

MONARCH VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION HEREIN REFERRED TO AS:

MONARCH VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION

FAYETTE 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 Monarch 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 Monarch Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipality:

Municipality	County	2005	2006	2007
Dunbar Township	Fayette	\$17,564	\$17,940	\$19,114

BACKGROUND (Continued)

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

Monarch Volunteer Fire Department

Ms. Toni Grubbs, President MONARCH VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION Fayette County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Monarch 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.

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 Monarch 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 Monarch Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's cash balance as of December 31, 2007, 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, 2005 to December 31, 2007, found, in all significant respects, the Monarch Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association did not receive and expend state aid and accumulated relief association funds in compliance with applicable state aid laws, contracts, bylaws and administrative procedures, as noted in the following findings discussed later in this report. The results of our tests indicated the Monarch Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the accompanying information and as of December 31, 2007, had a cash balance of \$10,261 and no investments

- Finding No. 1 Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation Failure to Provide Documentation of Vehicle Ownership
- Finding No. 2 Undocumented Expenditures
- Finding No. 3 Unauthorized Expenditures
- Finding No. 4 Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation Inadequate Financial Record-Keeping System
- Finding No. 5 Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation Inadequate Minutes of Meetings
- Finding No. 6 Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster
- Finding No. 7 Failure to Maintain Officer's Bond Coverage

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

September 23, 2008

JACK WAGNER Auditor General

MONARCH VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION STATUS OF PRIOR FINDINGS

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

The Monarch Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association has complied with the following prior audit finding and recommendation:

• Undocumented Expenditures

By receiving reimbursement from the Monarch Volunteer Fire Department in the amount of \$7,104 for the undocumented expenditures that were made in the prior financial period. However, the relief association had additional undocumented expenditures during the current audit period, as discussed in Finding No. 2 of this report.

NONCOMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Monarch Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association has not complied with prior audit findings. These issues are further discussed in the following findings noted in the Findings and Recommendations section of this report:

- Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –
 Failure to Provide Documentation of Vehicle Ownership
- Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation Inadequate Financial Record-Keeping System
- Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation Inadequate Minutes of Meetings
- Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –
 Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster

We are concerned with the volunteer firefighters' relief association's failure to correct these previously reported audit findings. The association management should strive to implement the recommendations and corrective actions noted in this audit report.

<u>Finding No. 1 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –</u> Failure to Provide Documentation of Vehicle Ownership

<u>Condition</u>: As cited in the prior audit report, on May 11, 1999, the relief association expended \$5,110 for the purchase of a 1986 rescue vehicle. However, the relief association did not provide documentation of the ownership for this vehicle. In order for the relief association to perfect its ownership of this vehicle, the relief association must have its name listed on the title of the vehicle and a copy of the title must be available for verification.

Criteria: Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8507(a) states, in part:

The Department of the Auditor General shall have the power, and its duty shall be, to audit the accounts and records of every volunteer firefighters' relief association receiving any money under Chapter 7 of the act of December 18, 1984 (P.L. 1005, No. 205), known as the "Municipal Pension Plan Funding Standard and Recovery Act," as amended, as far as may be necessary to satisfy the department that the money received was expended or is being expended for no purpose other than that authorized by this act.

Prudent business practice dictates that the relief association should document and maintain ownership of equipment purchased by the relief association. As such, vehicles purchased by the relief association must be titled in the name of the relief association.

<u>Cause</u>: Relief association officials again failed to provide adequate documentation of ownership of the vehicle purchased with relief association funds.

<u>Effect</u>: As a result of the relief association's failure to provide documentation of the relief association's ownership of the vehicle, relief association assets were not properly safeguarded.

<u>Recommendation</u>: We again recommend the relief association provide this department with a copy of the rescue vehicle title as evidence of the relief association's ownership of the vehicle. If such action is not taken, we recommend that the relief association be reimbursed \$5,110. For further guidance, please refer to the Auditor General's publication, MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATIONS.

<u>Management's Response</u>: Relief association management agreed with the finding and indicated they will take action to comply with the recommendation.

<u>Finding No. 2 – Undocumented Expenditures</u>

<u>Condition</u>: The relief association was unable to provide adequate supporting documentation for the following expenditures:

Date	Transaction Type*	Description		A	mount
04/21/05 05/11/05 10/20/05 06/12/06 12/08/06 12/08/06	Debit memo Debit memo Debit memo Debit memo Withdrawal Withdrawal	County association County association Equipment vendor Equipment vendor Equipment vendor Equipment vendor		\$	348 111 1,255 3,400 1,281 1,015
			Total	\$	7,410

^{*}The relief association has a savings account only.

