

BECHTELSVILLE FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION

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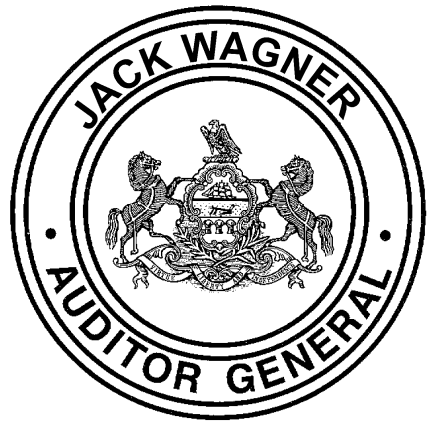
BECHTELSVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION

BERKS COUNTY

COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT

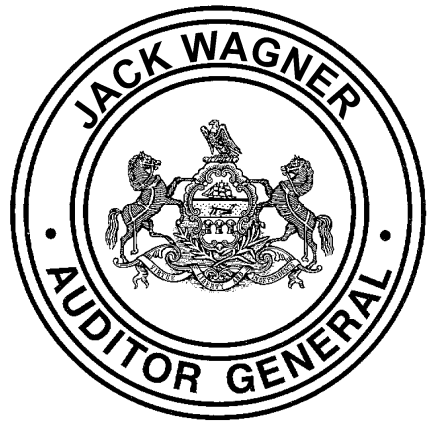
FOR THE PERIOD

JANUARY 1, 2006 TO DECEMBER 31, 2008



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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, Act of June 11, 1968, (P.L. 149, No. 84), as amended, 53 P.S. § 8501 et seq. (commonly referred to as Act 84), 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 Bechtelsville 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 84 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 84 authorizes specific types of expenditures and prescribes appropriate volunteer firefighters' relief association investment options. Within the parameters established by Act 84, 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 Bechtelsville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipalities:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>
Bechtelsville Borough	Berks	\$5,554	\$5,588	\$5,705
District Township	Berks	\$3,303	\$3,460	\$3,541
Pike Township	Berks	\$3,315	\$3,415	\$3,496

BACKGROUND (Continued)

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

Keystone Fire Company No. 1 of Bechtelsville

Mr. Ronald H. Kehl, President
BECHTELSVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
Berks County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Bechtelsville 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, Act of June 11, 1968, (P.L. 149, No. 84), as amended, 53 P.S. § 8501 et seq. (commonly referred to as Act 84), for the period January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2008.

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 Bechtelsville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's administration of state aid and accumulated 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 applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws and administrative procedures significant within the context of the audit objectives. We also tested transactions, confirmed the Bechtelsville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's cash balance as of December 31, 2008, with the custodian of the funds, and interviewed selected officials to the extent necessary to satisfy the audit objectives.

The results of our audit for the period January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2008, found, in all significant respects, the Bechtelsville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association received and expended funds in compliance with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws and administrative procedures, except as noted in the following finding discussed later in this report. The results of our tests indicated the Bechtelsville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the accompanying information and as of December 31, 2008, had a cash balance of \$15,162 and no investments.

Finding – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –
Insufficient Officer's Bond Coverage

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

February 24, 2009

JACK WAGNER
Auditor General

BECHTELSVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDINGS

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

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

- Undocumented Expenditure

By providing adequate documentation to determine the validity of the \$210 undocumented expenditure that was made in the prior audit period. In addition, the relief association did not make any undocumented expenditures during the current audit period.

NONCOMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

The Bechtelsville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association did not comply with a prior audit finding. This issue is further discussed in the following finding noted in the Finding and Recommendation section of this report:

- Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –
Insufficient Officer's Bond Coverage

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

BECHTELSVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –
Insufficient Officer's Bond Coverage

Condition: As cited in the prior audit report, the relief association did not maintain a bond in a sufficient amount to cover the authorized disbursing officer as required by Act 84. During the current audit period, the relief association did increase its bond coverage to \$15,000, effective August 26, 2008, but it was again not maintained in a sufficient amount to cover the balance of cash assets. The relief association's bond coverage was \$15,000 as of December 31, 2008, while the cash assets totaled \$15,162.

Criteria: Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8505(c) states, in part, that:

. . . the disbursing officer, whether designated treasurer, comptroller, financial secretary, or otherwise, shall be bonded by corporate surety for the faithful performance of his duties. The amount of such 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 such bond shall be a proper charge against the funds of the association.

Cause: Relief association officials were informed in the prior audit report of the necessity to maintain adequate bond coverage but failed to monitor the cash balance to ensure the officer's bond coverage was maintained in a sufficient amount to comply with Act 84 requirements.

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

Recommendation: We again recommend the relief association ensure that a faithful performance bond adequately covers the disbursing officer as required by Act 84. This requirement may be accomplished by increasing the officer's bond coverage to an amount greater than the expected maximum balance of cash assets, or by decreasing the cash assets to an amount anticipated to remain below the coverage amount. Relief association officials should monitor the cash balance to ensure that unexpected events affecting current funds do not again result in an insufficient officer's bond coverage. 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.

BECHTELSVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
 ACCOMPANYING EXPENDITURE INFORMATION
 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2006 TO DECEMBER 31, 2008

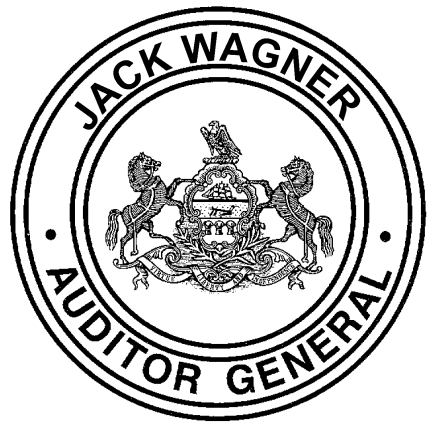
Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8502(1) states, in part, that:

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. Such an association may also serve other purposes, . . . provided only that adequate provisions be first made to serve its primary purpose. . . .

Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8506, 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. 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	\$ 3,061
Total Benefit Services	\$ 3,061
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 26,320
Equipment maintenance	2,919
Training expenses	3,617
Fire prevention materials	6,214
Total Fire Services	\$ 39,070
Administrative Services:	
Miscellaneous administrative expenses	\$ 55
Total Administrative Services	\$ 55



BECHTELSVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Edward G. Rendell
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Bechtelsville Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Officers:

Mr. Ronald H. Kehl, President

Mr. Scott Reitnauer, Vice President

Mr. Donald Frantz, Secretary

Mr. Dennis H. Moyer, Treasurer

Reports were also distributed to each municipality, which allocated foreign fire insurance tax monies to this relief association.

Ms. Valerie A. Moll, Secretary
Bechtelsville Borough

Ms. Marie T. Erlandson, Secretary
District Township

Ms. Susan E. Cramp, Secretary
Pike Township

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.