

SHAWNEE VALLEY FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION
BEDFORD COUNTY
COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2008 TO DECEMBER 31, 2010

Released March 2013



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BEDFORD COUNTY

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

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>
East St. Clair Township	Bedford	\$3,769	\$3,402	\$3,829
Harrison Township	Bedford	\$5,855	\$5,370	\$6,044
Juniata Township	Bedford	\$3,678	\$3,407	\$3,835
Manns Choice Borough	Bedford	\$1,480	\$1,291	\$1,454
Napier Township	Bedford	\$7,941	\$7,388	\$8,315
New Paris Borough	Bedford	\$ 484	\$ 441	\$ 498
Schellsburg Borough	Bedford	\$1,853	\$1,655	\$1,863

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

Shawnee Valley Volunteer Fire Company



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

Mr. Timothy A. Wertz, President
SHAWNEE VALLEY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
Bedford County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Shawnee Valley 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, 2008 to December 31, 2010.

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 Shawnee Valley 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 Shawnee Valley Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's recorded financial transactions, tests of the physical existence of inventories, interviews of selected officials and direct confirmation of the Shawnee Valley Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's cash, investments, and certain other assets and liabilities as of December 31, 2010, 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, 2008 to December 31, 2010, found the Shawnee Valley Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association took appropriate corrective action to address the findings 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 Shawnee Valley Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the Accompanying Expenditure Information and, as of December 31, 2010, had a cash balance of \$98,728 and no investments.

Finding – Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Membership Roster

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

June 8, 2011

EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE
Auditor General

SHAWNEE VALLEY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDINGS

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Shawnee Valley Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association has complied with the following prior audit findings and recommendations:

- Inadequate Relief Association Bylaws

By revising the relief association's bylaws to meet the minimum requirements of Act 118.

- Insufficient Officer's Bond Coverage

By increasing the officer's bond coverage to an amount greater than the balance of cash assets.

SHAWNEE VALLEY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Membership Roster

Condition: The relief association officials failed to maintain a complete and accurate roster of relief association members.

Criteria: Relief association officials should maintain a complete and accurate roster of the relief association's membership, as identified by criteria set forth in the relief association's bylaws. A comprehensive roster of all relief association members should include the following:

- Names of each member;
- Members' mailing addresses;
- Dates of births;
- Dates of memberships; and
- Membership classifications.

In addition, when warranted, a notation should be made on the roster identifying the date of a member's resignation or death.

Cause: Relief association officials were unaware that they should maintain a comprehensive roster of relief association members.

Effect: The failure to maintain a comprehensive membership roster could result in the payment of benefits to nonmembers, or deprive eligible relief association members from receiving authorized benefit payments.

Recommendation: We recommend the relief association officials compile and maintain a complete and accurate roster of the relief association's membership. For additional 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.

SHAWNEE VALLEY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
 ACCOMPANYING EXPENDITURE INFORMATION
 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2008 TO DECEMBER 31, 2010

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	\$ 11,078
Total Benefit Services	\$ 11,078
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 23,130
Equipment maintenance	17,071
Training expenses	1,595
Fire prevention materials	253
Total Fire Services	\$ 42,049
Administrative Services:	
Miscellaneous administrative expenses	\$ 724
Total Administrative Services	\$ 724



SHAWNEE VALLEY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom Corbett
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Shawnee Valley Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Governing Body:

Mr. Timothy A. Wertz, President

Mr. Joshua D. Haney, Vice President

Ms. Brandy M. Wertz, Secretary

Mr. Park D. Williams, Treasurer

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

Ms. Dorothy R. Oldham, Secretary
East St. Clair Township

Ms. Elizabeth C. Bohn, Secretary
Harrison Township

Ms. Susan C. Higgins, Secretary
Juniata Township

Ms. Christie Barefoot, Secretary
Manns Choice Borough

Ms. Lesley Kennedy, Secretary
Napier Township

Ms. Kerri Mickel, Secretary
New Paris Borough

Ms. Dorothy Wolfhope, Secretary
Schellsburg 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.