

# COMPLIANCE AUDIT

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## F.W.M. Volunteer Firemen's Relief Association

Wyoming County, Pennsylvania

For the Period

January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2017

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November 2018



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of the Auditor General

Eugene A. DePasquale • Auditor General



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EUGENE A. DePASQUALE  
AUDITOR GENERAL

Ms. Kimberly Walters, President  
F.W.M. Volunteer Firemen's  
Relief Association  
Wyoming County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the F.W.M. Volunteer Firemen'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, 2015 to December 31, 2017.

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 required to be and was not 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.

Based on our audit procedures, we conclude that, for the period January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2017, 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 findings listed below and discussed later in this report.

Finding No. 1 – Failure To Deposit State Aid

Finding No. 2 – Untimely Receipt And Deposit Of State Aid

Finding No. 3 – Failure To Maintain A Complete And Accurate Equipment Roster

The supplementary financial information contained in this report is presented for purposes of additional disclosure and analysis. We performed only limited procedures on the supplementary financial information and, accordingly, express no form of assurance on it.

The contents of this report were discussed with the management of the relief association and, where appropriate, their responses have 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.

November 19, 2018



EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE  
Auditor General

## CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Background.....	1
Findings and Recommendations:	
Finding No. 1 – Failure To Deposit State Aid .....	3
Finding No. 2 – Untimely Receipt And Deposit Of State Aid.....	4
Finding No. 3 – Failure To Maintain A Complete And Accurate Equipment Roster.....	6
Supplementary Financial Information .....	8
Report Distribution List .....	10

## 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.

**BACKGROUND – (Continued)**

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

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
Forkston Township	Wyoming	\$3,784	\$3,770	\$3,786*
Mehoopany Township	Wyoming	\$5,331*	\$5,231	\$5,317*
North Branch Township	Wyoming	\$1,558*	\$1,551*	\$1,749*
Windham Township	Wyoming	\$2,546**	\$2,541	\$2,532*

\* The following state aid allocations received from the municipalities noted above were not deposited by the relief association until October 13, 2018 as disclosed in Finding No. 1 in this report.

\*\* The 2015 state aid allocation from Windham Township was not deposited by the relief association until April 15, 2016 as disclosed in Finding No. 2 of this report.

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:

F.W.M. Volunteer Fire Company

F.W.M. VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Finding No. 1 – Failure To Deposit State Aid**

Condition: The relief association did not deposit the 2015, 2016 and 2017 state aid allocations distributed by the townships listed below, in the total amount of \$21,824, into a relief association account. The foreign fire insurance tax allocations were distributed to the municipal treasurers on September 23, 2015, September 20, 2016 and September 25, 2017, respectively. The treasurers forwarded the state aid to the relief association on the dates listed below, which are within 60 days of receipt, as required by Section 706 (b)(2) of the Act of December 18, 1984, (P.L. 1005, No. 205); however, upon receipt of the state aid allocations, the relief association did not ensure the funds were deposited into a relief association account.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Date Municipality Distributed Aid</u>
2015	Mehoopany Township	\$ 5,331	10-16-15
2015	North Branch Township	\$ 1,158	10-07-15
2015	North Branch Township	\$ 400	11-04-15
2016	North Branch Township	\$ 1,551	10-05-16
2017	Forkston Township	\$ 3,786	10-02-17
2017	Mehoopany Township	\$ 5,317	12-13-17
2017	North Branch Township	\$ 1,749	10-04-17
2017	Windham Township	\$ 2,532	10-12-17

Criteria: Section 706 (b)(2) of the Act of December 18, 1984, (P.L. 1005, No. 205), states:

The foreign fire insurance premium tax amount applicable to a municipality served solely by volunteer firefighters shall be paid to the municipality, which shall within 60 days of the date of the receipt of the moneys from the State Treasurer pay the amount received to the relief association fund of the fire department or departments, or fire company or companies, now existing or hereafter organized, inside or outside of the municipality, which is or are actively engaged in the service of the municipality and duly recognized by the governing body of the municipality.

Furthermore, prudent business practice dictates that, upon receipt of its state aid allocations, the relief association should ensure the funds are deposited in a timely manner.

Cause: Relief association officials failed to establish internal control procedures to ensure that all state aid received is deposited into a relief association account.

F.W.M. VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Finding No. 1 – (Continued)**

Effect: As a result of the state aid not being deposited, the relief association was unable to use the funds for general operating expenses or for investment purposes. In addition, the failure to deposit receipts in a timely manner can lead to a greater risk that funds could be lost or misappropriated.

Recommendation: We recommend that the relief association officials immediately deposit the \$21,824 of state aid allocations it received from the townships and listed in the above table. In addition, relief association officials should establish accounting and internal control procedures to ensure that all state aid is received in a timely manner and deposited into a relief association account. 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, as a result of our audit, the relief association deposited \$21,824 into a relief association account on October 13, 2018.

Auditor's Conclusion: We reviewed documentation verifying that the deposit of \$21,824 was received. Compliance with deposits of state aid allocations during the next audit period will be subject to verification through our next audit.

