



**THE HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREMAN'S  
RELIEF ASSOCIATION**

**ELK COUNTY**

**COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT**

**FOR THE PERIOD**

**JANUARY 1, 2010 TO DECEMBER 31, 2011**

**RELEASED OCTOBER 2013**

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA**

**EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE - AUDITOR GENERAL**

**DEPARTMENT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL**





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**EUGENE A. DePASQUALE**  
**AUDITOR GENERAL**

**HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS’  
RELIEF ASSOCIATION**  
Elk County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Highland 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, 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 findings 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.

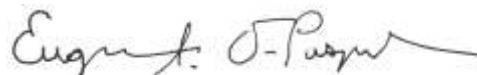
Our audit was limited to the areas related to the objectives identified above.

Volunteer firefighters' relief association officers are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the Highland Township 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 Highland 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 Highland Township 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 Highland Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association took appropriate corrective action to address the one of the two findings contained in our prior audit report. However, the Highland Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association failed to take appropriate corrective action to address the remaining finding contained in our prior audit report, as listed below and discussed in the Status of Prior Findings section of this report. In addition, the results of our audit found the Highland Township 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 in detail in the Finding and Recommendation section of this report. The results of our tests also indicated the Highland Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the Accompanying Expenditure Information and, as of December 31, 2011, had a cash balance of \$8,294 and an investment balance with a fair value of \$1,251.

Finding – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation  
Failure to Maintain Surety (Fidelity) Bond Coverage

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



EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE  
Auditor General

June 12, 2013

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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 Highland Township Volunteer Fireman's Relief Association, herein referred to as Highland 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 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 Highland Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipality:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>
Highland Township	Elk	\$2,906	\$4,317

BACKGROUND (Continued)

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

Highland Township Volunteer Fire Department

HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDINGS

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

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

- Unauthorized Expenditures

By receiving reimbursement from the Highland Township Volunteer Fire Department, in the amount of \$900, for the unauthorized expenditures made during the prior audit period.

NONCOMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

The Highland Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association has not complied with one of the two prior audit findings. This finding is noted below and discussed in detail in the Finding and Recommendation section of this report:

- Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –  
Failure to Maintain Surety (Fidelity) Bond Coverage

We are concerned with the volunteer firefighters' relief association's failure to correct the previously reported audit finding. The association management should strive to implement the recommendation and corrective action noted in this audit report



HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –  
Failure to Maintain Surety (Fidelity) Bond Coverage

Condition: As cited in our prior audit report, the relief association, again, failed to maintain Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage on its authorized disbursing officer, as required by Act 118. The relief association allowed its Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage to lapse on January 12, 2011. Cash assets as of December 31, 2011, totaled \$8,294.

Criteria: Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7415(c)(4) states, in part, that:

. . . the disbursing officer, whether designated treasurer, comptroller, financial secretary or otherwise, shall be bonded by corporate surety for faithful performance of duty. The amount of the bond shall be at least as great as the maximum cash balance in current funds of the association at any time during the fiscal year, and the premium on the bond shall be a proper charge against the funds of the association.

Cause: Even though notified of this condition during our prior audit, relief association officials, again, neglected the Act 118 provisions requiring the maintenance of Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage on the relief association's authorized disbursing officer.

Effect: As a result of the disbursing officer of the relief association not being sufficiently bonded, the relief association's cash assets were not adequately safeguarded.

However, subsequent to the current audit period, on July 20, 2012, the relief association obtained adequate Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage.

Recommendation: We, again, recommend that the relief association officials continue to maintain Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage on the relief association's authorized disbursing officer in an amount greater than the relief association's maximum cash balance, as required by Act 118. 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.

HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP 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	\$ 92
Total Benefit Services	\$ 92
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 2,171
Training expenses	204
Total Fire Services	\$ 2,375
Administrative Services:	
Officer compensation	\$ 1,900
Other administrative expenses	56
Total Administrative Services	\$ 1,956

HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom Corbett  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Highland Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Governing Body:

Mr. William A. Edinger, President

Ms. Tara Jo Hilyer, Vice President

Ms. Misty D. Edinger, Secretary

Ms. Amy S. Beers, Treasurer

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

Ms. Christy Reigel, Secretary  
Highland Township

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at [www.auditorgen.state.pa.us](http://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](mailto:news@auditorgen.state.pa.us).