

# COMPLIANCE AUDIT

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## The Volunteer Firemen's Relief Association of the City of Reading, Penna.

Berks County

For the Period

January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2020

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April 2021



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of the Auditor General

Timothy L. DeFoor • Auditor General

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**TIMOTHY L. DEFOOR  
AUDITOR GENERAL**

Mr. Donald Royle, President  
The Volunteer Firemen's Relief Association  
of the City of Reading, Penna.  
Berks County

We have conducted a compliance audit of The Volunteer Firemen's Relief Association of the City of Reading, Penna. (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, 2020.

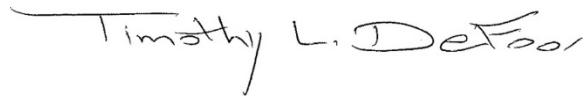
The objective of the audit was to determine if the relief association complied with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures as they relate to the receipt of state aid and the expenditure of relief association funds. Our audit was limited to the areas related to the objective 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 cash balance and the investment balance directly from the financial institution. Therefore, while the relief association provided bank and investment statements that indicated that, as of December 31, 2020, the relief association had a cash balance of \$76,231 and an investment balance with a fair value of \$3,760,578, we were not able to verify a portion of the cash balance and the 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, 2018 to December 31, 2020, 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.

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

April 12, 2021

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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. Since fire protection for the City of Reading is provided entirely by paid firefighters, The Volunteer Firemen's Relief Association of the City of Ready, Penna. is no longer allocated state aid. However, the relief association remains in existence, using its accumulated funds to provide benefits to its remaining members and for the administration of the relief association.

## BACKGROUND – (Continued)

Based on the relief association’s records, its total cash and investments as of December 31, 2020 were \$3,836,809, as illustrated below:

Cash	\$ 76,231
Fair Value of Investments	<u>3,760,578</u>
Total Cash and Investments	<u>\$ 3,836,809</u>

Based on the relief association’s records, its total expenditures for the period January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2020 were \$298,842, 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	\$ 1,938
Death benefits	195,000
Tokens of sympathy and goodwill	<u>100</u>
Total Benefit Services	<u>\$ 197,038</u>
Administrative Services:	
Officer compensation	\$ 69,722
Other administrative expenses*	31,263
Bond premiums	<u>819</u>
Total Administrative Services	<u>\$ 101,804</u>
Total Expenditures	<u>\$ 298,842</u>

\*Portions of the other administrative expenses represent payroll taxes in the amount of \$21,604 and preparation for audit and filing of IRS Form 990 in the amount of \$4,400.

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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 volunteer firefighters' relief association and the affiliated fire service organizations are separate, legal entities. The relief association is affiliated with the following fire service organizations:

Friendship Fire Company No. 4

Hampden Fire Company No. 6

Junior Fire Company No. 2

Keystone Fire Company No. 1

Liberty Fire Company No. 5

Marion Fire Company No. 10

Neversink Fire Company No. 3

Oakbrook Fire Company No. 14

Rainbow Fire Company No. 1

Reading Hose Fire Company No. 1

Riverside Fire Company No. 1

Schuylkill Fire Company No. 12

Union Fire Company No. 13

Washington Fire Company No. 2

THE VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF THE CITY OF READING,  
PENNA.  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

**The Honorable Tom W. Wolf**  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

The Volunteer Firemen's Relief Association of the City of Reading, Penna. Governing Body:

**Mr. Donald Royle**  
President

**Mr. Lester Ebersole**  
Vice President

**Mr. David Silcox**  
Secretary

**Ms. Deborah Landis**  
Treasurer

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).