

# COMPLIANCE AUDIT

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## Westfall Township Volunteer Fire Department Relief Association

Pike County, Pennsylvania

For the Period

January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019

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November 2020



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of the Auditor General

Eugene A. DePasquale • Auditor General



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**EUGENE A. DePASQUALE  
AUDITOR GENERAL**

Mr. William Koferl, President  
Westfall Township Volunteer Fire  
Department Relief Association  
Pike County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Westfall Township Volunteer Fire Department 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, 2018 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, 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 the cash balance and the investment balance directly from the financial institution. Therefore, while the relief association provided copies of bank and investment statements that indicated that, as of December 31, 2019, the relief association had a cash balance of \$48,114 and an investment balance with a fair value of \$11,741, we were not able to verify those cash and investment balances.

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, 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.

In addition, as of July 22, 2020, the Westfall Township Volunteer Fire Department Relief Association merged with the Mill Rift Relief Association. Consequently, all remaining monetary assets and equipment of the Mill Rift Relief Association were committed for transfer to the Westfall Township Volunteer Fire Department Relief Association. Refer to the Background section of this report for further information. As the receiving relief association of the monetary and equipment assets transferred through the dissolution/merger, the Westfall Township Volunteer Fire Department Relief Association must strive to take corrective actions and implement the recommendations contained in the audit report of the Mill Rift Relief Association covering the period January 1, 2017 to July 22, 2020.

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.

October 29, 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>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>
Westfall Township	Pike	\$14,545	\$19,107

Based on the relief association’s records, its total cash and investments as of December 31, 2019 were \$59,855, as illustrated below:

Cash	\$ 48,114
Fair Value of Investments	<u>11,741</u>
Total Cash and Investments	<u>\$ 59,855</u>

On May 1, 2019 the Mill Rift Fire Department was decertified as the Westfall Township fire service provider. In addition, as of July 22, 2020, the former Mill Rift Relief Association completed the process of dissolution and merged with Westfall Township Volunteer Fire Department Relief Association. Consequently, according to officials from the former Mill Rift Relief Association and the former Westfall Township Volunteer Fire Department Relief Association, all remaining monetary assets and on hand equipment were committed for transfer to the Westfall Township Volunteer Fire Department Relief Association.

As part of the merger, the former Mill Rift Relief Association transferred cash in the amount of \$12,047 to the Westfall Township Volunteer Fire Department Relief Association, which was deposited into the Westfall Township Volunteer Fire Department Relief Association bank account on July 22, 2020. In addition, the former Mill Rift Relief Association transferred equipment assets to the Westfall Township Volunteer Fire Department Relief Association; however, the former Mill Rift Relief Association failed to provide a record of equipment transferred.

During the conduct of our audit, officials of the Westfall Township Volunteer Fire Department Relief Association acknowledged receipt of equipment received from the former Mill Rift Relief Association through the transfer, and the Westfall Township Volunteer Fire Department Relief Association also compiled and provided our auditors with a listing of equipment items representing all equipment that was received in the transfer. Our auditors found that based on prior available audit information – namely equipment rosters and other records noting equipment purchases – the former Mill Rift Relief Association had equipment purchases totaling \$35,747 during the period covering January 1, 2017 and December 31, 2019, and various other equipment inventory items owned by the former Mill Rift Relief Association from previous purchases of equipment made during prior audit years, that had not been accounted for as transferred to the Westfall Township Volunteer Fire Department Relief Association.

**BACKGROUND – (Continued)**

Based on the relief association’s records, its total expenditures for the period January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019 were \$58,178, 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	<u>\$        9,177</u>
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	<u>\$      48,501</u>
Administrative Services:	
Bond premiums	<u>          500</u>
Total Expenditures	<u><u>          \$      58,178</u></u>

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:

Westfall Township Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.

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<sup>1</sup> Accuracy was evaluated for a selection of transactions based on dollar amount, category, and/or random selection.

WESTFALL TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

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

Westfall Township Volunteer Fire Department Relief Association Governing Body:

**Mr. William Kofert**  
President

**Ms. Terri Williams**  
Secretary

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

**Ms. Jodi Manheim**  
Secretary  
Westfall 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).