

# COMPLIANCE AUDIT

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## Strinestown Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association York County, Pennsylvania For the Period January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2021

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April 2022



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of the Auditor General

Timothy L. DeFoor • Auditor General



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TIMOTHY L. DEFOOR  
AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. Christopher M. Montgomery, President  
Strinestown Volunteer Firefighters'  
Relief Association  
York County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Strinestown Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association for the period January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2021. The audit was conducted pursuant to authority derived from Article VIII, Section 10 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; Section 403 of The Fiscal Code, 72 P.S. § 403; and the Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Act ("VFRA Act"), see 35 Pa.C.S. § 7418.

The objectives of the audit were:

1. To determine if the relief association took appropriate corrective action to address the finding 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, nor was it required to be, conducted in accordance with Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

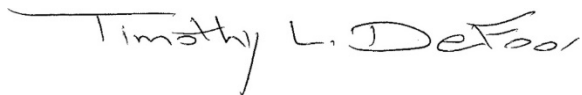
Relief association officers are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the relief association's administration of state aid and accumulated relief funds complies with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures, 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 objectives. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our conclusions.

We were not able to obtain an independent confirmation of the cash balance directly from the financial institution. Therefore, while the relief association provided bank statements that indicated that, as of December 31, 2021, the relief association had a cash balance of \$64,186, we were not able to verify this cash 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, 2021:

- The relief association took appropriate corrective action to address the finding 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.

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 horizontal line above the first few letters.

Timothy L. DeFoor  
Auditor General  
March 30, 2022

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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<sup>1</sup>, and the Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Act<sup>2</sup> ("VFRA Act"), 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<sup>3</sup> (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.

The VFRA Act 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, the VFRA Act authorizes specific types of expenditures and prescribes appropriate volunteer firefighters' relief association investment options. Within the parameters established by the VFRA Act, 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 municipality:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>
Conewago Township	York	\$47,345	\$48,964	\$49,370	\$42,426

<sup>1</sup> 72 P.S. § 403 (as last amended by Act 44 of 2017).

<sup>2</sup> 35 Pa.C.S. § 7411 *et seq.* See specifically, 35 Pa.C.S. § 7418 (amended by Act 91 of 2020).

<sup>3</sup> 53 P.S. § 895.701 *et seq.* (Act 205 of 1984, as amended by Act 119 of 1990).

## BACKGROUND – (Continued)

Based on the relief association's records, its total cash as of December 31, 2021 was \$64,186, as illustrated below:

Cash	<u>\$ 64,186</u>
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Based on the relief association's records, its total expenditures for the period January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2021 were \$217,169, 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>4</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	\$ 46,783
Tokens of sympathy and goodwill	51
Total Benefit Services	<u>\$ 46,834</u>

#### Fire Services:

Equipment purchased	\$ 76,543
Equipment maintenance	44,625
Training expenses	4,034
Fire prevention materials	3,058
Total Fire Services	<u>\$ 128,260</u>

#### Administrative Services:

Bond premiums	\$ 575
Other administrative expenses*	9,853
Total Administrative Services	<u>\$ 10,428</u>

#### Other Expenditures:

Payments on loan	\$ 31,447
Unauthorized expenditure**	200
Total Other Expenditures	<u>\$ 31,647</u>

Total Expenditures	<u><u>\$ 217,169</u></u>
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<sup>4</sup> Accuracy was evaluated for a selection of transactions based on dollar amount, category, and/or random selection.

## **BACKGROUND – (Continued)**

\* A majority of the other administrative expenses represent monthly telecommunications services totaling \$5,525 and rescue software subscriptions totaling \$3,137 for the four-year audit period.

\*\* During 2021, the relief association made an insignificant disbursement in the amount of \$200 which was not authorized by the VFRA Act. We disclosed this issue to relief association officials on February 17, 2022, and they stated that their intent is for the relief association to be reimbursed in the amount of \$200 at the next board meeting.

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:

Strinestown Community Fire Company

STRINESTOWN VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDING

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

The relief association has complied with the prior audit finding and recommendation, as follows:

- Inappropriate Ownership Of A Rescue Vehicle

By providing a copy of the title of the rescue vehicle in the name of the relief association.

We commend the relief association management for its efforts in complying with the finding and recommendation contained in the prior audit report. The relief association management should strive to remain in compliance with all applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws and administrative procedures.



STRINESTOWN VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

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

**Mr. Charles J. McGarvey, Sr.**  
State Fire Commissioner

Srinestown Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Governing Body:

**Mr. Christopher M. Montgomery**  
President

**Mr. Kevin Bissinger**  
Vice President

**Ms. Tonya Markle**  
Secretary

**Mr. Daryl Hull**  
Treasurer

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

**Mr. Joshua S. Kopp**  
Secretary  
Conewago 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).