



**VIGILANT HOSE COMPANY NO. 1 OF PORT VUE, PA. RELIEF FUND**

**HEREIN REFERRED TO AS:**

**VIGILANT HOSE COMPANY NO. 1 VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF  
ASSOCIATION**

**ALLEGHENY 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 Vigilant Hose Company No. 1 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 Vigilant Hose Company No. 1 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>
Port Vue Borough	Allegheny	\$18,767	\$19,004	\$19,046

BACKGROUND (Continued)

The volunteer firefighters' relief association and the affiliated fire service organization are separate, legal entities. The Vigilant Hose Company No. 1 Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association is affiliated with the following fire service organization:

Vigilant Hose Company No. 1

Mr. Thomas E. Douglass, President  
VIGILANT HOSE COMPANY NO. 1 VOLUNTEER  
FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
Allegheny County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Vigilant Hose Company No. 1 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 Vigilant Hose Company No. 1 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 Vigilant Hose Company No. 1 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 Vigilant Hose Company No. 1 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 findings discussed later in this report. The results of our tests indicated the Vigilant Hose Company No. 1 Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the accompanying information and as of December 31, 2007, had a cash balance of \$19,048 and no investments.

Finding No. 1 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –  
Insufficient Officer's Bond Coverage

Finding No. 2 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –  
Failure to Maintain a Compete and Accurate Equipment Roster

Finding No. 3 – Undocumented Expenditure

The contents of this report were discussed with the management of the Vigilant Hose Company No. 1 Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association and, where appropriate, their responses have been included in the report.

July 29, 2008

JACK WAGNER  
Auditor General



VIGILANT HOSE COMPANY NO. 1 VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDINGS

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

The Vigilant Hose Company No. 1 Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association has complied with the following prior audit finding and recommendation:

- Failure to Obtain a Federal Tax Identification Number

By obtaining a federal tax identification number and furnishing it to the financial institution in which the relief association maintains funds.

NONCOMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Vigilant Hose Company No. 1 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 –  
Insufficient Officer's Bond Coverage
- 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.

VIGILANT HOSE COMPANY NO. 1 VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 1 – 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. While the relief association officials did increase their bond coverage during the audit period, it was still insufficient. As of December 31, 2007, the relief association's bond coverage was \$10,000; however, the cash assets totaled \$19,048.

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: While notified of this condition in the prior audit report, relief association officials neglected to monitor the cash balance to ensure the officer's bond coverage was in compliance with Act 84 provisions.

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.

VIGILANT HOSE COMPANY NO. 1 VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 2 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –  
Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster

Condition: 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. While a roster of relief association owned equipment was provided for the current audit period, it was incomplete and did not indicate that an annual inventory of the equipment was conducted to account for the relief association's fixed assets. Specifically, the roster did not include all equipment items purchased nor did it reflect the unit costs of the items, the dates of purchase, the serial numbers, where applicable, the current location of the items, or supplier names. Furthermore, the roster included various types of association expenditures, such as training and insurance, rather than just equipment items purchased.

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: While notified of this condition in the prior audit report, 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.

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.

VIGILANT HOSE COMPANY NO. 1 VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 2 – (Continued)

Recommendation: 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.

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.

VIGILANT HOSE COMPANY NO. 1 VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 3 – Undocumented Expenditure

Condition: The relief association was unable to provide adequate supporting documentation for a \$1,175 expenditure made to an equipment vendor on November 7, 2007.

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 an invoice, 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.

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

Effect: Lack of supporting documentation, such as an invoice, made it impossible to determine the expenditure was made in accordance with Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8506(e).

Recommendation: We recommend the relief association provide this department with adequate supporting documentation, such as an invoice, to determine the validity of the expenditure or that the relief association be reimbursed \$1,175 for the undocumented expenditure. 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.

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.

VIGILANT HOSE COMPANY NO. 1 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	\$ 37,243
Total Benefit Services	<u>\$ 37,243</u>
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 31,327
Equipment maintenance	2,254
Training expenses	7,488
Total Fire Services	<u>\$ 41,069</u>
Administrative Services:	
Miscellaneous administrative expenses	\$ 421
Total Administrative Services	<u>\$ 421</u>
Other Expenditures:	
Undocumented expenditure	\$ 1,175
Total Other Expenditures	<u>\$ 1,175</u>

VIGILANT HOSE COMPANY NO. 1 VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Edward G. Rendell  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Vigilant Hose Company No. 1 Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Officers:

Mr. Thomas E. Douglass, President

Mr. Timothy Wilson, Secretary

Mr. Vincent McGinty, Treasurer

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

Ms. Joann M. Gubanic, Secretary  
Port Vue 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).