

# COMPLIANCE AUDIT

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## Ridge Fireman's Relief Association

Chester County, Pennsylvania  
For the Period  
January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2019

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January 2021



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of the Auditor General

Eugene A. DePasquale • Auditor General



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of the Auditor General  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0018  
Facebook: Pennsylvania Auditor General  
Twitter: @PAAuditorGen  
www.PaAuditor.gov

EUGENE A. DePASQUALE  
AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. Ray Kolb, President  
Ridge Fireman's Relief Association  
Chester County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Ridge Fireman's Relief Association (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, as consolidated by the Act of November 23, 2010 (P.L. 1181, No. 118), at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7411 *et seq.*, for the period January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2019.

The objective of the audit was to determine if the relief association complied with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures as they relate to the receipt of state aid and the expenditure of relief association funds. Our audit was limited to the areas related to the objective identified above and was not, nor was it required to be, conducted in accordance with Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

Relief association officers are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the relief association's administration of state aid and accumulated relief funds complies with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures, including the safeguarding of assets. Relief association officers are responsible for complying with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures. It is our responsibility to perform procedures to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to the extent necessary to satisfy the audit objective. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our conclusions.

We were not able to obtain copies of canceled or imaged checks from the relief association. While the relief association provided bank statements, the relief association failed to provide copies of canceled or imaged checks. Without copies of canceled or imaged checks, we were not able to determine whether two relief association officers authorized and signed the checks as required by Act 118.

Based on our audit procedures, we conclude that, except for the effects, if any, of the matter described in the preceding paragraph, for the period January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2019, the relief association, in all significant respects, complied with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures as they relate to the receipt of state aid and the expenditure of relief association funds.

The contents of this report were discussed with the management of the relief association. We would like to thank the relief association officials for the cooperation extended to us during the conduct of the audit.

January 11, 2021



EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE  
Auditor General

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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, as consolidated by the Act of November 23, 2010, (P.L. 1181, No. 118), at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7411 *et seq.*, 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 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 118 governs the overall operation of volunteer firefighters' relief associations. Relief association bylaws define the specific operational procedures by which relief associations conduct business. To fulfill its primary purpose, Act 118 authorizes specific types of expenditures and prescribes appropriate volunteer firefighters' relief association investment options. Within the parameters established by Act 118, it is the responsibility of relief associations 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 that is or are recognized as providing the service to the municipality.

**BACKGROUND – (Continued)**

The relief association was allocated state aid from the following municipalities:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>
East Coventry Township	Chester	\$44,344	\$40,339	\$43,725
East Vincent Township	Chester	\$21,413	\$19,777	\$21,744
South Coventry Township	Chester	\$18,867	\$17,144	\$18,686
Warwick Township	Chester	\$ 2,100	\$ 1,904	\$ 2,037
West Vincent Township	Chester	\$ 7,256	\$ 6,722	\$ 7,701

Based on the relief association's records, its total cash and investments as of December 31, 2019 were \$1,031,382, as illustrated below:

Cash	\$ 142,612
Fair Value of Investments	<u>888,770</u>
Total Cash and Investments	<u><u>\$ 1,031,382</u></u>

## BACKGROUND – (Continued)

Based on the relief association’s records, its total expenditures for the period January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2019 were \$345,027, as noted below. The accuracy of these expenditures was evaluated as part of the Department’s audit to conclude on the relief association’s compliance with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures as they relate to the receipt of state aid and the expenditure of relief association funds.<sup>1</sup> **The scope of the Department’s audit does not include the issuance of an opinion on the accuracy of these amounts.**

### Expenditures:

Benefit Services:	
Insurance premiums	\$ 51,054
Relief benefits	6,858
Tokens of sympathy and goodwill	4,799
Total Benefit Services	<u>\$ 62,711</u>
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 107,301
Equipment maintenance	31,688
Training expenses	13,992
Fire prevention materials	3,774
Total Fire Services	<u>\$ 156,755</u>
Administrative Services:	
Other administrative expenses**	\$ 14,605
Bond premiums	300
Total Administrative Services	<u>\$ 14,905</u>
Total Investments Purchased	<u>\$ 105,000</u>
Other Expenditures:	
Miscellaneous expenditure*	<u>\$ 5,656</u>
Total Expenditures	<u><u>\$ 345,027</u></u>

\* The miscellaneous expenditure represents a reimbursement to the affiliated fire company to correct an erroneous deposit made into a relief association account on October 30, 2018.

\*\* A portion of the other administrative expenditures represents rent paid to the affiliated fire company in the amount of \$10,800.

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<sup>1</sup> Accuracy was evaluated for a selection of transactions based on dollar amount, category, and/or random selection.

## **BACKGROUND – (Continued)**

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

Ridge Fire Co. #1



RIDGE FIREMAN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

**The Honorable Tom W. Wolf**  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Ridge Fireman's Relief Association Governing Body:

**Mr. Ray Kolb**  
President

**Mr. Thomas M. Mowrer**  
Vice President

**Mr. David Burt**  
Secretary

**Mr. David Proffitt**  
Treasurer

**Mr. Frank Gunson**  
Trustee

**Mr. Jack Clark**  
Trustee

**Mr. Douglas Kasznay**  
Trustee

**Mr. Gary Moore**  
Trustee

**Mr. Richard Hendrick**  
Trustee

RIDGE FIREMAN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

The following municipalities allocated foreign fire insurance tax monies to this relief association and received a copy of this report:

**Mr. David G. Kraynik**  
Secretary  
East Coventry Township

**Ms. Catherine Ricardo**  
Secretary  
East Vincent Township

**Ms. Amanda Shaner**  
Secretary  
South Coventry Township

**Ms. Joan Grimley**  
Secretary  
Warwick Township

**Ms. Kathy Shillenn**  
Secretary  
West Vincent Township

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at [www.PaAuditor.gov](http://www.PaAuditor.gov). Media questions about the report can be directed to the Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General, Office of Communications, 229 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120; via email to: [news@PaAuditor.gov](mailto:news@PaAuditor.gov).