

# COMPLIANCE AUDIT

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## Farmington Township Volunteer Firemen's Relief Association Clarion County, Pennsylvania For the Period January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2019

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October 2020



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



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

EUGENE A. DePASQUALE  
AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. Henry Karg, President  
Farmington Township Volunteer  
Firemen's Relief Association  
Clarion County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Farmington Township 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, 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 – Unauthorized Expenditures

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.

September 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>
Farmington Township	Clarion	\$10,473	\$9,620	\$10,481
Highland Township	Clarion	\$ 1,610	\$1,487	\$ 1,573
Knox Township	Clarion	\$ 2,361	\$2,154	\$ 2,313

## BACKGROUND – (Continued)

Based on the relief association’s records, its total cash as of December 31, 2019 was \$16,262, as illustrated below:

Cash	<u>\$ 16,262</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 \$47,777, 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.<sup>1</sup> **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	<u>\$ 9,898</u>
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 23,250
Equipment maintenance	5,973
Training expenses	5,449
Fire prevention materials	<u>1,760</u>
Total Fire Services	<u>\$ 36,432</u>
Administrative Services:	
Other administrative expenses	\$ 527
Bond premiums	<u>612</u>
Total Administrative Services	<u>\$ 1,139</u>
Other Expenditures:	
Unauthorized expenditures	<u>\$ 308</u>
Total Expenditures	<u><u>\$ 47,777</u></u>

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:

Farmington Township Volunteer Fire Company

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

FARMINGTON TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'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 Surety (Fidelity) Bond Coverage

By maintaining Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage in an amount greater than the balance of the relief association's cash assets.

FARMINGTON TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

**Finding – Unauthorized Expenditures**

**Condition:** The relief association expended funds for the following items during the current audit period that are not authorized by Act 118:

Date	Check No.	Description	Amount
07/28/17	896	Maintenance on fire company vehicle	\$ 258
02/18/18	906	Fire company bond insurance premium	50
Total			<u>\$ 308</u>

**Criteria:** Section 7416(f) of Act 118 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 the affairs of the association, including legal fees, rental or purchase of offices, payment of reasonable compensation of employees and purchase of office equipment and supplies.
- (11) To purchase safeguards for preserving life, health and safety of volunteer firefighters to ensure their availability to participate in the volunteer fire service.

Costs associated with the maintenance of a fire company apparatus and the fire company's Surety (Fidelity) bond policy premium do not qualify as authorized volunteer firefighters' relief association expenditures; consequently, these disbursements are not authorized under Act 118.

**Cause:** Relief association officials indicated that they were unaware that the aforementioned expenditures were not authorized by Act 118.

**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 118.

**Recommendation:** We recommend that the relief association be reimbursed \$308 for the unauthorized expenditures and that relief association officials become familiar with Section 7416(f) of Act 118 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.



FARMINGTON TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

**Finding – (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.

FARMINGTON TOWNSHIP 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

Farmington Township Volunteer Firemen's Relief Association Governing Body:

**Mr. Henry Karg**  
President

**Mr. Rick Heasley**  
Treasurer

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

**Ms. Robin Kahle**  
Secretary  
Farmington Township

**Ms. Nancy Kadunce**  
Secretary  
Highland Township

**Ms. Jacqui Blose**  
Secretary  
Knox 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).