

COMPLIANCE AUDIT

Homeville Volunteer Fire Company Relief Association of West Mifflin, Pennsylvania Allegheny County For the Period January 1, 2019, to December 31, 2022

July 2023



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General

Timothy L. DeFoor • Auditor General



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**TIMOTHY L. DEFOOR
AUDITOR GENERAL**

Mr. William Mattis, President
Homeville Volunteer Fire Company Relief
Association of West Mifflin, Pennsylvania
Allegheny County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Homeville Volunteer Fire Company Relief Association of West Mifflin, Pennsylvania (relief association) for the period January 1, 2019, to December 31, 2022. The audit was conducted pursuant to authority derived from Article VIII, Section 10 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; Section 403 of The Fiscal Code, 72 P.S. § 403; and the Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Act ("VFRA Act"), see 35 Pa.C.S. § 7418.

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 an independent confirmation of a portion of the investment balance directly from the financial institution. Therefore, while the relief association provided copies of investment statements that indicated that, as of December 31, 2022, the relief association had an investment balance with a fair value of \$381,553, we were not able to verify a portion of this investment balance.

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, 2019, to December 31, 2022, 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 Maintain 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.

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
June 15, 2023

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BACKGROUND

Pursuant to Article VIII, Section 10 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Section 403 of The Fiscal Code¹, and the Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Act² ("VFRA Act"), 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 Law³ (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.

The VFRA Act 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, the VFRA Act authorizes specific types of expenditures and prescribes appropriate volunteer firefighters' relief association investment options. Within the parameters established by the VFRA Act, 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.

¹ 72 P.S. § 403 (as last amended by Act 44 of 2017).

² 35 Pa.C.S. § 7411 *et seq.* See specifically, 35 Pa.C.S. § 7418 (amended by Act 91 of 2020).

³ 53 P.S. § 895.701 *et seq.* (Act 205 of 1984, as amended by Act 119 of 1990).

BACKGROUND – (Continued)

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

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>
West Mifflin Borough	Allegheny	\$24,262	\$24,417	\$21,503	\$25,734

Based on the relief association’s records, its total cash and investments as of December 31, 2022, were \$408,587, as illustrated below:

Cash	\$ 27,304
Fair Value of Investments	<u>381,553</u>
Total Cash and Investments	<u>\$ 408,857</u>

BACKGROUND – (Continued)

Based on the relief association's records, its total expenditures for the period January 1, 2019, to December 31, 2022, were \$148,227, 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.⁴ **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	\$ 39,408
Relief benefits	1,100
Total Benefit Services	<u>\$ 40,508</u>

Fire Services:

Equipment purchased	\$ 58,563
Equipment maintenance	7,294
Training expenses	3,190
Fire prevention materials	3,430
Total Fire Services	<u>\$ 72,477</u>

Administrative Services:

Other administrative expenses *	<u>\$ 25,242</u>
Total Investments Purchased	<u>\$ 10,000</u>

Total Expenditures	<u><u>\$ 148,227</u></u>
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* During the current audit period, on October 1, 2021, West Mifflin Borough accidentally sent a check to the relief association in the amount of \$24,417 that was intended for the affiliated fire company. Due to the borough's error, the relief association reimbursed the borough immediately on October 1, 2021, in the amount of \$24,417 for the erroneous deposit.

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:

Homeville Volunteer Fire Company No.1

⁴ Accuracy was evaluated for a selection of transactions based on dollar amount, category, and/or random selection.

HOMEVILLE VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF
WEST MIFFLIN, PENNSYLVANIA
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – Failure To Maintain Surety (Fidelity) Bond Coverage

Condition: The relief association failed to maintain Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage on its authorized disbursing officer, as required by the VFRA Act. The relief association’s Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage expired on May 21, 2021. As of December 31, 2022, the relief association’s cash assets totaled \$27,304.

Criteria: Section 7415(c)(4) of the VFRA Act 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 indicated that it was an oversight on their part and thought the bond coverage was renewed.

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

Recommendation: We recommend that the relief association officials obtain Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage on the relief association’s authorized disbursing officer in an amount greater than the relief association’s maximum cash balance, as required by the VFRA Act. 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 purchased bond coverage in an amount greater than the relief association’s maximum cash balance on May 3, 2023.

Auditor’s Conclusion: We reviewed documentation verifying that bond coverage was obtained on May 3, 2023. Compliance for maintaining bond coverage during the next audit period will be subject to verification through our next audit.

HOMEVILLE VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF
WEST MIFFLIN, PENNSYLVANIA
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Joshua D. Shapiro
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Homeville Volunteer Fire Company Relief Association of West Mifflin, Pennsylvania
Governing Body:

Mr. William Mattis
President

Mr. Justin Martin
Vice President

Ms. Trudy Rutkowski
Secretary

Mr. Gary Kopcho
Treasurer

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

Mr. Brian Kamauf
Secretary
West Mifflin 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.