



CHESTER HILL FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION

HEREIN REFERRED TO AS:

CHESTER HILL VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION

CLEARFIELD COUNTY

COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD

JANUARY 1, 2005 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007



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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 Chester Hill 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 Chester Hill Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipalities:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>
Chester Hill Borough	Clearfield	\$4,732	\$4,768	\$4,926
Decatur Township	Clearfield	\$8,027	\$8,129	\$8,299

BACKGROUND (Continued)

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

Chester Hill Hose Company

Mr. Ryan Haggans, President
CHESTER HILL VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
Clearfield County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Chester Hill 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, 2005 to December 31, 2007. The audit was conducted in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* applicable to performance audits, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

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 Chester Hill 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 Chester Hill Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's investment balance and the cash balance as of December 31, 2007, with the custodians 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, 2005 to December 31, 2007, found, in all significant respects, the Chester Hill 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 Chester Hill Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the accompanying information and as of December 31, 2007, had a cash balance of \$24,648 and an investment balance with a fair value of \$4,530.

Finding – Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster

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

May 22, 2008

JACK WAGNER
Auditor General

CHESTER HILL VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDINGS

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- Failure to Adhere to Relief Association Bylaws

By establishing guidelines and procedures to meet the provisions contained in the relief association bylaws.

- Inadequate Minutes of Meetings

By maintaining detailed minutes of all association meetings.

- Unauthorized Expenditures

By receiving reimbursement from the affiliated fire company on August 31, 2006, in the amount of \$1,378 for the unauthorized expenditures made in the prior audit period.

- Duplicate Payment

By receiving reimbursement from the insurance company on January 3, 2007, in the amount of \$159 for the duplicate payment made in the prior financial period.

- Inadequate Internal Controls

By adopting the internal control procedures recommended in the prior audit to safeguard relief association assets and ensure the propriety of relief association transactions. However, during the current audit, we determined that the relief association did not maintain a complete and accurate roster of equipment purchased during the current audit period. This is discussed in detail in the finding contained in the Finding and Recommendation section of this report.

CHESTER HILL VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster

Condition: The relief association officials did not maintain a complete and accurate roster of equipment owned by the relief association. While a listing of relief association owned equipment was provided during the current audit, it was incomplete and did not accurately identify equipment owned by the relief association. Specifically, the list of equipment that was provided did not contain dates of purchase, unit costs, or names of suppliers. Also serial numbers, where available, were not consistently recorded to accurately identify the relief association's equipment. As such, it was impossible to determine if all items purchased during the audit period had been accurately recorded. In addition, there was no indication that an annual inventory of the equipment was performed to account for the relief association's fixed assets.

Criteria: The relief association should establish adequate internal control procedures to ensure the maintenance of a cumulative equipment roster of all items purchased by the relief association in order to provide an effective accounting control over the relief association's fixed assets. A cumulative roster of all relief association equipment should include the following:

- Type of equipment purchased.
- Date of purchase.
- Unit cost.
- Name of supplier.
- Serial number, if applicable.
- Current location of item.
- Final disposition of sold or damaged equipment.
- Notation of the annual inventory.

Cause: Relief association officials failed to establish adequate internal control procedures over fixed assets to include the maintenance of a cumulative equipment roster and the performance of an annual equipment inventory.

Effect: The failure to properly record equipment purchases in a detailed equipment roster prevents officials from effectively monitoring the relief association's equipment purchases. In addition, the failure to maintain a detailed equipment roster and perform an annual equipment inventory prevents adequate accountability and safeguarding of relief association assets.

Recommendation: We recommend the relief association officials maintain a cumulative roster of all relief association owned equipment. Furthermore, the relief association should ensure it performs an annual inventory of all operable equipment and that the inventory be sufficiently documented. For further guidance, please refer to the Auditor General's publication, MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATIONS.

CHESTER HILL VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – (Continued)

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.

CHESTER HILL VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
 ACCOMPANYING EXPENDITURE INFORMATION
 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2005 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007

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	\$ 8,111
Death benefits	200
Tokens of sympathy and goodwill	75
Total Benefit Services	\$ 8,386
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 59,210
Equipment maintenance	3,831
Total Fire Services	\$ 63,041
Administrative Services:	
Officer compensation	\$ 1,200
Other administrative expenses	73
Total Administrative Services	\$ 1,273
Other Expenditures:	
Principal payments on lease-financing	\$ 4,100
Interest payments on lease-financing	704
Total Other Expenditures	\$ 4,804

CHESTER HILL VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Edward G. Rendell
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Chester Hill Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Officers:

Mr. Ryan Haggans, President

Ms. Jona Saltsman, Secretary

Ms. Gladys Straw, Treasurer

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

Ms. Anna R. Williams, Secretary
Chester Hill Borough

Ms. Debra A. Koptchak, Secretary
Decatur 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.