Criteria: Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8507(a) states, in part:

The Department of the Auditor General shall have the power, and its duty shall be, to audit the accounts and records of every volunteer firefighters' relief association receiving any money under Chapter 7 of the Act of December 18, 1984 (P.L. 1005, No 205), known as the "Municipal Pension Plan Funding Standard and Recovery Act," as amended, as far as may be necessary to satisfy the department that the money received was expended or is being expended for no purpose other than that authorized by this act.

Without adequate supporting documentation, such as invoices, this department is unable to determine if the relief association funds were expended for purposes authorized by Act 84. Furthermore, good business practices would require that supporting documentation be maintained to verify the propriety of all financial transactions.

<u>Cause</u>: Relief association officials failed to establish adequate internal control procedures to ensure supporting documentation is maintained for all expenditures.

<u>Effect</u>: Lack of supporting documentation, such as invoices and detailed minutes of meetings, made it impossible to determine the expenditures were made in accordance with Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8506(e).

Finding No. 2 – (Continued)

Recommendation: We recommend the relief association provide this department with adequate supporting documentation, such as invoices, to determine the validity of the expenditures or that the relief association be reimbursed \$7,410 for the undocumented expenditures. We also recommend that the relief association officials maintain supporting documentation for all future expenditures. For further guidance, please refer to the Auditor General's publication, MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATIONS.

<u>Management's Response</u>: Relief association management agreed with the finding presented at the audit exit conference and indicated they will take action to comply with the recommendation.

Finding No. 3 – Unauthorized Expenditures

Condition: The relief association expended a total of \$7,886 for premiums on the fire company's commercial package policy. However, only \$440, the portion paid for inland marine coverage, is considered authorized by Act 84. The remaining portion of \$7,446, which was disbursed for premiums on the fire company's commercial package policy and the fire company's crime policy, are not authorized by Act 84.

Criteria: Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8506(e)(2 and 12) states:

The funds of any volunteer firefighters' relief association may be spent:

- (2) To purchase contracts of insurance which shall at the least afford financial assistance to active members of the fire service represented by the association against losses due to injury suffered in the fire service and which may also provide in the order named, (i) for payments to the widow or other dependents of a member in the event of his death, (ii) for protection of active firemen against disease, (iii) for the replacement or purchase of prosthetic devices such as visual aids, hearing aids, dentures, braces, crutches, and the like, where such devices have been lost or damaged while the owner was engaged in the fire service or where the need for such devices arises because of functional impairment attributable to participation in the fire service, (iv) for the repair or replacement if necessary of articles of clothing or pocket pagers damaged in the course of participation in the fire service, and (v) for disability incurred after service for a minimum of 20 years as a volunteer firefighter.
- (12)To secure insurance against the legal liability of the volunteer firefighters for loss and expense from claims arising out of the performance of their official, authorized duties while going to, returning from or attending fires or while performing their duties as special fire police.

Since the Department of the Auditor General is legislatively prohibited from giving pre-audit advice, an interagency agreement with the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) had been established whereby the DCED provided interpretation of Act 84 of 1968, the "Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Act." Since these types of insurance coverage are not for the benefit of the volunteer firefighters, they have been deemed by DCED to not qualify under Act 84.

<u>Cause</u>: Relief association officials were unaware that the expenditures for the fire department's insurance premiums were not authorized by Act 84.

Finding No. 3 – (Continued)

<u>Effect</u>: As a result of these improper expenditures, relief association funds were not available for investment purposes or to pay for expenditures authorized by Act 84.

Recommendation: We recommend the relief association be reimbursed \$7,446 for the unauthorized expenditures and that relief association officials become familiar with Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8506(e) to aid them in determining the propriety of future expenditures. For further guidance, please refer to the Auditor General's publication, MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATIONS.

<u>Management's Response</u>: Relief association management agreed with the finding as presented at the audit exit conference; however, modifications to the finding were made subsequent to the exit conference and we were unable to reach the relief association officials to discuss the changes.

<u>Finding No. 4 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Inadequate Financial Record-Keeping System</u>

<u>Condition:</u> As cited in the prior audit report, the relief association's financial record-keeping system did not provide effective control over cash receipts, disbursements, and monetary assets, and does not meet the minimum requirements of maintaining financial records established by this department. The following are the noted deficiencies for the current audit period:

- Complete and accurate journals were not maintained.
- Ledgers were not utilized to record the transactions of the relief association accounts.
- Documentation to support various expenditures was not available for examination at the time of the audit. (See Finding No. 2)
- Cancelled checks were not maintained for all disbursements.
- Financial statements were not prepared.

<u>Criteria</u>: Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8505 (a) states, in part, that the relief association:

... must provide for the taking and preserving of minutes of all meetings, and the maintenance of such books of account as may be necessary and appropriate to afford a permanent record of its financial affairs.

