



**BUSHKILL TOWNSHIP FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BUSHKILL, OF THE COUNTY OF NORTHAMPTON,  
OF THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA**

**HEREIN REFERRED TO AS:**

**BUSHKILL TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION**

**NORTHAMPTON COUNTY**

**COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT**

**FOR THE PERIOD**

**JANUARY 1, 2007 TO DECEMBER 31, 2008**



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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, Act of June 11, 1968, (P.L. 149, No. 84), as amended, 53 P.S. § 8501 et seq. (commonly referred to as Act 84), 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 Bushkill Township 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 84 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 84 authorizes specific types of expenditures and prescribes appropriate volunteer firefighters' relief association investment options. Within the parameters established by Act 84, 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. The Bushkill Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipality:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>
Bushkill Township	Northampton	\$59,316	\$61,903

BACKGROUND (Continued)

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

Bushkill Township Volunteer Fire Company

Mr. Arthur A. Smith, President  
BUSHKILL TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'  
RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
Northampton County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Bushkill Township 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, Act of June 11, 1968, (P.L. 149, No. 84), as amended, 53 P.S. § 8501 et seq. (commonly referred to as Act 84), for the period January 1, 2007 to December 31, 2008.

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 Bushkill Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's administration of state aid and accumulated 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 Bushkill Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's recorded financial transactions,

tests of the physical existence of inventories, interviews of selected officials and direct confirmation of the Bushkill Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's cash, investments, and certain other assets and liabilities as of December 31, 2008, 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, 2007 to December 31, 2008, found, in all significant respects, the Bushkill Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association received and expended funds in compliance with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws and administrative procedures, except as noted in the following findings discussed later in this report. The results of our tests indicated the Bushkill Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the accompanying information and as of December 31, 2008, had a cash balance of \$90,888 and an investment balance with a fair value of \$200,783.

Finding No. 1 – Undocumented Expenditures

Finding No. 2 – Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster

The contents of this report were discussed with the management of the Bushkill Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association, and where appropriate, their responses have been included in the report.

November 5, 2009

JACK WAGNER  
Auditor General



BUSHKILL TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 1 – Undocumented Expenditures

Condition: The relief association was unable to provide adequate supporting documentation for the following expenditures:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Check No.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
10/03/08	446	Credit Card Company	\$ 418
11/30/08	455	Credit Card Company	<u>356</u>
Total			<u>\$ 774</u>

Criteria: Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8507(a) states, in part:

The Department of the Auditor General shall have the power, and its duty shall be, to audit the accounts and records of every volunteer firefighters' relief association receiving any money under Chapter 7 of the Act of December 18, 1984 (P.L. 1005, No 205), known as the "Municipal Pension Plan Funding Standard and Recovery Act," as amended, as far as may be necessary to satisfy the department that the money received was expended or is being expended for no purpose other than that authorized by this act.

Without adequate supporting documentation, such as invoices, this department is unable to determine if the relief association funds were expended for purposes authorized by Act 84. Furthermore, good business practices would require that supporting documentation be maintained to verify the propriety of all financial transactions.

Cause: Relief association officials failed to establish adequate internal control procedures to ensure supporting documentation is maintained for all expenditures.

Effect: Lack of supporting documentation, such as invoices and detailed minutes of meetings, made it impossible to determine if the expenditures were made in accordance with Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8506(e). In addition, the failure to maintain adequate documentation for relief association expenditures can lead to an increased risk of errors occurring and funds being misappropriated.

Subsequent to the audit period, on December 15, 2009, the relief association provided adequate supporting documentation for \$416 of the undocumented expenditures noted above. In addition, the relief association received reimbursement of \$358 for the remaining undocumented expenditures.

BUSHKILL TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 1 – Undocumented Expenditures – (Continued)

Recommendation: We recommend the relief association officials maintain supporting documentation for all future expenditures. 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.

BUSHKILL TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 2 – Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster

Condition: The relief association officials did not maintain a complete and accurate roster of equipment owned by the relief association. The equipment roster provided, for the current audit period only, documented radio equipment owned by the relief association and the accompanying serial numbers for the identified radio equipment. All other safeguard items owned by the relief association were not identified on the equipment roster. In addition, there was no indication that an annual inventory of the equipment was performed to account for the relief association's fixed assets.

Criteria: The relief association should establish adequate internal control procedures to ensure the maintenance of a cumulative equipment roster of all items purchased by the relief association in order to provide an effective accounting control over the relief association's fixed assets. A cumulative roster of all relief association equipment should include the following:

- Type of equipment purchased.
- Date of purchase.
- Unit cost.
- Name of supplier.
- Serial number, if applicable.
- Current location of item.
- Final disposition of sold or damaged equipment.
- Notation of the annual inventory.

Cause: Relief association officials failed to establish adequate internal control procedures over fixed assets to include the maintenance of a cumulative equipment roster and the performance of an annual equipment inventory.

Effect: The failure to properly record equipment purchases in a detailed equipment roster prevents officials from effectively monitoring the relief association's equipment purchases. In addition, the failure to maintain a detailed equipment roster and perform an annual equipment inventory prevents adequate accountability and safeguarding of relief association assets.

Recommendation: We recommend the relief association officials maintain a cumulative roster of all relief association owned equipment. Furthermore, the relief association should ensure it performs an annual inventory of all operable equipment and that the inventory be sufficiently documented. 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.

BUSHKILL TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
 ACCOMPANYING EXPENDITURE INFORMATION  
 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2007 TO DECEMBER 31, 2008

Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8502(1) states, in part, that:

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. Such an association may also serve other purposes, . . . provided only that adequate provisions be first made to serve its primary purpose. . . .

Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8506, 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. 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	\$ 6,623
Total Benefit Services	\$ 6,623
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 71,019
Equipment maintenance	13,305
Training expenses	8,920
Fire prevention materials	3,298
Total Fire Services	\$ 96,542
Administrative Services:	
Miscellaneous administrative expenses	\$ 914
Total Administrative Services	\$ 914
Total Investments Purchased	\$ 62,740
Other Expenditures:	
Undocumented expenditures	\$ 774
Total Other Expenditures	\$ 774

BUSHKILL TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom Corbett  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Bushkill Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Governing Body:

Mr. Arthur A. Smith, President	Mr. William Kummer, Trustee
Mr. Ronald Short, Vice President	Mr. Matthew Klotz, Trustee
Ms. Eileen Rohn, Secretary	Mr. Casey Zelena, Trustee
Mr. Fred Benjamin, Treasurer	

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

Mr. Aaron J. Hook, Secretary  
Bushkill Township

This report is a matter of public record. Copies of this report may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General, Office of Communications, 318 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120. If you have any questions regarding this report or any other matter, you may contact the Department of the Auditor General by accessing our website at [www.auditorgen.state.pa.us](http://www.auditorgen.state.pa.us).