

COMPLIANCE AUDIT

Nisbet Volunteer Fire Company's Relief Association

Lycoming County, Pennsylvania

For the Period

January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2018

July 2019



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General

Eugene A. DePasquale • Auditor General



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EUGENE A. DePASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. Michael Steinbacher, President
Nisbet Volunteer Fire Company's
Relief Association
Lycoming County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Nisbet Volunteer Fire Company'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.

Based on our audit procedures, we conclude that, for the period January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2018:

- The relief association took appropriate corrective action to address the findings contained in our prior audit 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 – Failure To Maintain Surety (Fidelity) Bond Coverage

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.

July 12, 2019



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>
Bastress Township	Lycoming	\$ 959	\$ 866
Susquehanna Township	Lycoming	\$5,294	\$4,834

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:

Nisbet Volunteer Fire Company

NISBET VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDINGS

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- Untimely Deposit Of State Aid

By timely depositing all income received.

- Inadequate Minutes Of Meetings

By maintaining detailed minutes of all relief association meetings held during the period.

NISBET VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION
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 Act 118. The relief association's Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage expired on September 14, 2017. As of December 31, 2018, the relief association's cash assets totaled \$4,137.

Criteria: Section 7415(c)(4) of Act 118 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 the insurance policy was moved to another insurance agent; however, the relief association officers failed to ensure that the relief association's bond coverage was also transferred. In addition, the relief association officials failed to ensure that the provision of Act 118 requiring the maintenance of Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage on the relief association's authorized disbursing officer was adhered to.

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 Act 118. 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: Compliance will be subject to verification through our next audit.

NISBET VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION
SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION
CASH BALANCE
AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2018

Cash	<u>\$ 4,137</u>
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NISBET VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION
SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION
SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES
FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2017 TO DECEMBER 31, 2018

Expenditures:

Benefit Services:	
Insurance premiums	<u>\$ 2,955</u>
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 9,964
Equipment maintenance	3,123
Training expenses	<u>1,881</u>
Total Fire Services	<u>\$ 14,968</u>
Administrative Services:	
Other administrative expenses	<u>\$ 443</u>
Total Expenditures	<u><u>\$ 18,366</u></u>

NISBET VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom W. Wolf
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Nisbet Volunteer Fire Company's Relief Association Governing Body:

Mr. Michael Steinbacher
President

Ms. Luci Steinbacher
Secretary

Ms. Barb Steppe
Treasurer

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

Ms. Patricia A. Dincher
Secretary
Bastress Township

Ms. Cheryl L. Kurtz
Secretary
Susquehanna 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.