



**NEWPORT FIRE COMPANY NO. 1 RELIEF ASSOCIATION**

**HEREIN REFERRED TO AS:**

**NEWPORT VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION**

**BUCKS 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 Newport 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 Newport Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipality:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>
Bensalem Township	Bucks	\$70,520	\$71,147	\$76,621

BACKGROUND (Continued)

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

Newport Fire Company No. 1 Bensalem Township, PA

Mr. John R. Dott, President  
NEWPORT VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'  
RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
Bucks County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Newport 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 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 Newport 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 objective. We also tested transactions, confirmed the Newport 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 objective.

The results of our audit for the period January 1, 2005 to December 31, 2007, found, in all significant respects, the Newport 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 Newport Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the accompanying information and as of December 31, 2007, had a cash balance of \$77,263 and an investment balance with a fair value of \$146,317.

Finding – Inadequate Minutes of Meetings

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

December 9, 2008

JACK WAGNER  
Auditor General



NEWPORT VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – Inadequate Minutes of Meetings

Condition: The relief association failed to maintain detailed minutes of meetings, as required by Act 84 and the relief association bylaws. Specifically, the relief association's minutes that were provided did not adequately address all of the financial transactions which occurred during the audit period nor did they properly document the procedures executed at the meeting. As such, it was impossible to determine if the relief association's financial-related operations were actually presented, discussed, and approved by the association or whether meetings were even held in accordance with the requirements established by the association bylaws. In addition, the minutes provided by the association failed to evidence that a quorum was present before conducting relief association business.

Criteria: 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.

Article 1 of the relief association's bylaws states:

Regular meetings of this association shall be held on the last Tuesday of each month preceding the regular business meeting. Special meetings may be called by the President, or at the written request of ten members of this Association. All members must receive ample notification of any special meetings that are called. Three Directors must be present to conduct business.

In addition, Article 3 of the relief association's bylaws states, in part:

[The] Secretary shall keep in writing a true and accurate record of all proceedings of the association, and make a report of same at all regular meetings and as so directed to by the Directors.

Cause: Relief association officials neglected to maintain detailed minutes of meetings, as required by Act 84 and the relief association's bylaws. We were informed by relief association officers that the minutes provided for examination during the current audit period represented excerpts from minutes maintained from business discussed during fire company meetings. In addition, we were informed by officers of the relief association that separate meetings were not held by the relief association to conduct relief association business.

NEWPORT VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – (Continued)

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

Recommendation: We recommend the relief association officials conduct separate meetings to discuss relief association business and maintain a permanent record of all relief association meetings, as required by Act 84 and the relief association's bylaws. The minutes should include an adequate record of all financial-related transactions executed by the relief association. 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.

NEWPORT 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	\$ 42,933
Total Benefit Services	\$ 42,933
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 199,974
Equipment maintenance	28,112
Training expenses	722
Total Fire Services	\$ 228,808
Administrative Services:	
Miscellaneous administrative expenses	\$ 4,698
Total Administrative Services	\$ 4,698



NEWPORT VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Edward G. Rendell  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Newport Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Officers:

Mr. John R. Dott, President

Mr. Jeff Rastetter, Secretary

Mr. Thomas P. McCool, Treasurer

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

Mr. Joseph Szafran, Secretary  
Bensalem 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](http://www.auditorgen.state.pa.us).