



**HALLSTEAD FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION
SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY
COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2009 TO DECEMBER 31, 2011**

JUNE 2013

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE - AUDITOR GENERAL
DEPARTMENT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL



HALLSTEAD FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION

SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY

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CONTENTS

Background.....	1
Letter From the Auditor General	3
Finding and Recommendation:	
Finding – Undocumented Expenditures.....	5
Accompanying Expenditure Information	7
Report Distribution List	9



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 Hallstead Firemen's Relief Association, herein referred to as Hallstead 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. The Hallstead 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>
Great Bend Township	Susquehanna	\$5,281	\$5,944	\$9,670
Hallstead Borough	Susquehanna	\$5,384	\$6,060	\$9,893

BACKGROUND (Continued)

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

Hallstead Fire Engine and Hose No. 1



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

Mr. Aaron Stallings, President
HALLSTEAD VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
Susquehanna County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Hallstead 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 Hallstead 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 Hallstead Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's recorded financial transactions, tests of the physical existence of inventories, interviews of selected officials and direct confirmation of the Hallstead 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 Hallstead 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 Hallstead Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the Accompanying Expenditure Information and, as of December 31, 2011, had a cash balance of \$19,670 and no investments.

Finding – Undocumented Expenditures

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

February 14, 2012



EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE
Auditor General

HALLSTEAD VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – Undocumented Expenditures

Condition: The relief association was unable to provide invoices and certificates of completion for the following training expenditures:

Date	Check No.	Amount
02/16/10	241	\$ 900
02/14/11	249	1,045
Total		\$ 1,945

Criteria: Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7418(a) states:

The Office of Auditor General shall have the power and its duty shall be to audit the accounts and records of every volunteer firefighters' relief association receiving money under Chapter 7 of the Act of December 18, 1984 (P.L. 1005, No. 205), [FN1] known as the Municipal Pension Plan Funding Standard and Recovery Act, as far as may be necessary to satisfy the Auditor General that the money received was or is being expended for no purpose other than that authorized by this subchapter. Copies of all audits shall be furnished to the Governor.

Furthermore, prudent business practices dictate that adequate supporting documentation be maintained to evidence the propriety of all financial transactions.

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

Effect: Without invoices and training certificates, this department is unable to determine whether the training courses were successfully completed and therefore, whether relief association funds were expended for purposes authorized by Act 118.

Recommendation: We recommend the relief association provide this department with invoices and training certificates to evidence the validity of the training expenditures or that the relief association be reimbursed \$1,945 for the undocumented expenditures. We also recommend that the relief association officials maintain invoices and training certificates evidencing the successful completion of all future training courses. For further guidance, please refer to the Auditor General's publication, MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATIONS.

HALLSTEAD 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.

HALLSTEAD 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	\$ 10,544
Total Benefit Services	<u>\$ 10,544</u>
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 15,896
Equipment maintenance	2,889
Training expenses	858
Total Fire Services	<u>\$ 19,643</u>
Administrative Services:	
Miscellaneous administrative expenses	\$ 22
Total Administrative Services	<u>\$ 22</u>
Other Expenditures:	
Undocumented expenditures	\$ 1,945
Total Other Expenditures	<u>\$ 1,945</u>



HALLSTEAD VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom Corbett
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Hallstead Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Governing Body:

Mr. Aaron Stallings, President

Mr. David Callender, Vice President

Mr. James Shafer, Secretary

Mr. Mark Gnade, Treasurer

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

Ms. Sheila Guinan, Secretary
Great Bend Township

Ms. Cindy Gillespie, Secretary
Hallstead Borough

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.