



**BLUE KNOB VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S
RELIEF ASSOCIATION**

BLAIR COUNTY

COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD

JANUARY 1, 2009 TO DECEMBER 31, 2011

Released September 2013

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE - AUDITOR GENERAL

DEPARTMENT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0018
Facebook: Pennsylvania Auditor General
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EUGENE A. DePASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. Edward Helsel, President
BLUE KNOB VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
Blair County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Blue Knob Volunteer Firefighters' 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, 2009 to December 31, 2011.

We conducted this compliance audit in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* applicable to performance audits, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our audit results and conclusions based on our audit objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our audit results and conclusions based on our audit objective.

The objective of the audit was to determine if the volunteer firefighters' relief association received and expended state aid and accumulated relief funds in compliance with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws and administrative procedures.

Our audit was limited to the areas related to the objective identified above.

Volunteer firefighters' relief association officers are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the Blue Knob Volunteer Firefighters' 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. In conducting our audit, we obtained an understanding of the volunteer firefighters' relief association's internal controls as they relate to the association's compliance with those requirements and that we considered to be significant within the context

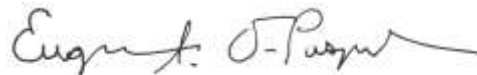
of the audit objective, and assessed whether those significant controls were properly designed and implemented. Our audit procedures also included tests of documentary evidence supporting the Blue Knob Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's recorded financial transactions, tests of the physical existence of inventories, interviews of selected officials and direct confirmation of the Blue Knob Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's cash, investments, and certain other assets and liabilities as of December 31, 2011, with the custodians of the funds, debtors, creditors, and financial institutions to the extent necessary to satisfy the audit objective. Additionally, we performed procedures to provide a reasonable assurance of detecting instances of violations of legal and regulatory requirements or violations of provisions of contracts that are significant within the context of the audit objective.

The results of our audit, for the period January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2011, found the Blue Knob Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association, in all significant respects, received and expended state aid and accumulated relief funds in compliance with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws and administrative procedures, except as noted in the finding listed below and discussed later in this report. The results of our tests also indicated the Blue Knob Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the Accompanying Expenditure Information and, as of December 31, 2011, had a cash balance of \$23,757 and no investments.

Finding – Untimely Deposit of State Aid

The contents of this report were discussed with the management of the Blue Knob Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association and, where appropriate, their response has been included in the report.

May 6, 2013



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 Blue Knob Volunteer Firemen's Relief Association, herein referred to as Blue Knob Volunteer Firefighters' 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 the volunteer firefighters' relief association. The relief association's bylaws define the specific operational procedures by which the volunteer firefighters' relief association conducts 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 the volunteer firefighters' relief association 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, which is or are recognized as providing the service to the municipality.

BACKGROUND (Continued)

The Blue Knob Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipalities:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>
Kimmel Township	Bedford	\$ 700	\$ 700*	\$ 1,000
Pavia Township	Bedford	\$ 800	\$ 900	\$ 1,396
Greenfield Township	Blair	\$5,089	\$5,728	\$10,922
Juniata Township	Blair	\$3,010	\$3,388	\$ 5,104

*However, the 2010 state aid allocation from Kimmel Township was erroneously deposited into the Blue Knob Volunteer Fire Company's checking account. The error was not detected until October 2012 and, subsequently, these funds were appropriately deposited into the relief association's checking account on October 17, 2012. (See finding in the Finding and Recommendation section of this report.)

The volunteer firefighters' relief association and the affiliated fire service organization are separate, legal entities. The Blue Knob Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association is affiliated with the following fire service organization:

Blue Knob Volunteer Fire Company

BLUE KNOB VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – Untimely Deposit of State Aid

Condition: The volunteer firefighters' relief association did not deposit the 2010 state aid allocation it received from Kimmel Township, in the amount of \$700, until October 17, 2012.

Criteria: Section 706 (b)(2) of the Act of December 18, 1984, (P.L. 1005, No. 205), states:

The foreign fire insurance premium tax amount applicable to a municipality served solely by volunteer firefighters shall be paid to the municipality, which shall within 60 days of the date of the receipt of the moneys from the State Treasurer pay the amount received to the relief association fund of the fire department or departments, or fire company or companies, now existing or hereafter organized, inside or outside of the municipality, which is or are actively engaged in the service of the municipality and duly recognized by the governing body of the municipality.

Furthermore, prudent business practice dictates that, upon receipt of its state aid allocation, the relief association should ensure the funds are deposited in a timely manner.

Cause: The foreign fire insurance tax allocation was distributed to the municipal treasurer on September 20, 2010, who forwarded this state aid to the volunteer firefighters' relief association on November 5, 2010, which is within 60 days of receipt, as required by Section 706 (b)(2) of the Act of December 18, 1984, (P.L. 1005, No. 205). However, the relief association mistakenly deposited the funds into the affiliated fire company's account. The relief association failed to establish internal control procedures to ensure that all income received was recorded and deposited in a timely manner.

However, subsequent to the audit period under review, on October 17, 2012, the Blue Knob Volunteer Fire Company reimbursed to the relief association \$700; relief association officials deposited the funds into the relief association's account on the same day.

Effect: As a result of the untimely deposit, funds were not available to pay general operating expenses or for investment purposes. In addition, an untimely deposit of receipts increases the risk that funds could be lost or misappropriated.

Recommendation: We recommend the relief association officials adopt internal control procedures to ensure the timely deposit of all income received. For further guidance, please refer to the Auditor General's publication, MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATIONS.

BLUE KNOB VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION (Continued)

Finding – (Continued)

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.

BLUE KNOB VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
 ACCOMPANYING EXPENDITURE INFORMATION
 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2009 TO DECEMBER 31, 2011

Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7412 states: a volunteer firefighters' relief association is an organization formed primarily for the purpose of affording financial protection to volunteer firefighters against the consequences of misfortune suffered as a result of their participation in the fire service. The organization may contain within its membership the members of one or more fire companies and may serve secondary purposes, as set forth in this subchapter, but only if adequate provisions have been first made to serve the primary purpose.

Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7416 authorizes the investment of relief association funds and outlines the types of benefits and services that can be provided with volunteer firefighters' relief association funds.

Furthermore, all expenditures must be properly authorized as prescribed in the volunteer firefighters' relief association bylaws and approved at an association meeting.

USES OF FUNDS:

Benefit Services:	
Insurance premiums	\$ 11,245
Total Benefit Services	\$ 11,245
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 4,391
Training expenses	4,066
Total Fire Services	\$ 8,457
Administrative Services:	
Other administrative expenses	\$ 2,290
Total Administrative Services	\$ 2,290



BLUE KNOB VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom Corbett
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Blue Knob Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Governing Body:

Mr. Edward Helsel, President

Mr. Charles Salyards, Vice President

Mr. James Berkhimer, Secretary

Mr. Garth Gordon, Treasurer

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

Ms. Cathy S. Cox, Secretary
Kimmel Township

Ms. Priscilla A. Hauer, Secretary
Pavia Township

Ms. Teresa Patterson, Secretary
Greenfield Township

Mr. Ronald E. Neff, Secretary
Juniata Township

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at www.auditorgen.state.pa.us. Media questions about the report can be directed to the Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General, Office of Communications, 231 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120; via email to: news@auditorgen.state.pa.us.