



Commonwealth of Virginia

Auditor of Public Accounts

Walter J. Kucharski
Auditor of Public Accounts

P.O. Box 1295
Richmond, Virginia 23218

March 13, 2012

The Honorable Richard C. Kerns
Chief Judge
City of Newport News General District Court
2500 Washington Avenue, 2nd Fl.
Newport News, VA 23607-4307

Audit Period: July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011
Court System: City of Newport News
Judicial District: Seventh

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:

Properly Bill Fines and Costs

The Clerk billed and collected fines and attorney fees involving local and state charges in thirty cases tested, with errors in eight of these cases.

- In one case, the Clerk incorrectly certified court-appointed attorney fees to the Commonwealth, which paid \$630, which the locality should have paid.
- In four cases, the Clerk did not bill the locality for public defender fees, resulting in a loss to the Commonwealth of \$435.
- In one case, the Clerk entered a state fine as a locality fine, resulting in a loss to the Commonwealth of \$500.
- In two cases, the Clerk overcharged defendants for attorney fees, resulting in a gain to the Commonwealth of \$30 and to the locality of \$60.

We recommend the clerk research all similar cases, make the appropriate corrections to case paperwork, and bill the localities for the applicable attorney fees and expenses. The Clerk and her staff should work with the Office of the Executive Secretary to receive guidance regarding best practices of processing local and state attorney fees and expenses.

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

AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

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cc: The Honorable Alfred O. Masters, Jr., Judge
The Honorable Gary A. Mills, Judge
The Honorable Bryant L. Sugg, Judge
Faye Rogers, Clerk
Paul F. DeLosh, Director of Judicial Services
Supreme Court of Virginia