**Finding No. 2 – Untimely Receipt And Deposit Of State Aid**

Condition: Although Windham Township prepared and returned a Certification Form AG 385 for 2015 by the March 31 annual filing date in accordance with Act 205, the township did not distribute the 2015 state aid in the amount of \$2,546 to the relief association in a timely manner. The foreign fire insurance tax allocation was distributed to the municipal treasurer on September 23, 2015, who forwarded this state aid to the relief association on February 11, 2016, which is not within 60 days of receipt, as required by Section 706 (b)(2) of the Act of December 18, 1984, (P.L. 1005, No. 205). The relief association did not deposit the 2015 state aid allocation it received from Windham Township, in the amount of \$2,546, until April 15, 2016. Since there was no documentation indicating that the relief association attempted to retrieve the funds, the relief association did not ensure the funds were received and deposited timely.



F.W.M. VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Finding No. 2 – (Continued)**

Criteria: Section 706 (b)(2) of the Act of December 18, 1984, (P.L. 1005, No. 205), states:

The foreign fire insurance premium tax amount applicable to a municipality served solely by volunteer firefighters shall be paid to the municipality, which shall within 60 days of the date of the receipt of the moneys from the State Treasurer pay the amount received to the relief association fund of the fire department or departments, or fire company or companies, now existing or hereafter organized, inside or outside of the municipality, which is or are actively engaged in the service of the municipality and duly recognized by the governing body of the municipality.

Furthermore, prudent business practice dictates that upon receipt of its state aid allocation, the relief association should establish adequate internal control procedures to ensure the funds are deposited in a timely manner.

Cause: Relief association officials failed to establish internal control procedures to ensure that all income due the relief association was received, recorded and deposited into a relief association account in a timely manner.

Effect: As a result of the untimely receipt and deposit, funds were not available to pay general operating expenses or for investment purposes. In addition, an untimely receipt and deposit of funds increases the risk that funds could be lost or misappropriated.

Recommendation: We recommend that the relief association officials adopt internal control procedures to ensure the timely receipt and deposit of all future income received. 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.

Auditor's Conclusion: Compliance will be subject to verification through our next audit.

F.W.M. VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Finding No. 3 – Failure To Maintain A Complete And Accurate Equipment Roster**

Condition: The relief association failed to maintain a complete and accurate roster of equipment owned by the relief association. Although a listing of relief association owned equipment was provided during the current audit period, it was incomplete because it did not contain the names of suppliers (vendors), dates of purchase, cost of equipment and serial numbers to accurately identify equipment owned by the relief association. As such, it was impossible to determine if all equipment purchased during the audit period in the amount of \$29,016 was recorded. In addition, there was no indication that a physical inventory of equipment was conducted on an annual basis to account for the equipment owned by the relief association.

Criteria: Prudent business practice dictates that 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 equipment. A cumulative equipment roster of all relief association equipment should include all of the following:

- Types of equipment purchased
- Dates of purchase
- Unit costs
- Names of suppliers
- Serial numbers, if applicable
- Current locations of items
- Final dispositions of sold or damaged equipment
- Evidence of the performance and results of an annual physical inventory

Cause: Relief association officials failed to establish adequate internal control procedures over equipment by requiring the maintenance of a cumulative equipment roster and the performance of an annual physical inventory of equipment.

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 physical inventory of equipment prevents adequate accountability for, and safeguarding of, relief association equipment.

Recommendation: We recommend that the relief association officials maintain a cumulative equipment roster of all equipment owned by the relief association. Furthermore, the relief association should ensure it performs an annual physical inventory of all operable equipment and that the completion of the inventory be sufficiently documented. For further guidance, please refer to the Auditor General's publication, MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATIONS.

F.W.M. VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Finding No. 3 – (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.

Auditor's Conclusion: Compliance will be subject to verification through our next audit.

F.W.M. VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION  
CASH BALANCE  
AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2017

Cash	<u>\$ 57,610</u>
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F.W.M. VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
 SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION  
 SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES  
 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2015 TO DECEMBER 31, 2017

Expenditures:

Benefit Services:

Insurance premiums	\$ 18,518
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Fire Services:

Equipment purchased	\$ 29,016
Training expenses	3,888
Total Fire Services	\$ 32,904

Administrative Services:

Other administrative expenses	\$ 256
Bond premiums	750
Total Administrative Services	\$ 1,006

Total Expenditures	\$ 52,428
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F.W.M. VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

**The Honorable Tom W. Wolf**  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

F.W.M. Volunteer Firemen's Relief Association Governing Body:

**Ms. Kimberly Walters**  
President

**Ms. Christina Walters**  
Treasurer

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

**Ms. Madge Severcool**  
Secretary  
Forkston Township

**Ms. Maryellen Condeelis**  
Secretary  
Mehoopany Township

**Ms. Beverly Poole**  
Secretary  
North Branch Township

**Mr. Kenneth Johnson**  
Secretary  
Windham Township

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at [www.PaAuditor.gov](http://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](mailto:news@PaAuditor.gov).