



**FAIRVIEW BOROUGH AND TOWNSHIP FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION**

**HEREIN REFERRED TO AS:**

**FAIRVIEW BOROUGH & TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF  
ASSOCIATION**

**ERIE COUNTY**

**COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT**

**FOR THE PERIOD**

**JANUARY 1, 2006 TO DECEMBER 31, 2008**



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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 Fairview Borough & 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 Fairview Borough & Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipality:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>
Fairview Township	Erie	\$59,429	\$59,180	\$60,981

BACKGROUND (Continued)

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

Fairview Firemen's Relief Association

Mr. David Duberow, President  
FAIRVIEW BOROUGH & TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER  
FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
Erie County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Fairview Borough & 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, 2006 to December 31, 2008.

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 Fairview Borough & 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 objective. We also tested transactions,

confirmed the Fairview Borough & Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's investment balance and the cash balance as of December 31, 2008, 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, 2006 to December 31, 2008, found, in all significant respects, the Fairview Borough & 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 findings discussed later in this report. The results of our tests indicated the Fairview Borough & Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the accompanying information and as of December 31, 2008, had a cash balance of \$163,915 and an investment balance with a fair value of \$94,794.

Finding No. 1 – Unauthorized Expenditure

Finding No. 2 – Undocumented Expenditure

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

March 9, 2009

JACK WAGNER  
Auditor General



FAIRVIEW BOROUGH & TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 1 – Unauthorized Expenditure

Condition: The relief association expended \$1,435 for the premium on the fire company officer's bond policy, which is not authorized by Act 84. While \$33,421 of the total insurance premiums paid by the relief association were for authorized insurance, the \$1,435 disbursement for the premium on the fire company's bond policy was not for the purpose of insuring the relief association or its members.

Criteria: Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8506(e)(1) states:

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

- (1) To pay for such normal and reasonable running expenses as may be appropriate to the businesslike conduct of its affairs including legal fees and including but not by way of limitation the rental or purchase of offices, the payment of reasonable compensation of any needed employees, and the purchase of office equipment and supplies.

Because 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." The fire company officer's bond policy has been deemed by DCED to not qualify as an insurance benefit that directly covers the volunteer firefighters' relief association or its members; consequently, this disbursement is not authorized under Act 84.

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

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.

Recommendation: We recommend the relief association be reimbursed \$1,435 for the unauthorized expenditure 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.

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.

FAIRVIEW BOROUGH & TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 2 – Undocumented Expenditure

Condition: The relief association was unable to provide adequate supporting documentation for a \$300 expenditure made to a relief association member on March 4, 2008.

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 or training certificate, 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 or training certificate, made it impossible to determine if 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 or training certificate, to determine the validity of the expenditure or that the relief association be reimbursed \$300 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.

FAIRVIEW BOROUGH & TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
 ACCOMPANYING EXPENDITURE INFORMATION  
 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2006 TO DECEMBER 31, 2008

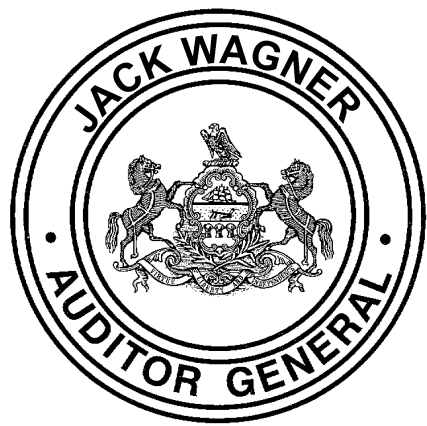
Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8502(1) states, in part, that:

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	\$ 34,856
Death benefits	1,000
Relief benefits	13,024
Tokens of sympathy and goodwill	818
Total Benefit Services	\$ 49,698
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 55,768
Equipment maintenance	2,072
Training expenses	17,447
Fire prevention materials	600
Total Fire Services	\$ 75,887
Administrative Services:	
Miscellaneous administrative expenses	\$ 216
Total Administrative Services	\$ 216
Total Investments Purchased	\$ 135,000
Other Expenditures:	
Undocumented expenditure	\$ 300
Total Other Expenditures	\$ 300



FAIRVIEW BOROUGH & 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

Fairview Borough & Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Officers:

Mr. David Duberow, President

Ms. Michelle Rodrigues, Secretary

Mr. Brian Mesaros, Treasurer

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

Ms. Barbara Partchey, Secretary  
Fairview 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).