

# COMPLIANCE AUDIT

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## Mountville Fire Company No. 1 Firemen's Relief Association Lancaster County, Pennsylvania For the Period January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2020

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January 2022



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of the Auditor General

Timothy L. DeFoor • Auditor General



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

TIMOTHY L. DEFOOR  
AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. Paul M. Rossi, President  
Mountville Fire Company No. 1  
Firemen's Relief Association  
Lancaster County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Mountville Fire Company No. 1 Firemen's Relief Association (relief association) for the period January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2020. The audit was conducted pursuant to authority derived from Article VIII, Section 10 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; Section 403 of The Fiscal Code, 72 P.S. § 403; and the Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Act, 35 Pa.C.S. § 7411 *et seq.* ("VFRA Act"), as most recently amended by Act 91 of 2020.

The objectives of the audit were:

1. To determine if the relief association took appropriate corrective action to address the findings contained in our prior audit report.
2. 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 objectives 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 objectives. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our conclusions.

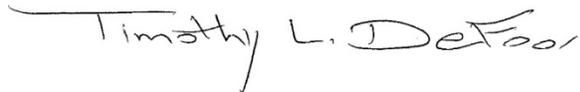
Based on our audit procedures, we conclude that, for the period January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2020:

- The relief association took appropriate corrective action to address three of the five findings contained in our prior audit report. However, the relief association failed to take appropriate corrective action to address two remaining findings contained in our prior audit report, as listed below and discussed in the Status of Prior Findings section of this report.
- 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, except as noted in the findings listed below and discussed later in this report.

Finding No. 1 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –  
Undocumented Expenditures

Finding No. 2 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Failure  
To Maintain A Complete And Accurate Equipment Roster

The contents of this report were discussed with the management of the relief association and, where appropriate, their responses have been included in the report. We would like to thank the relief association officials for the cooperation extended to us during the conduct of the audit.



Timothy L. DeFoor  
Auditor General  
December 27, 2021

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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<sup>1</sup>, and the Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Act<sup>2</sup> ("VFRA Act"), 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<sup>3</sup> (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.

The VFRA Act 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, the VFRA Act authorizes specific types of expenditures and prescribes appropriate volunteer firefighters' relief association investment options. Within the parameters established by the VFRA Act, 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 72 P.S. § 403 (as last amended by Act 44 of 2017).

<sup>2</sup> 35 Pa.C.S. § 7411 *et seq.* See specifically, 35 Pa.C.S. § 7418 (amended by Act 91 of 2020).

<sup>3</sup> 53 P.S. § 895.701 *et seq.* (Act 205 of 1984, as amended by Act 119 of 1990).

**BACKGROUND – (Continued)**

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

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
Mountville Borough	Lancaster	\$13,744	\$14,852	\$15,000
West Hempfield Township	Lancaster	\$10,971	\$12,045	\$12,147

Based on the relief association’s records, its total cash as of December 31, 2020 was \$56,633, as illustrated below:

Cash	<u>\$ 56,633</u>
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Based on the relief association’s records, its total expenditures for the period January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2020 were \$92,402, 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>4</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	\$ 19,455
Tokens of sympathy and goodwill	<u>72</u>
Total Benefit Services	<u>\$ 19,527</u>
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 37,811
Equipment maintenance	23,285
Training expenses	<u>11,579</u>
Total Fire Services	<u>\$ 72,675</u>
Administrative Services:	
Bond premiums	<u>\$ 200</u>
Total Expenditures	<u>\$ 92,402</u>

<sup>4</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:

Mountville Volunteer Fire Company No. 1

MOUNTVILLE FIRE COMPANY NO. 1 FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDINGS

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The relief association has complied with three of the five prior audit findings and recommendations, as follows:

- Duplicate Payment

By receiving reimbursement of \$494 in the form of credits to subsequent invoices from the vendor for the duplicate payment.

- Unsecured Loan

By securing the fire company loan with a lien on a fire company owned truck.

- Failure To Secure Ownership Interest In Jointly Purchased Vehicle

By executing a written formal agreement with the affiliated fire company that adequately secures its proportional ownership interest in the jointly purchased vehicle.

NONCOMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The relief association has not complied with two of the five prior audit findings. The findings are noted below and discussed in detail in the Findings and Recommendations section of this report:

- Undocumented Expenditures

Although the relief association provided adequate supporting documentation for a portion of the prior audit undocumented expenditures in the amount of \$1,032, the relief association was unable to provide adequate supporting documentation or reimbursement for the remaining prior audit undocumented expenditures during the current audit period as further disclosed in Finding No. 1 of this report.

