



**SOUTH GREENSBURG VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S  
RELIEF ASSOCIATION**

**WESTMORELAND COUNTY**

**COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT**

**FOR THE PERIOD**

**JANUARY 1, 2009 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 South Greensburg Volunteer Firemen's Relief Association, herein referred to as South Greensburg 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 South Greensburg Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipality:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>
South Greensburg Borough	Westmoreland	\$12,689	\$14,282	\$20,660

BACKGROUND (Continued)

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

South Greensburg Volunteer Fire Department Hose Company No. 1



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of the Auditor General  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0018  
Facebook: Pennsylvania Auditor General  
Twitter: @PAAuditorGen

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

Mr. Dean Sickenberger, President  
SOUTH GREENSBURG VOLUNTEER  
FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
Westmoreland County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the South Greensburg 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 South Greensburg 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 South Greensburg Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's recorded financial transactions, tests of the physical existence of inventories, interviews of selected officials and direct confirmation of the South Greensburg 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 South Greensburg 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 South Greensburg Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the Accompanying Expenditure Information and, as of December 31, 2011, had a cash balance of \$49,763 and an investment balance with a fair value of \$29,094.

#### Finding – Failure to Comply With Terms of Agreement

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 South Greensburg Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association and, where appropriate, their response has been included in the report.



June 1, 2012

EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE  
Auditor General

SOUTH GREENSBURG VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – Failure to Comply With Terms of Agreement

Condition: On December 3, 2003, the relief association entered into an agreement with the South Greensburg Fire Company to contribute \$19,341 towards the purchase of safeguard equipment mounted on an affiliated fire company owned vehicle. In September 2009 the affiliated fire company sold the vehicle for \$18,000. However, the relief association did not receive its prorated portion of 18%, or \$3,240, per terms of the agreement.

Criteria: The terms of the agreement stated in the event this vehicle is ever sold, a prorated share of the proceeds from the sale of the vehicle shall revert to the relief association.

Cause: The current relief association officers were unaware of this agreement and failed to collect the prorated portion of the sale of the vehicle due the relief association as outlined in the agreement.

Effect: Due to the relief association not receiving its prorated portion of the sales proceeds, these funds were unavailable for general operating expenses or for investment purposes.

Subsequent to the audit period, on May 23, 2012, the relief association received \$3,240 from the affiliated fire company, which constituted the relief association's prorated portion of the sale of the vehicle per the terms of the agreement.

Recommendation: We recommend the relief association officers monitor all future agreements to ensure monetary payments due the relief association are received timely. 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.

SOUTH GREENSBURG VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
OBSERVATION

Observation – Scope Limitation

The South Greensburg 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.

SOUTH GREENSBURG 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	\$ 524
Death benefits	3,000
Relief benefits	1,258
Total Benefit Services	\$ 4,782
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 36,020
Equipment maintenance	1,528
Training expenses	1,889
Total Fire Services	\$ 39,437
Administrative Services:	
Miscellaneous administrative expenses	\$ 650
Total Administrative Services	\$ 650



SOUTH GREENSBURG VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom Corbett  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

South Greensburg Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Governing Body:

Mr. Dean Sickenberger, President

Mr. Thomas Bishop, Vice President

Mr. James Bold, Secretary

Mr. Eric Hardy, Treasurer

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

Mr. Lee Kunkle, Secretary  
South Greensburg 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](http://www.auditorgen.state.pa.us).