

COMPLIANCE AUDIT

New Cumberland Fire Department Volunteer Firemen's Relief Association Cumberland County, Pennsylvania For the Period January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2018

March 2020



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



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EUGENE A. DePASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. Edward J. Erlsten, President
New Cumberland Fire Department Volunteer
Firemen's Relief Association
Cumberland County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the New Cumberland Fire Department 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, 2018.

The objectives of the audit were:

1. To determine if the relief association took appropriate corrective action to address the findings 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 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 objectives. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our conclusions.

We were not able to obtain an independent confirmation 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, 2018, the relief association had an investment balance with a fair value of \$250,442, we were not able to verify 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, 2017 to December 31, 2018:

- The relief association took appropriate corrective action to address three of the four findings contained in our prior audit report. However, the relief association failed to take appropriate corrective action to address the one remaining finding contained in our prior audit report, as listed below and discussed in the Status of Prior Findings section of this 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 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Failure To
Maintain A Pennsylvania Sales Tax Exemption Number

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 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.

March 5, 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.

BACKGROUND – (Continued)

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

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>
New Cumberland Borough	Cumberland	\$40,240	\$36,411

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 Cumberland Fire Department

NEW CUMBERLAND FIRE DEPARTMENT VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDINGS

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The relief association has complied with three of the four prior audit findings and recommendations, as follows:

- Inadequate Relief Association Bylaws

By revising the relief association bylaws to meet the minimum requirements of Act 118.

- Failure To Maintain A Complete And Accurate Equipment Roster

By maintaining a cumulative inventory roster of all relief association owned equipment.

- Unauthorized Expenditure

By the affiliated fire company adding the unauthorized expenditure of \$7,825 made in the prior audit period to the agreement for the 2007 Pierce Engine, ensuring that the relief association receives an increased prorated share of the proceeds due upon the sale of the vehicle.

NONCOMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The relief association has not complied with one of the four prior audit findings. This finding is noted below and discussed in detail in the Finding and Recommendation section of this report:

- Failure To Maintain A Pennsylvania Sales Tax Exemption Number

We are concerned by the relief association's failure to correct this previously reported audit finding. The association management should strive to implement the recommendation and corrective action noted in this audit report.

NEW CUMBERLAND FIRE DEPARTMENT VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Failure To Maintain A Pennsylvania Sales Tax Exemption Number

Condition: The relief association failed to maintain a Pennsylvania sales tax exemption number. Although the relief association did have its own sales tax exemption number, it expired on February 29, 2008, and is no longer valid.

A similar condition was noted in our prior audit report.

Criteria: Section 7415(e) of Act 118 states:

A volunteer firefighters' relief association organized or conducted in accordance with the requirements of this section shall be regarded as a charitable corporation for all purposes, including the right to establish exemption from the operation of certain taxes.

Cause: Even though notified of this condition during our prior audit, relief association officials again failed to take measures necessary to maintain a (current/valid) Pennsylvania sales tax exemption number.

Effect: As a result of the relief association's continued failure to maintain a sales tax exemption number, the relief association may be required to pay Pennsylvania sales tax on their purchases, which ultimately reduces the funds otherwise available for general operating expenditures or for investment purposes.

Recommendation: We again recommend that the relief association officials immediately reapply for a new state sales tax exemption number from the Department of Revenue and furnish this exemption number to all vendors from whom the relief association purchases equipment. 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 indicated they will take action to comply with the recommendation.

Auditor's Conclusion: We are concerned by the relief association's failure to correct this previously reported audit finding and strongly encourage timely implementation of the recommendation noted in this audit report.

NEW CUMBERLAND FIRE DEPARTMENT VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION
CASH AND INVESTMENT BALANCES
AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2018

Cash	\$ 4,731
Fair Value of Investments	<u>250,442</u>
Total Cash and Investments	<u>\$ 255,173</u>

NEW CUMBERLAND FIRE DEPARTMENT VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION
SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES
FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2017 TO DECEMBER 31, 2018

Expenditures:

Benefit Services:	
Insurance premiums	\$ 31,756
Tokens of sympathy and goodwill	1,019
Total Benefit Services	\$ 32,775
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 46,615
Equipment maintenance	18,697
Training expenses	8,732
Fire prevention materials	6,285
Total Fire Services	\$ 80,329
Administrative Services:	
Other administrative expenses*	\$ 4,791
Bond premiums	1,104
Total Administrative Services	\$ 5,895
Total Expenditures	\$ 118,999

* A portion of the other administrative expenditures represent installation of alerting system shutoffs and annual maintenance fees in the amount of \$3,601.

NEW CUMBERLAND FIRE DEPARTMENT 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

New Cumberland Fire Department Volunteer Firemen's Relief Association Governing Body:

Mr. Edward J. Erlsten
President

Ms. Bernadette Donnelly
Secretary

Ms. Joanne M. Schumacher
Treasurer

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

Mr. John R. Murray
Secretary
New Cumberland 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.