

COMPLIANCE AUDIT

Greensburg Volunteer Firemen's Relief Association

Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania

For the Period

January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019

August 2020



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General

Eugene A. DePasquale • Auditor General



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**EUGENE A. DePASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL**

Mr. W. Calvin Kier, President
Greensburg Volunteer Firemen's
Relief Association
Westmoreland County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Greensburg 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, 2018 to December 31, 2019.

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.

Due to a stay at home order issued by the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania during the COVID-19 pandemic, we were unable to observe any of the relief association's equipment to verify its existence.

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, 2019, 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 – Failure To Deposit Proceeds From Vehicle Sold Into Relief Association Account

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.

August 26, 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 municipality:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>
Greensburg City	Westmoreland	\$63,429	\$69,282

BACKGROUND – (Continued)

Based on the relief association's records, its total cash and investments as of December 31, 2019 were \$3,522,073, as illustrated below:

Cash	\$ 84,972
Fair Value of Investments	<u>3,437,101</u>
Total Cash and Investments	<u>\$ 3,522,073</u>

Based on the relief association's records, its total expenditures for the period January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019 were \$675,448, 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	\$ 23,453
Death benefits	111,990
Relief benefits	78,166
Tokens of sympathy and goodwill	<u>8,691</u>
Total Benefit Services	<u>\$ 222,300</u>
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 242,200
Equipment maintenance	60,661
Training expenses	<u>36,155</u>
Total Fire Services	<u>\$ 339,016</u>
Administrative Services:	
Officer compensation	\$ 1,200
Other administrative expenses	<u>12,932</u>
Total Administrative Services	<u>\$ 14,132</u>
Total Investments Purchased	<u>\$ 100,000</u>
Total Expenditures	<u>\$ 675,448</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 organizations are separate, legal entities. The relief association is affiliated with the following fire service organizations:

Hose Company No. 1

Truck Company No. 2

Hose Company No. 3

Hose Company No. 6

Hose Company No. 7

Hose Company No. 8

GREENSBURG VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – Failure To Deposit Proceeds From Vehicle Sold Into Relief Association Account

Condition: On March 1, 2019, the proceeds from the sale of a relief association owned vehicle (1991 Grumman Olson truck), in the amount of \$4,300, was erroneously deposited into the City of Greensburg's account.

Criteria: Prudent business practice dictates that the relief association should closely monitor that all proceeds from vehicles sold are received and timely deposited into a relief association account.

Cause: Relief association officials failed to establish internal control procedures to ensure that all proceeds from vehicles sold are timely deposited into a relief association account.

Effect: The failure to deposit all relief association proceeds from vehicles sold in a timely manner can lead to a greater risk that funds could be lost or misappropriated. As a result of the proceeds from the vehicle sold being deposited into the city's account, the relief association was unable to use the funds to purchase a replacement vehicle, for general operating expenses, or for investment purposes.

Recommendation: We recommend that the relief association be reimbursed \$4,300 for the erroneous deposit. We also recommend the relief association officials establish accounting and internal control procedures to ensure that all proceeds from vehicles sold are timely 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 City of Greensburg reimbursed the relief association \$4,300 for the erroneous deposit on July 29, 2020.

Auditor's Conclusion: We reviewed documentation verifying that the reimbursement of \$4,300 was deposited on August 8, 2020. Compliance for expenditures made during the next audit period will be subject to verification through our next audit.

GREENSBURG 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

Greensburg Volunteer Firemen's Relief Association Governing Body:

Mr. W. Calvin Kier
President

Mr. Clyde J. Snyder
Vice President

Mr. Louis R. Battistella
Secretary

Mr. Michael Answine
Treasurer

Mr. Jon A. Hillwig
Financial Secretary

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

Ms. Kelsye A. Milliron
Secretary
Greensburg City

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.