



**WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT RELIEF
ASSOCIATION**

HEREIN REFERRED TO AS:

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION

CLARION COUNTY

COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD

JANUARY 1, 2004 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 Washington Township 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 Washington Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipalities:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>
Knox Township	Clarion	\$ 2,623	\$ 2,909	\$ 2,936	\$ 2,951
Washington Township	Clarion	\$10,047	\$ 11,103	\$ 11,239	\$11,184

BACKGROUND (Continued)

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

Washington Township Volunteer Fire Department

Mr. Michael D. Buzard, President
WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER
FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
Clarion County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Washington Township 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, 2004 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 finding 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 Washington Township 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 Washington Township 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, 2004 to December 31, 2007, found, in all significant respects, the Washington Township 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 Washington Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the accompanying information and as of December 31, 2007, had a cash balance of \$11,813 and no investments.

Finding – Unauthorized Expenditure

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

February 15, 2008

JACK WAGNER
Auditor General

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDING

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

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

- Failure to Obtain a Pennsylvania Sales Tax Exemption Number

By obtaining a state sales tax exemption number and furnishing this number to all vendors from which the relief association purchases equipment.

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – Unauthorized Expenditure

Condition: On June 1, 2004, the relief association expended \$250 for a premium fire company officer's bond insurance policy, which is not authorized by Act 84. While certain portions of the total insurance premiums paid by the relief association were for authorized insurance, the disbursements for the premiums on the fire company's bond policy were not for the purpose of insuring the relief association or its members.

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." This type of insurance coverage has been deemed by DCED to not qualify under Act 84.

Cause: Relief association officials were unaware that the expenditure for the fire company treasurer's bond was not authorized by Act 84.

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – (Continued)

Effect: As a result of this improper expenditure, relief association funds were not available for investment purposes or to pay for expenditures authorized by Act 84.

However, subsequent to the audit exit conference, on February 19, 2008, after bringing this matter to the relief association's attention, the relief association received reimbursement from the affiliated fire company, in the amount of \$250, for the unauthorized expenditure.

Recommendation: We recommend the 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.

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.

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
 ACCOMPANYING EXPENDITURE INFORMATION
 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2004 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	\$ 550
Tokens of sympathy and goodwill	110
Total Benefit Services	\$ 660
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 41,240
Equipment maintenance	12,196
Training expenses	2,350
Fire prevention materials	1,693
Total Fire Services	\$ 57,479
Administrative Services:	
Officer compensation	\$ 1,440
Other administrative expenses	46
Total Administrative Services	\$ 1,486

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Edward G. Rendell
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Washington Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Officers:

Mr. Michael D. Buzard, President

Mr. Joseph A. Carulli, Secretary

Mr. Douglas J. Smerkar, Treasurer

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

Ms. Jacqui Blose, Secretary
Knox Township

Ms. Jacqui Blose, Secretary
Washington 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.