



HARFORD VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY RELIEF ASSOCIATION

HEREIN REFERRED TO AS:

HARFORD VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION

SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY

COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD

JANUARY 1, 2004 TO DECEMBER 31, 2006



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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 Harford 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 Harford 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>
Gibson Township	Susquehanna	\$2,217	\$2,452	\$2,482
Harford Township	Susquehanna	\$7,364	\$8,287	\$8,466
Lenox Township	Susquehanna	\$2,583	\$2,849	\$2,880

BACKGROUND (Continued)

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

Harford Volunteer Fire Company

Mr. Daniel Federici, President
HARFORD VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
Susquehanna County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Harford 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, 2006. 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.

The Department of the Auditor General (Department) is mandated by state statute to calculate state aid provided to volunteer firefighters' relief associations and to audit volunteer firefighters' relief associations having received such aid. An administrative unit of the Department's Comptroller's Office that is not involved in the audit process calculates state aid and submits requests to the Commonwealth's Treasury Department for the disbursement of state aid to the municipality. The Department has implemented procedures to ensure that Department audit personnel are not directly involved in the calculation and disbursement processes. The Department's mandatory responsibilities are being disclosed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*.

Volunteer firefighters' relief association officers are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the Harford 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 Harford Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's cash balance as of December 31, 2006, with the custodian of the funds, and interviewed selected officials to the extent necessary to satisfy the audit objectives.

The results of our audit found that for the period January 1, 2004 to December 31, 2006, the Harford Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the accompanying information and as of December 31, 2006, had a cash balance of \$13,664 and no investments. Additionally, the results of our tests indicated that, in all significant respects, the Harford Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association received and expended state aid and accumulated relief association funds in compliance with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws and administrative procedures, except as noted in the following finding discussed later in this report:

Finding – Inadequate Minutes of Meetings

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

June 21, 2007

JACK WAGNER
Auditor General

HARFORD VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDINGS

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Harford Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association has complied with the following prior audit recommendations:

- Undocumented Expenditure

By receiving reimbursement of \$474 for the undocumented expenditure that was made in the prior financial period.

- Failure to Perform an Annual Equipment Inventory

By performing and documenting an inventory of all operable equipment owned.

- Failure to Maintain Minutes of Meetings

By maintaining minutes of relief association meetings; however, those minutes were inadequate (see finding).

HARFORD VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding – Inadequate Minutes of Meetings

Condition: The relief association failed to maintain detailed minutes of meetings, as required by Act 84. Specifically, the relief association's minutes did not address all of the financial-related transactions that occurred during the period under review.

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.

Cause: Relief association officials were unaware that maintaining detailed minutes of meetings was required by Act 84.

Effect: The failure to maintain 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 maintain detailed minutes of meetings, including all financial-related business conducted 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.

HARFORD VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
 ACCOMPANYING EXPENDITURE INFORMATION
 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2004 TO DECEMBER 31, 2006

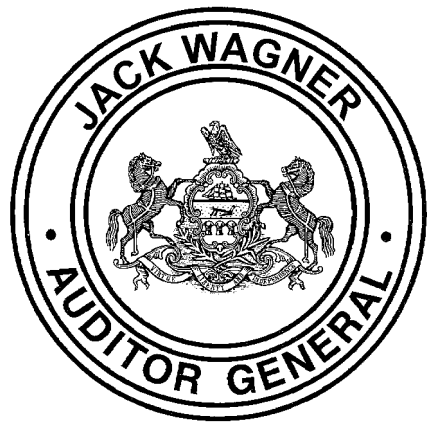
Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8502(1) states, in part, that:

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	\$ 3,592
Relief benefits	740
Total Benefit Services	\$ 4,332
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 41,026
Equipment maintenance	2,701
Training expenses	2,008
Total Fire Services	\$ 45,735
Administrative Services:	
Miscellaneous administrative expenses	411
Total Administrative Services	\$ 411



HARFORD VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Edward G. Rendell
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Harford Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Officers:

Mr. Daniel Federici, President

Ms. Susan Chidester, Secretary

Ms. Bonnie Phelps, Treasurer

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

Ms. Cindy Bartkus, Secretary
Gibson Township

Ms. Sue A. Furney, Secretary
Harford Township

Ms. Sharon Depew, Secretary
Lenox 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.