

COMPLIANCE AUDIT

Greenfield Township Volunteer Fire Company Relief Association Erie County, Pennsylvania For the Period January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2024

April 2026



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General

Timothy L. DeFoor • Auditor General



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TIMOTHY L. DEFOOR
AUDITOR GENERAL

Ms. Heather Walk, President
Greenfield Township Volunteer Fire
Company Relief Association
Erie County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Greenfield Township Volunteer Fire Company Relief Association (relief association) for the period January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2024. 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 ("VFRA Act"), see 35 Pa.C.S. § 7418.

The objectives of the audit were:

1. To determine if the relief association took appropriate corrective action to address the finding 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.

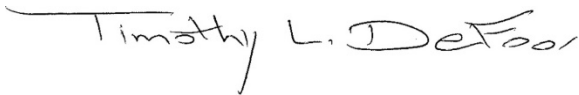
Relief association officers are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the relief association's administration of state aid and accumulated relief association funds complies with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative 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 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, 2023, to December 31, 2024:

- The relief association took appropriate corrective action to address the finding contained in our prior audit 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 finding listed below and discussed later in this report.

Finding – Unauthorized Expenditures

The contents of this report were discussed with the management of the relief association and, where appropriate, their response has 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
February 23, 2026

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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 municipality:

| Municipality | County | 2023 | 2024 |
|---------------------|--------|----------|----------|
| Greenfield Township | Erie | \$11,161 | \$11,347 |

Based on the relief association’s records, its total cash as of December 31, 2024, was \$43,115.

Based on the relief association’s records, its total expenditures for the period January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2024, were \$20,856, 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.⁵ **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 | \$ 9,867 |
| Fire Services: | |
| Training expenses | \$ 6,375 |
| Administrative Services: | |
| Bond premiums | \$ 263 |
| Other administrative expenses | 62 |
| Total Administrative Services | \$ 325 |
| Other Expenditures: | |
| Unauthorized expenditures – See Finding | \$ 4,289 |
| Total Expenditures | \$ 20,856 |

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:

Greenfield Township Volunteer Fire Company

⁵ Accuracy was evaluated for a selection of transactions based on dollar amount, category, and/or random selection.

GREENFIELD TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY RELIEF ASSOCIATION
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDING

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

The relief association has complied with the prior audit finding and recommendation, as follows:

- Untimely Deposit Of State Aid

By timely depositing all state aid received.

GREENFIELD TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – Unauthorized Expenditures

Condition: During the current audit period, the relief association incurred an expenditure of \$4,289 for commercial insurance package premiums of the affiliated fire company.

In addition, during the post audit period, the relief association incurred an expenditure of \$486 for the purchase of body cameras.

These expenditures are not authorized under the VFRA Act.

Criteria: Section 7416(f) of the VFRA Act states:

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

- (2) To purchase contracts of insurance which, at a minimum, shall afford financial assistance to active members of the fire service represented by the association against losses due to injury suffered in the fire service and may also provide, in the order named: (i) for payments to the surviving spouse or other dependents of a member in the event of the member's death; (ii) for protection of active firefighters against disease; (iii) for replacement or purchase of prosthetic devices such as visual aids, hearing aids, dentures, braces, crutches and the like, where those devices have been lost or damaged while the owner was engaged in the fire service or where the need for those devices arose because of functional impairment attributable to participation in the fire service; (iv) for repair or replacement, if necessary, of articles of clothing or pocket pagers damaged or lost in the course of participation in the fire service; and (v) for disability incurred after service for a minimum of 20 years as a volunteer firefighter.

- (8) To contribute to or to purchase contracts of insurance which will contribute to the cost of rehabilitating and retraining volunteer firefighters who, by reason of their participation in the fire service, have suffered a major impairment of the ability to continue their vocation.

- (11) To purchase safeguards for preserving life, health and safety of volunteer firefighters to ensure their availability to participate in the volunteer fire service, including necessary training.

GREENFIELD TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – (Continued)

In addition, Section 7418(b) of the VFRA Act states:

- (b) Findings -- If the Auditor General finds that money received by a volunteer firefighters' relief association has been expended for a purpose other than one authorized by this subchapter, the commissioner, upon receiving notice of the finding from the auditor general, shall decline to approve payment to the volunteer firefighters' relief association until the improperly expended amount has been reimbursed to the relief association fund.

Costs associated with the payment of the affiliated fire company commercial insurance package premiums and the purchase of body cameras do not qualify as authorized volunteer firefighters' relief association expenditures; consequently, these expenditures are not authorized under the VFRA Act.

Cause: Relief association officials stated that the insurance payments were paid by the treasurer in error and the relief association was not aware that the purchase of body cameras was unauthorized.

Effect: As a result of the unauthorized expenditures, relief association funds were not available for investment purposes or for expenditures authorized by the VFRA Act. In addition, because of stipulations within the VFRA Act, failure to obtain reimbursement of the unauthorized expenditure may result in a withholding of future state aid allocations until the monies related to the unauthorized expenditures identified in the finding have been reimbursed to the relief association.

Recommendation: We recommend that the relief association be reimbursed \$4,289 for the current audit period unauthorized expenditure and \$486 for the post-audit period unauthorized expenditure. and that relief association officials become familiar with Section 7416(f) of the VFRA Act 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 Response: Relief association management agreed with the finding as presented at the audit exit conference and, as a result of our audit, the relief association received a reimbursement of \$4,775 from the affiliated fire company.

Auditor's Conclusion: We reviewed documentation verifying the receipt and deposit of the \$4,775 reimbursement received from the affiliated fire company. Compliance with authorized expenditures made during the next audit period will be subject to verification.

GREENFIELD TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY RELIEF ASSOCIATION
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Joshua D. Shapiro
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Greenfield Township Volunteer Fire Company Relief Association Governing Body:

Ms. Heather Walk
President

Ms. Julia Davis
Vice President

Ms. Mandy Hedlund
Secretary

Ms. Darcy Snyder
Treasurer

Ms. Ashley Barnett
Assistant Secretary

Ms. Amy Heyer
Assistant Treasurer

A report was also distributed to the following municipality, which allocated foreign fire insurance tax monies to this relief association:

Ms. Renee Wagner
Secretary
Greenfield 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.