

COMPLIANCE AUDIT

The New Bethlehem Fire Relief Association Clarion County, Pennsylvania For the Period January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2019

May 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. Wayne Livingston, President
The New Bethlehem Fire Relief Association
Clarion County

We have conducted a compliance audit of The New Bethlehem Fire 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 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, 2017 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 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. We would like to thank the relief association officials for the cooperation extended to us during the conduct of the audit.

May 18, 2020

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Eugene A. DePasquale".

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.

BACKGROUND – (Continued)

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>
South Bethlehem Borough	Armstrong	\$1,945	\$1,786	\$1,899 *
New Bethlehem Borough	Clarion	\$4,010	\$3,655	\$3,957
Porter Township	Clarion	\$3,000	\$2,428	\$3,143
Redbank Township	Clarion	\$3,236	\$2,183	\$2,341

* Although South Bethlehem Borough prepared and returned a Certification Form AG 385 for 2019, the date the borough distributed the 2019 state aid to the relief association could not be determined because the borough failed to submit a Receipt And Distribution Of Foreign Fire Insurance Premium Tax Form 706-B to this department as required by the instructions accompanying Form 706-B and the 2019 state aid allocation received by the borough disclosing this information.

South Bethlehem Borough is still required to submit a 2019 Receipt And Distribution Of Foreign Fire Insurance Premium Tax Form 706-B to this Department as soon as possible.

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:

New Bethlehem Fire Company No. 1

THE NEW BETHLEHEM FIRE RELIEF ASSOCIATION
SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION
CASH BALANCE
AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2019

Cash	<u>\$ 37,292</u>
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THE NEW BETHLEHEM FIRE RELIEF ASSOCIATION
 SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION
 SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES
 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2017 TO DECEMBER 31, 2019

Expenditures:

Benefit Services:	
Insurance premiums	\$ 7,214
Death benefits	1,500
Tokens of sympathy and goodwill	50
Total Benefit Services	\$ 8,764
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 22,939
Equipment maintenance	4,432
Training expenses	2,525
Fire prevention materials	1,449
Total Fire Services	\$ 31,345
Administrative Services:	
Officer compensation	\$ 2,400
Other administrative expenses	28
Bond premiums	504
Total Administrative Services	\$ 2,932
Total Expenditures	\$ 43,041

THE NEW BETHLEHEM FIRE RELIEF ASSOCIATION
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom W. Wolf
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

The New Bethlehem Fire Relief Association Governing Body:

Mr. Wayne Livingston
President

Mr. Edward Goth
Treasurer

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

Ms. Dawn Davis
Secretary
South Bethlehem Borough

Mr. Richard D. McGarrity
Secretary
New Bethlehem Borough

Ms. Stephanie Reedy
Secretary
Porter Township

Ms. Stephanie Reedy
Secretary
Redbank Township

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.