In addition, the relief association bylaws stipulate the following:

- Article IV Section 2 All receipts shall be recorded in the association's journal and ledger and supporting documentation such as deposit slips, bank statements, etc, shall be maintained to verify the receipts.
- Article V Section 2 All expenditures must be made through a relief association account and recorded in detail in the association journal and ledger. Supporting documentation such as invoices, cancelled checks, etc., shall be maintained to verify all disbursements.

Furthermore, an adequate system of accounting and record keeping is a prerequisite for sound administration of relief association assets.

<u>Cause</u>: While notified of this condition in the prior audit report, relief association officials again neglected to prepare and maintain the necessary financial records.

<u>Effect</u>: The failure of relief association officials to maintain adequate records prohibits the membership from effectively monitoring the relief association's financial operations.

Finding No. 4 – (Continued)

Recommendation: We again recommend the relief association establish and maintain a financial record-keeping system, which meets the minimum record-keeping requirements of this department. For further guidance, please refer to the Auditor General's publication, MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATIONS.

<u>Management's Response</u>: 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.

<u>Finding No. 5 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Inadequate Minutes of Meetings</u>

<u>Condition</u>: As cited in the prior audit report, the relief association failed to maintain detailed minutes of meetings, as required by Act 84. Specifically, the relief association's minutes did not address all of the financial-related transactions, which occurred during the audit period.

<u>Criteria</u>: Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8505(a) states, in part, that the relief association:

... must provide for the taking and preserving of minutes of all meetings, and the maintenance of such books of account as may be necessary and appropriate to afford a permanent record of its financial affairs.

<u>Cause</u>: While notified of this condition in the prior audit report, relief association officials neglected to maintain detailed minutes of meetings, as required by Act 84.

<u>Effect</u>: The failure to maintain detailed minutes of meetings prevented the verification as to whether all relief association business was presented before the membership for approval.

<u>Recommendation</u>: We again recommend the relief association maintain detailed minutes of meetings, including all financial-related business conducted by the relief association. For further guidance, please refer to the Auditor General's publication, MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATIONS.

<u>Management's Response</u>: 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.

<u>Finding No. 6 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –</u> Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster

<u>Condition</u>: As cited in the prior audit report, the relief association officials did not maintain a complete and accurate roster of equipment owned by the relief association. The relief association has not provided an updated roster that includes the equipment items purchased in the prior and current audit periods. Consequently, there was no indication that an annual inventory of the equipment was performed to account for the relief association's fixed assets.

<u>Criteria</u>: 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.

<u>Cause</u>: While notified of this condition in the prior audit report, the relief association officials neglected 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 to account for the relief association's fixed assets.

<u>Effect</u>: 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.

<u>Recommendation</u>: We again 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.

Finding No. 6 – (Continued)

<u>Management's Response</u>: 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.

Finding No. 7 – Failure to Maintain Officer's Bond Coverage

<u>Condition</u>: The relief association failed to maintain bond coverage on the disbursing officer, as required by Act 84. Specifically, the relief association did not renew the officer's bond policy that expired January 10, 2007.

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.

<u>Cause</u>: Relief association officials were aware of the Act 84 provisions regarding the maintenance of officer's bond coverage; however, they did not realize the policy had expired.

<u>Effect</u>: As a result of the disbursing officer of the relief association not being bonded, the relief association's cash assets are not adequately safeguarded.

<u>Recommendation</u>: We recommend the relief association obtain officer's bond coverage in an amount greater than the maximum cash balance, as required by Act 84. For further guidance, please refer to the Auditor General's publication, MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATIONS.

<u>Management's Response</u>: Relief association management agreed with the finding and indicated they will take action to comply with the recommendation.

MONARCH VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION POTENTIAL WITHHOLD OF STATE AID

Conditions such as those reported in Finding Nos. 1, 2 and 3 may lead to a total withholding of state aid in the future unless those findings are corrected. However, such action will not be considered if sufficient documentation is immediately provided to verify compliance with this department's recommendations. Such documentation should be submitted by the volunteer firefighters' relief association to: Department of the Auditor General, Bureau of Firefighters' Relief Association Audits, Room 406 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120.

MONARCH 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	\$	11,013
Total Benefit Services	\$	11,013
	-	
Fire Services:		
Equipment purchased	\$	27,310
Equipment maintenance		1,954
Training expenses		112
Total Fire Services	\$	29,376
Administrative Services:		
Miscellaneous administrative expenses	\$	22
Total Administrative Services		22
Other Expenditures:		
Principal payments on lease-financing	\$	19,673
Interest payments on lease-financing		4,950
Undocumented expenditures		7,410
Total Other Expenditures		32,033
1		

MONARCH VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Edward G. Rendell Governor Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Monarch Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Officers:

Ms. Toni Grubbs, President

Ms. Heather Breig, Secretary

Mr. Steven Grubbs, Treasurer

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

Mr. Ronald Keller, Secretary Dunbar 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.