

# COMPLIANCE AUDIT

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## Lake Silkworth Volunteer Firemen's Relief Association

Luzerne County, Pennsylvania

For the Period

January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019

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November 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. William R. Lathrop, President  
Lake Silkworth Volunteer Firemen's  
Relief Association  
Luzerne County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Lake Silkworth 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.

Based on our audit procedures, we conclude that, 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.

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.

October 30, 2020

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eugene A. DePasquale". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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:

Municipality	County	2018	2019
Lake Township	Luzerne	\$2,125	\$2,319
Lehman Township	Luzerne	\$6,565	\$7,151
Plymouth Township	Luzerne	*	\$2,197

## BACKGROUND – (Continued)

\* During the current audit period, the relief association did not begin receiving an allocation of state aid from Plymouth Township until 2019. Plymouth Township disbanded its previous fire company in 2019 and the relief association now provides fire protection to Plymouth Township. Municipalities have sole discretion to distribute their annual allocation of state aid received to any relief association providing fire service to the municipality.

Based on the relief association's records, its total cash as of December 31, 2019 was \$23,961, as illustrated below:

Cash	<u>\$ 23,961</u>
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Based on the relief association's records, its total expenditures for the period January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019 were \$13,409, 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	\$ 3,268
Relief benefits	144
Total Benefit Services	<u>\$ 3,412</u>

#### Fire Services:

Equipment purchased	\$ 5,633
Equipment maintenance	2,426
Training expenses	243
Fire prevention materials	170
Total Fire Services	<u>\$ 8,472</u>

#### Administrative Services:

Other administrative expenses	\$ 395
Bond premiums	465
Total Administrative Services	<u>\$ 860</u>

#### Other Expenditures:

Miscellaneous *	<u>\$ 665</u>
Total Expenditures	<u><u>\$ 13,409</u></u>

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

## **BACKGROUND – (Continued)**

\* The relief association made an erroneous deposit during the current audit period. On July 15, 2019, the relief association returned the \$665 to the affiliated fire company.

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:

Lake Silkworth Volunteer Fire Department

LAKE SILKWORTH 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

Lake Silkworth Volunteer Firemen's Relief Association Governing Body:

**Mr. William R. Lathrop**  
President

**Ms. Diane Grimes**  
Secretary

**Ms. Maury Romonoski**  
Treasurer

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

**Ms. J. Carlene Price**  
Secretary  
Lake Township

**Ms. Laura Elderkin**  
Secretary  
Lehman Township

**Mr. Steven Grzymiski**  
Secretary  
Plymouth 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).