

# COMPLIANCE AUDIT

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## West Mahanoy Township Relief Association Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania For the Period January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019

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April 2020



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of the Auditor General

Eugene A. DePasquale • Auditor General



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**EUGENE A. DePASQUALE  
AUDITOR GENERAL**

Mr. Christopher Miscannon, President  
West Mahanoy Township Relief Association  
Schuylkill County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the West Mahanoy Township Relief Association (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, as consolidated by the Act of November 23, 2010 (P.L. 1181, No. 118), at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7411 *et seq.*, for the period January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019.

The objective of the audit was 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 objective identified above and was not required to be and was not 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 objective. 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, 2019, 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 – Inadequate Minutes Of Meetings

The supplementary financial information contained in this report is presented for purposes of additional disclosure and analysis. We performed only limited procedures on the supplementary financial information and, accordingly, express no form of assurance on it.

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.

April 10, 2020



EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE  
Auditor General

## CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Background .....	1
Finding and Recommendation:	
Finding – Inadequate Minutes Of Meetings.....	3
Supplementary Financial Information .....	5
Report Distribution List .....	7

## 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, as consolidated by the Act of November 23, 2010, (P.L. 1181, No. 118), at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7411 *et seq.*, 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 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 118 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, Act 118 authorizes specific types of expenditures and prescribes appropriate volunteer firefighters' relief association investment options. Within the parameters established by Act 118, 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.

**BACKGROUND – (Continued)**

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

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>
West Mahanoy Township	Schuylkill	\$11,495	\$12,434

The volunteer firefighters’ relief association and the affiliated fire service organizations are separate, legal entities. The relief association is affiliated with the following fire service organizations:

Altamont Fire Company

Shenandoah Heights Fire Company

William Penn Fire Company

WEST MAHANOY TOWNSHIP RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

**Finding – Inadequate Minutes Of Meetings**

Condition: The relief association failed to maintain detailed minutes of meetings as required by Act 118 and the relief association’s bylaws. Specifically, the relief association’s minutes did not address all of the financial-related transactions that occurred during the audit period. The relief association’s bylaws also require quarterly meetings; however, relief association officials only provided meeting minutes for three meetings in 2019.

Criteria: Section 7415(a) of Act 118 states, in part, that the relief association:

. . . must provide for taking and preserving minutes of all meetings and maintenance of such books of account as may be necessary and appropriate to afford a permanent record of its fiscal affairs.

In addition, the relief association’s bylaws at Article 2, Section 1 states, in part:

The stated meeting shall take place at 7PM on the first Sunday of January, April, September and December.

Furthermore, the relief association’s bylaws at Article 3, Section 4 states, in part:

Recording Secretary: The Recording Secretary shall keep a true record of the proceeding of every meeting in the minutes. The minutes shall note authorization by the membership of all association financial transactions and all other pertinent business discussed at meetings.

Cause: Relief association officials indicated that they were unaware that maintaining detailed minutes of meetings was required by Act 118 and the relief association’s bylaws.

Effect: Without detailed minutes of meetings, evidence that relief association business was presented before the membership for approval does not exist.

Recommendation: We recommend that the relief association officials maintain detailed minutes of meetings, evidencing the discussion and approval of 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.

WEST MAHANOEY TOWNSHIP RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

**Finding – (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: Compliance will be subject to verification through our next audit.



WEST MAHANOEY TOWNSHIP RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION  
CASH AND INVESTMENT BALANCES  
AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2019

Cash	\$ 16,748
Fair Value of Investments	<u>81,566</u>
Total Cash and Investments	<u>\$ 98,314</u>

WEST MAHANAY TOWNSHIP RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
 SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION  
 SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES  
 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2018 TO DECEMBER 31, 2019

Expenditures:

Benefit Services:	
Insurance premiums	\$ 8,172
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 17,298
Equipment maintenance	1,185
Training expenses	240
Total Fire Services	\$ 18,723
Administrative Services:	
Officer compensation	\$ 1,600
Bond premiums	331
Total Administrative Services	\$ 1,931
Total Expenditures	\$ 28,826

WEST MAHANOH TOWNSHIP RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

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

West Mahanoy Township Relief Association Governing Body:

**Mr. Christopher Miscannon**  
President

**Mr. Richard P. Stevens, Jr.**  
Treasurer

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

**Mr. Michael B. Michalik**  
Secretary  
West Mahanoy Township

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at [www.PaAuditor.gov](http://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](mailto:news@PaAuditor.gov).