

COMPLIANCE AUDIT

Bloomsburg Volunteer Firefighter's
Relief Association of
Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania
Columbia County
For the Period
January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2020

July 2021



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General

Timothy L. DeFoor • Auditor General



**Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0018
Facebook: Pennsylvania Auditor General
Twitter: @PAAuditorGen
www.PaAuditor.gov**

**TIMOTHY L. DEFOOR
AUDITOR GENERAL**

Mr. Hugh Gross, President
Bloomsburg Volunteer Firefighter's
Relief Association of Bloomsburg,
Pennsylvania
Columbia County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Bloomsburg Volunteer Firefighter's Relief Association of Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania (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, 2018 to December 31, 2020.

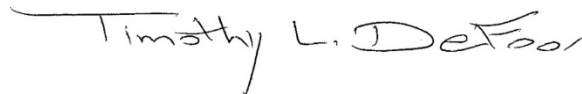
The objective of the audit was to determine if the relief association complied with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures as they relate to the receipt of state aid and the expenditure of relief association funds. Our audit was limited to the areas related to the objective 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 objective. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our conclusions.

We were not able to obtain independent confirmations of a portion of the cash balance and a portion of the investment balance directly from the financial institutions. Therefore, while the relief association provided statements that indicated that, as of December 31, 2020, the relief association had a cash balance of \$473,224 and an investment balance with a fair value of \$843,075, we were not able to verify portions of those cash and investment balances.

Based on our audit procedures, we conclude that, except for the effects, if any, of the matter described in the preceding paragraph, for the period January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2020, 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.

The contents of this report were discussed with the management of the relief association. We would like to thank the relief association officials for the cooperation extended to us during the conduct of the audit.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy L. DeFoor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the left of the first letter.

Timothy L. DeFoor
Auditor General

July 6, 2021

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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 municipality:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
Bloomsburg Borough	Columbia	\$58,097	\$63,616	\$64,710

BACKGROUND – (Continued)

Based on the relief association’s records, its total cash and investments as of December 31, 2020 were \$1,316,299, as illustrated below:

Cash	\$ 473,224
Fair Value of Investments	<u>843,075</u>
Total Cash and Investments	<u>\$ 1,316,299</u>

Based on the relief association’s records, its total expenditures for the period January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2020 were \$244,159, 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	\$ 8,774
Death benefits	<u>30,000</u>
Total Benefit Services	<u>\$ 38,774</u>
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 170,190
Equipment maintenance	<u>20,817</u>
Total Fire Services	<u>\$ 191,007</u>
Administrative Services:	
Officer compensation	\$ 9,891
Other administrative expenses	3,065
Bond premiums	<u>1,422</u>
Total Administrative Services	<u>\$ 14,378</u>
Total Expenditures	<u>\$ 244,159</u>

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:

Bloomsburg Volunteer Fire Department Incorporated

BLOOMSBURG VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF
BLOOMSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom W. Wolf
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Bloomsburg Volunteer Firefighter's Relief Association of Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania Governing
Body:

Mr. Hugh Gross
President

Mr. Todd Thomas
Vice President

Ms. Libby Kile
Secretary

Mr. Todd Davis
Treasurer

Mr. Herb Kline
Trustee

Mr. Daniel Kile
Trustee

Mr. John Mahon
Trustee

BLOOMSBURG VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF
BLOOMSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

A report was also distributed to the following municipality, which allocated foreign fire insurance tax monies to this relief association:

Ms. Lisa Dooley
Secretary
Bloomsburg Borough

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.