compliance with Act 118 provisions.

Effect: As a result of the authorized disbursing officer of the relief association being insufficiently bonded, the relief association's cash assets were not adequately safeguarded.

Recommendation: We recommend that the relief association officials ensure that its Surety (Fidelity) bond sufficiently covers the relief association's authorized disbursing officer, as required by Act 118. This requirement may be accomplished by increasing the Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage on the relief association's authorized disbursing officer to an amount greater than the expected maximum balance of the relief association's cash assets, or by decreasing the relief association's cash assets to an amount anticipated to remain below the policy coverage amount. In addition, relief association officials should monitor the relief association's cash balance to ensure that unexpected events affecting the relief association's current funds do not again result in insufficient Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage on the relief association's authorized disbursing officer. 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 discussed prior to the audit exit conference and, as a result of our audit, the relief association increased their bond coverage to \$100,000 on September 11, 2020.

BIGLERVILLE HOSE & TRUCK CO. #1 VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER'S
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – (Continued)

Auditor's Conclusion: We reviewed documentation verifying that the bond coverage was increased to \$100,000. Compliance for sufficient bond coverage during the next audit period will be subject to verification through our next audit.

BIGLERVILLE HOSE & TRUCK CO. #1 VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER'S
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom W. Wolf
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Biglerville Hose & Truck Co. #1 Volunteer Firefighter's Relief Association Governing Body:

Mr. Brandon Huff
President

Mr. Eric Bowmaster
Vice President

Ms. Renee Weikert
Secretary

Mr. James Shenk
Treasurer

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

Ms. Sandra L. Vazquez
Secretary
Biglerville Borough

Ms. Danielle Helwig
Secretary
Butler Township

Ms. Robin Crushong
Secretary
Straban Township

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at www.PaAuditor.gov. Media questions about the report can be directed to the Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General, Office of Communications, 229 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120; via email to: news@PaAuditor.gov.