- Failure To Maintain A Complete And Accurate Equipment Roster

We are concerned by the relief association's failure to correct these previously reported audit findings. The relief association management should strive to implement the recommendations and corrective actions noted in this audit report.

MOUNTVILLE FIRE COMPANY NO. 1 FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Finding No. 1 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Undocumented Expenditures**

Condition: Although the relief association provided adequate supporting documentation for a portion of the prior audit undocumented expenditures in the amount of \$1,032, the relief association failed to provide adequate supporting documentation or reimbursement for the remaining \$83 of prior audit undocumented expenditures made to the affiliated fire company on June 13, 2016, and the relief association officials did not take corrective action to address the remaining undocumented expenditures prior to the current audit period ending December 31, 2020.

Criteria: Section 7418(a) of the VFRA Act states:

The Office of Auditor General shall have the power and its duty shall be to audit the accounts and records of every volunteer firefighters' relief association receiving 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 far as may be necessary to satisfy the Auditor General that the money received was or is being expended for no purpose other than that authorized by this subchapter. Copies of all audits shall be furnished to the Governor.

Prudent business practice dictates that supporting documentation be maintained to evidence the propriety of all financial transactions.

Cause: The relief association officials stated that they thought the un-itemized receipts that they maintained were sufficient.

Effect: Lack of supporting documentation, such as invoices, itemized receipts and detailed minutes of meetings, made it impossible to determine if the expenditures were made in accordance with Section 7416(f) of the VFRA Act. In addition, the failure to maintain adequate supporting documentation for relief association expenditures can lead to an increased risk of errors occurring and funds being misappropriated.

Recommendation: We recommend that the relief association officials provide this department with adequate supporting documentation, such as invoices and/or itemized receipts, to ensure the propriety of the expenditures or that the relief association be reimbursed \$83 for the undocumented expenditures. 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.

MOUNTVILLE FIRE COMPANY NO. 1 FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Finding No. 1 – (Continued)**

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.

Auditor's Conclusion: We are concerned by the relief association's failure to correct this previously reported audit finding and strongly encourage timely implementation of the recommendation noted in this audit report.

**Finding No. 2 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Failure To Maintain A Complete And Accurate Equipment Roster**

Condition: The relief association failed to maintain a complete and accurate roster of equipment owned by the relief association. Although a listing of relief association owned equipment was provided during the current audit period, it was incomplete because it did not contain the names of suppliers (vendors), dates of purchase, and cost of equipment to accurately identify equipment owned by the relief association. As such, it was impossible to determine if all equipment purchased during the audit period in the amount of \$37,811 was recorded. In addition, there was no indication that a physical inventory of equipment was conducted on an annual basis to account for the equipment owned by the relief association.

A similar condition was noted in our prior audit report.

Criteria: Prudent business practice dictates that 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 equipment. A cumulative equipment roster of all relief association equipment should include all of the following:

- Types of equipment purchased
- Dates of purchase
- Unit costs
- Names of suppliers
- Serial numbers, if applicable
- Current locations of items
- Final dispositions of sold or damaged equipment
- Evidence of the performance and results of an annual physical inventory

MOUNTVILLE FIRE COMPANY NO. 1 FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Finding No. 2 – (Continued)**

Cause: The relief association officials stated that the parties responsible for the equipment roster were unaware of all the requirements for the equipment roster.

Effect: The continued 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 physical inventory of equipment prevents adequate accountability for, and safeguarding of, relief association equipment.

Recommendation: We again recommend that the relief association officials maintain a cumulative equipment roster of all equipment owned by the relief association. Furthermore, the relief association should ensure it performs an annual physical inventory of all operable equipment and that the completion of 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.

Auditor's Conclusion: We are concerned by the relief association's failure to correct this previously reported audit finding and strongly encourage timely implementation of the recommendation noted in this audit report.

MOUNTVILLE FIRE COMPANY NO. 1 FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

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

Mountville Fire Company No. 1 Firemen's Relief Association Governing Body:

**Mr. Paul M. Rossi**  
President

**Ms. Amanda Dicely**  
Vice President

**Mr. Michael P. Rossi**  
Secretary

**Mr. Joseph S. Iacono**  
Treasurer/Trustee

**Mr. Dean R. Gantz, Jr.**  
Trustee

**Mr. Andrew M. Kalbach**  
Trustee

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

**Mr. Derrick Millhouse**  
Secretary  
Mountville Borough

**Mr. Andrew Stern**  
Secretary  
West Hempfield Township

MOUNTVILLE FIRE COMPANY NO. 1 FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

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