



**FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF
HOSE COMPANY NO. 1, FORD CITY, PENNSYLVANIA**

ARMSTRONG COUNTY

COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD

JANUARY 1, 2010 TO DECEMBER 31, 2011

RELEASED MAY 2013

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE - AUDITOR GENERAL

DEPARTMENT OF THE 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 Firemen's Relief Association of Hose Company No. 1, Ford City, Pennsylvania, herein referred to as Ford City 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 Ford City Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipalities:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>
Cadogan Township	Armstrong	\$ 1,417	\$ 1,950
Ford City Borough	Armstrong	\$16,589	\$22,533
North Buffalo Township	Armstrong	*	\$ 2,300

* North Buffalo Township did not disburse state aid to the relief association in 2010.

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

Ford City Hose Company No. 1



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

Mr. Richard C. Green, President
FORD CITY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
Armstrong County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Ford City 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, 2010 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 objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our audit results and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

The objectives of the audit were:

1. To determine if the volunteer firefighters' relief association took appropriate corrective action to address the finding contained in our prior audit report; and
2. 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 objectives identified above.

Volunteer firefighters' relief association officers are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the Ford City 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 objectives, and assessed whether those significant controls were properly designed and implemented. Our audit procedures also included tests of documentary evidence supporting the Ford City Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's recorded financial transactions, tests of the physical existence of inventories, interviews of selected officials and direct confirmation of the Ford City 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 objectives. 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 objectives.

The results of our audit, for the period January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2011, found the Ford City Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association took appropriate corrective action to address the finding contained in our prior audit report and, 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 Ford City Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the Accompanying Expenditure Information and, as of December 31, 2011, had a cash balance of \$67,533 and an investment balance with a fair value of \$1,132,523.

Finding – Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster

We also noted another matter that has been included in the following observation and detailed in the Observation section of this report.

Observation – Diversification of Investments

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



April 17, 2013

EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE
Auditor General

FORD CITY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDING

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

The Ford City Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association has complied with the following prior audit finding and recommendation:

- Inappropriate Presigning of Blank Checks

By prohibiting the presigning of blank checks.

FORD CITY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster

Condition: During our prior audit, we verbally cited the relief association for its failure to maintain a complete and accurate roster of equipment owned by the relief association. During our current audit, while a listing of relief association owned equipment was provided, it was incomplete and did not accurately identify equipment owned by the relief association. Specifically, the list of equipment that was provided did not contain dates of purchase, unit costs, names of suppliers, serial numbers, or final dispositions of sold or damaged items. During the current audit period, the relief association purchased \$54,182 in equipment, of which \$8,422 was not properly accounted for on the relief association's equipment roster. While evidence substantiated that the relief association performed, on January 1, 2012, a physical inventory on nine sets of breathing apparatus and a gas meter purchased during the current audit period, no evidence existed that an annual physical inventory of equipment was conducted on the relief association's remaining equipment that was purchased during the current audit period.

Criteria: Sound business practice dictates 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 equipment roster of all relief association equipment should include the following:

- Types of equipment purchased;
- Dates of purchase;
- Unit costs;
- Names of suppliers;
- Serial numbers, if applicable;
- Current locations of items;
- Final dispositions of sold or damaged equipment; and
- Evidence of the performance and results of an annual physical inventory.

Cause: Relief association officials failed to establish adequate internal control procedures over fixed assets requiring the maintenance of a cumulative equipment roster and requiring the performance of an annual physical inventory of equipment to account for the relief association's fixed assets.

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 physical inventory of fixed assets prevents adequate accountability for, and safeguarding of, relief association fixed assets.

FORD CITY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION (Continued)

Finding – (Continued)

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

FORD CITY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
OBSERVATION

Observation – Diversification of Investments

Within the parameters established by the Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Act¹, it is the responsibility of the volunteer firefighters' relief association to invest its funds in a proper and prudent manner.

As these investments typically provide an income stream to the relief association for annual operations, it is generally sensible not to invest all VFRA money in one asset or asset class that places the principal at risk. In fact, state law requires VFRA's to "reasonably diversify investments, unless the [VFRA] reasonably determines that it is in the interest of the beneficiaries not to diversify..."².

By diversifying investments, the VFRA can help preserve capital, increase liquidity and decrease volatility. Diversification means spreading one's money among different investments; asset allocation diversifies total investments among different investment classes, such as stocks, bonds, government securities, and cash equivalents.

As of December 31, 2011, the VFRA had \$352,206 (fair value) or 29% of the VFRA's cash and investments in mutual funds.

The VFRA management should periodically review its specific cash needs and investment goals and ensure that its investments are allocated and diversified to prudently meet those needs and goals.

¹ 53 P.S. § 8506(c)(1997). This provision incorporates the "prudent investor rule" of the Probate, Estates, and Fiduciaries Code, 20 Pa. C.S.A. §7201 et seq.

² 20 Pa. C.S.A. § 7204(a) (Supp. 2005).

FORD CITY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
 ACCOMPANYING EXPENDITURE INFORMATION
 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2010 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	\$ 5,541
Total Benefit Services	\$ 5,541
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 54,182
Equipment maintenance	4,208
Total Fire Services	\$ 58,390
Administrative Services:	
Miscellaneous administrative expenses	\$ 669
Total Administrative Services	\$ 669
Total Investments Purchased:	\$ 320,559



FORD CITY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom Corbett
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Ford City Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Governing Body:

Mr. Richard C. Green, President

Mr. Ernest G. Reich, Vice President

Mr. Arthur T. Breuer, Jr., Secretary

Mr. Gregory L. Baum, Treasurer

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

Mr. Ronald A. Galinas, Secretary
Cadogan Township

Ms. Lisa Bittner, Secretary
Ford City Borough

Ms. Pamela L. Bowser, Secretary
North Buffalo 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.