



RAMEY VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION

CLEARFIELD COUNTY

COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD

JANUARY 1, 2010 TO DECEMBER 31, 2011



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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 Ramey Volunteer Firemen's Relief Association, herein referred to as Ramey 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 Ramey Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipalities:

| <u>Municipality</u> | <u>County</u> | <u>2010</u> | <u>2011</u> |
|---------------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| Beccarai Township | Clearfield | \$ 950 | \$ 1,412 |
| Gulich Township | Clearfield | \$7,034 | \$10,444 |
| Ramey Borough | Clearfield | \$2,595 | \$ 3,496 |

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

Ramey Fire Engine Company Number One



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

Mr. Jeffrey Carns, President
RAMEY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
Clearfield County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Ramey 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 Ramey 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 Ramey Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's recorded financial transactions, tests of the physical existence of inventories, interviews of selected officials and direct confirmation of the Ramey 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 Ramey Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association did not take appropriate corrective action to address the finding contained in our prior audit report, as detailed below and discussed in the Status of Prior Finding section of this report. In addition, the results of our audit found the Ramey 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 Ramey Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the Accompanying Expenditure Information and, as of December 31, 2011, had a cash balance of \$19,824 and an investment balance with a fair value of \$15,835.

Finding No. 1 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –
Failure to Maintain Surety (Fidelity) Bond Coverage

Furthermore, a scope limitation on our audit exists, as detailed in the Observation section of this report.

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

November 29, 2012

EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE
Auditor General

RAMEY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDING

NONCOMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

The Ramey Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association has not complied with the following prior audit finding. 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 continued failure to adhere to our previously reported audit recommendation. The association management should strive to implement the recommendation and corrective action noted in this audit report.

RAMEY 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 failed to maintain Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage on its authorized disbursing officer, as required by Act 118. As of December 31, 2011, the relief association's cash assets totaled \$19,824.

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: While 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 bonded, the relief association's cash assets are not adequately safeguarded.

However, subsequent to the audit period, on August 1, 2012, the relief association obtained Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage in an amount greater than the maximum cash balance, as required by Act 118.

Recommendation: We, again, recommend that the relief association officials obtain 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.

RAMEY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
OBSERVATION

Observation – Scope Limitation

The Ramey Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association (VFRA) does not maintain canceled or imaged checks. Without copies of canceled or imaged checks, we could not determine whether two VFRA officers authorized and signed the checks. While the VFRA provided bank statements, the VFRA failed to provide copies of canceled or imaged checks.

Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7415(c)(3) states, in part, that the signatures of at least two officers, one of whom shall be the disbursing officer, shall be required to bind the association by formal contract or to issue a negotiable instrument.

Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7418(a) states, in part, that 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 . . . 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.

Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS) Section No. 6.56 states, "Auditors must obtain sufficient appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for their findings and conclusions." GAGAS Section No. 6.61(f) states, "Evidence obtained from a knowledgeable, credible, and unbiased third party is generally more reliable than evidence from management of the audited entity or others who have a direct interest in the audited entity."

Our inability to review canceled checks or imaged checks constitutes a scope limitation on our audit.

RAMEY 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 | \$ 1,686 |
| Total Benefit Services | \$ 1,686 |
| | |
| Fire Services: | |
| Equipment purchased | \$ 1,143 |
| Equipment maintenance | 91 |
| Total Fire Services | \$ 1,234 |
| | |
| Administrative Services: | |
| Miscellaneous administrative expenses | \$ 532 |
| Total Administrative Services | \$ 532 |
| | |
| Other Expenditures: | |
| Principal payments on loan | \$ 11,811 |
| Interest payments on loan | 7,510 |
| Principal payments on lease-financing | 66,884 |
| Interest payments on lease-financing | 1,999 |
| Total Other Expenditures | \$ 88,204 |

RAMEY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom Corbett
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Ramey Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Governing Body:

Mr. Jeffrey Carns, President

Mr. Michael Fetchu, Vice President

Mr. Darin J. Zazworsky, Secretary

Mr. Kevin Date, Treasurer

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

Ms. Shelia Flick, Secretary
Beccaria Township

Mr. Martin J. Pajonk, Secretary
Gulich Township

Ms. Trina M. Janocko, Secretary
Ramey Borough

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.