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Auditor of Public Accounts

Commonwealth of Virginia

Auditor of Public Accounts

P.O. Box 1295
Richmond, Virginia 23218

May 2, 2016

The Honorable C. Ridley Bain
Chief Judge
County of Brunswick General District Court
202 North Main Street
Lawrenceville, VA 23868

The Honorable Carson E. Saunders Jr.
Chief Judge
County of Brunswick Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court
315 South Main Street
Emporia, VA 23847

Audit Period: July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015
Court System: County of Brunswick
Judicial District: Sixth

We are performing a statewide audit of the Combined 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 and Collect Court Costs

The Clerk and her staff did not properly bill and collect court costs. In five of 20 cases tested, we noted the following errors.

- In one case, the Clerk did not bill the defendant for costs of \$25, resulting in a loss to the locality.
- In one case, the Clerk overcharged the defendant a total of \$100.

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- In one case, the Clerk incorrectly entered a state charge as local in the court's automated information system.
- In two cases, the Clerk did not properly assess court-appointed attorney fees, resulting in a loss of \$133 to the Commonwealth.

The Clerk should correct these specific cases noted above. Further, the Clerk should work with her staff to ensure they understand the billing and collecting requirements and, if necessary, request additional training from the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia.

Properly Retain Supporting Documentation

The Clerk did not maintain all required supporting documentation for court appointed attorney payments, which the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia has established should include an individual application for each case, waivers, timesheets, allowances, and signatures from the presiding and/ or Chief Judge. Failure to obtain and maintain all of the necessary documentation increases the risk of improper payments to attorneys. The Clerk should work with her staff to ensure the office maintains all the appropriate documentation.

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

AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

MSM:alh

cc: The Honorable Stephen D. Bloom, Judge
Susan Evans Martin, Clerk
Paul F. DeLosh, Director of Judicial Services
Supreme Court of Virginia