



**TARENTUM FIRE DEPARTMENT RELIEF ASSOCIATION**

**HEREIN REFERRED TO AS:**

**TARENTUM VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION**

**ALLEGHENY COUNTY**

**COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT**

**FOR THE PERIOD**

**JANUARY 1, 2005 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007**



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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 Tarentum 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 Tarentum Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipality:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>
Tarentum Borough	Allegheny	\$21,432	\$21,611	\$21,720

BACKGROUND (Continued)

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

Eureka Hose Fire Department  
Highland Hose Fire Department  
Summit Hose Fire Department

Mr. Thomas Westerman, President  
TARENTUM VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'  
RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
Allegheny County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Tarentum 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, 2005 to December 31, 2007. The audit was conducted in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* applicable to performance audits, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

The objective of the audit was 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 objective identified above.

Volunteer firefighters' relief association officers are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the Tarentum 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 objective. We also tested transactions, confirmed the Tarentum Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's investment balance and the cash balance as of December 31, 2007, with the custodians of the funds, and interviewed selected officials to the extent necessary to satisfy the audit objective.

The results of our audit for the period January 1, 2005 to December 31, 2007, found, in all significant respects, the Tarentum Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association received and expended funds in compliance with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws and administrative procedures, except as noted in the following finding discussed later in this report. The results of our tests indicated the Tarentum Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the accompanying information and as of December 31, 2007, had a cash balance of \$24,824 and an investment balance with a fair value of \$70,000.

Finding – Inadequate Relief Association Bylaws

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

April 22, 2008

JACK WAGNER  
Auditor General

TARENTUM VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – Inadequate Relief Association Bylaws

Condition: The existing bylaws of the Tarentum Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association do not contain all of the provisions required by Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8505(c). Specifically, the bylaws do not address the requirement that one of the required signatures shall be that of the disbursing officer in order to bind the association by formal contract or issue any negotiable instrument. In addition, the bond policy coverage amount on the treasurer was \$30,000, although the relief association bylaws state that the treasurer should be bonded for \$50,000.

Criteria: Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8505(c) states, in part, that the relief association's bylaws shall include the following provision.

- Require the signatures of at least two officers, one of whom shall be the disbursing officer, in order to bind the relief association by formal contract or to issue any negotiable instrument.

Article 3, Section 3 of the relief association's bylaws states that the association shall post a bond for \$50,000 for the faithful performance of the treasurer's duties.

Prudent business practices dictates that the relief association should adhere to all provisions stipulated in the bylaws to ensure that the relief association conducts its affairs with proper authorization.

Cause: Relief association officials were unaware of the mandatory bylaw provisions regarding signatory authority established by Act 84. Furthermore, relief association officials were unaware of their bylaw guidelines specifying the bond amount.

Effect: As a result of the mandatory signatory authority provision not being included in the bylaws, and as a result of the relief association not following the mandatory signatory authority bonding provision, the relief association may have conducted its affairs without proper authorization. Although the disbursing officer's signature was present on all checks, by not having this mandatory provision formally defined in the relief association bylaws, the membership may not be aware that the provision is required by Act 84.

Recommendation: We recommend that relief association officials review and update the bylaws governing their organization so that the bylaws meet the requirements set forth in Act 84 and properly authorize the operating procedures of 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 presented at the audit exit conference and indicated they will take action to comply with the recommendation.

TARENTUM VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
 ACCOMPANYING EXPENDITURE INFORMATION  
 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2005 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007

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	\$ 52,046
Total Benefit Services	\$ 52,046
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 12,928
Equipment maintenance	7,790
Total Fire Services	\$ 20,718
Administrative Services:	
Officer compensation	\$ 1,110
Other administrative expenses	144
Total Administrative Services	\$ 1,254

TARENTUM VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Edward G. Rendell  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Tarentum Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Officers:

Mr. Thomas Westerman, President

Mr. David Kengor, Secretary

Mr. Fred Sherick, Treasurer

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

Mr. William Rossey, Secretary  
Tarentum Borough

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](http://www.auditorgen.state.pa.us).