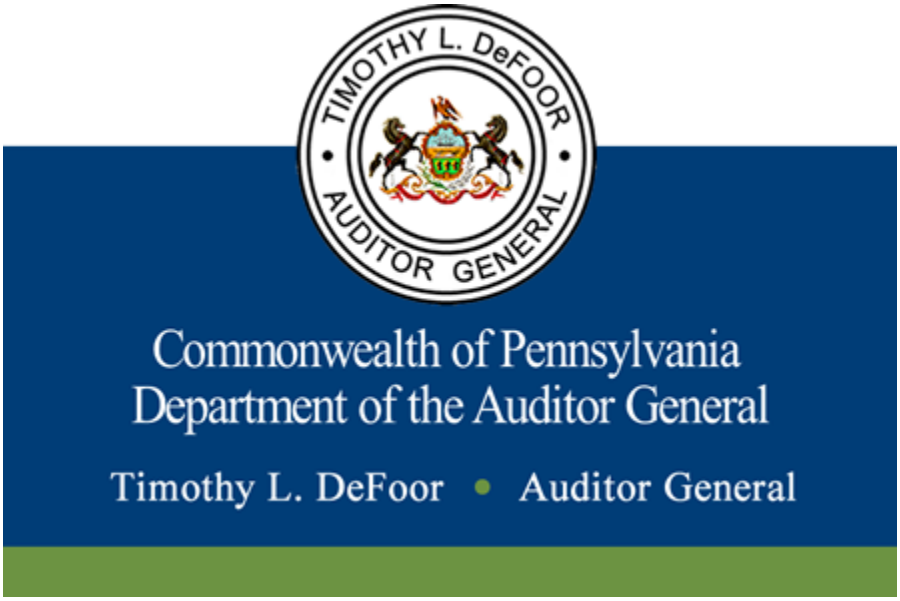
# LIMITED PROCEDURES ENGAGEMENT

# Bernville Volunteer Firefighters Relief Association

## Berks County, Pennsylvania

For the Period
January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2024

November 2025



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. Joseph Stoudt, President
Bernville Volunteer Firefighters
Relief Association
Berks County

We have conducted a Limited Procedures Engagement (LPE) of the Bernville Volunteer Firefighters Relief Association (relief association) for the period January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2024. The LPE 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 ("VFRA Act"), see 35 Pa.C.S. § 7418.

The objectives of the LPE were to determine if the relief association expended funds for authorized purposes and received and deposited state aid funds per the requirements of the VFRA Act and Act 205 of 1984. The scope of our engagement primarily focused on tests of documentary evidence supporting the financial transactions recorded by the relief association for a selection of transactions occurring within the LPE period. The procedures we performed are summarized below.

- Determined the number and amount of expenditures made by the relief association by reviewing its accounting journals, ledgers, and custodial accounts, as applicable. The relief association expended $63,141 during the LPE period.
- Tested expenditure transactions made during the LPE period totaling $27,956 by reviewing documentation including bank statements, cancelled checks, invoices, receipts, and meeting minutes to determine if expenditures were made in accordance with state law, and where applicable, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures.
- Interviewed relief association officials concerning relief association operations and transactions.
- Verified that the correct amount of state aid was timely deposited into the relief association's account by reviewing deposit slips, state aid forms, and/or bank statements.

The LPE was not, nor was it required to be, conducted in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

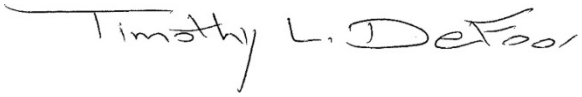
Relief association officers are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the relief association's administration of state aid and accumulated relief association funds complies with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative 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 engagement objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis to support our LPE results.

Based on the results of the procedures performed during our LPE, nothing came to our attention indicating that the relief association expended funds in an unauthorized manner or failed to deposit state aid funds appropriately.

The accompanying schedules included with the background information are presented for purposes of additional analysis. The schedules are not the subject of this engagement; however, certain line items are covered within the scope of the engagement procedures and resulting conclusion.

Our determination to perform an LPE for this engagement period does not preclude the Department from conducting a compliance audit of the relief association in subsequent periods. The relief association should continue to maintain comprehensive documentation.

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



Timothy L. DeFoor
Auditor General
November 4, 2025

CONTENTS

Page

Background ..... 1

Report Distribution List ..... 4

## BACKGROUND

Pursuant to Article VIII, Section 10 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania,[1] Section 403 of The Fiscal Code,[2] and the Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Act ("VFRA Act"),[3] 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, commonly referred to as Act 205,[4] 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 relief association officers therefore have a responsibility to the public to conduct the relief association's financial affairs in a businesslike manner and to maintain sufficient financial records to support the propriety of all relief association transactions. Volunteer firefighters' relief association officers are also responsible for ensuring that the relief 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.

[1] Pa. Const. Art. VIII § 10.
[2] 72 P.S. § 403.
[3] 35 Pa.C.S. § 7411 *et seq*.
[4] 53 P.S. § 895.701 *et seq.*

## BACKGROUND – (Continued)

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

| Municipality | County | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bernville Borough | Berks | $4,636 | $4,822 | $4,883 |
| Jefferson Township | Berks | $9,000 | $9,000 | $9,000 |
| North Heidelberg Township | Berks | $3,320 | $3,210 | $3,249 |
| Penn Township | Berks | $7,546 | $7,451 | $7,613 |

Based on the relief association's records, its total cash as of December 31, 2024, was $39,844, as illustrated below:

| | |
|---|---|
| Cash | $ 39,844 |

Based on the relief association's records, its total expenditures for the period January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2024, were $63,141, as noted below:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Expenditures: | | |
| Benefit Services: | | |
| Insurance premiums | $ | 17,277 |
| Fire Services: | | |
| Equipment purchased | $ | 19,581 |
| Equipment maintenance | | 8,766 |
| Training expenses | | 16,286 |
| Fire prevention materials | | 207 |
| Total Fire Services | $ | 44,840 |
| Administrative Services: | | |
| Bond premiums | $ | 384 |
| Other administrative expenses | | 640 |
| Total Administrative Services | $ | 1,024 |
| Total Expenditures | $ | 63,141 |

## 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:

Bernville Community Fire Company No. 1

BERNVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS RELIEF ASSOCIATION
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

**The Honorable Joshua D. Shapiro**
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Bernville Volunteer Firefighters Relief Association Governing Body:

**Mr. Joseph Stoudt**
President

**Mr. Kevin Martin**
Vice President

**Ms. Kristy Stoudt**
Secretary

**Mr. Jeffrey Moyer**
Treasurer

**Mr. Brian Etchberger**
Trustee

**Mr. Jeremy Nutter**
Trustee

**Mr. Joshua Paul**
Trustee

BERNVILLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS 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:

**Ms. Brenda Strunk**
Secretary
Bernville Borough

**Ms. Lori A. Deck**
Secretary
Jefferson Township

**Ms. Tanya Taatjes**
Secretary
North Heidelberg Township

**Ms. Christy Flaherty**
Secretary
Penn Township

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at 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.