



Commonwealth of Virginia

Walter J. Kucharski, Auditor

**Auditor of Public Accounts
P.O. Box 1295
Richmond, Virginia 23218**

October 5, 2009

The Honorable Chadwick S. Dotson
Chief Judge
County of Wise/City of Norton General District Court
206 East Main Street
Wise, VA 24293-0829

Audit Period: July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009
Court System: County of Wise/City of Norton
Judicial District: Thirtieth

We are performing a statewide audit of the General District Courts. During our review of this court, we conducted certain audit procedures, as we deemed appropriate.

Management of this court is an important part of the court's accountability, since you are responsible for establishing and maintaining internal controls and complying with applicable laws and regulations. During our review, we noted certain matters that required management's attention and corrective action. These matters included:

Promptly Distribute Collections

The Clerk does not promptly distribute collections to individual accounts once received from the private collection agent. Specifically, we noted the clerk took up to four months to distribute \$100 in collections received.

Failure to promptly distribute these funds could result in errors. The Clerk should promptly distribute collections to individual accounts on the court's accounting system.

Promptly Remit Collection Agent Fees

The Clerk delays up to three weeks sending fees to the private collection agent. The FMS User's Guide recommends the clerk remit private collection agent fees weekly. The Clerk should remit fees weekly as recommended by the FMS User's Guide.

Improve Accounts Receivable Management

The Clerk and her staff did not enter the correct payment due dates into the court's accounting system in three of five cases tested. If defendants cannot pay their fines and court costs within 15 days of sentencing,

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Section 19.2-354 of the Code of Virginia requires a court order or payment agreement. Improper due dates for individual accounts hinder collection efforts and could also result in loss of revenue for both the Commonwealth and the locality.

Properly Purchase Paper

The Clerk does not purchase paper in accordance with Chapter Six of the Office of Executive Secretary's Purchasing Manual. The Clerk orders paper through a local vendor.

This process circumvents the requirement of ordering bulk items through the Executive Office of the Supreme Court of Virginia and results in excess costs to the Commonwealth. We recommend the Clerk follow the purchasing requirements as outlined in the purchasing manual.

We acknowledge the cooperation extended to us by the Court during this engagement.

AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

WJK:clj

cc: Jean C. Sparks, Clerk
Paul F. DeLosh, Director of Judicial Services
Supreme Court of Virginia