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Auditor of Public Accounts

Commonwealth of Virginia

Auditor of Public Accounts

P.O. Box 1295
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January 6, 2020

The Honorable Florence A. Powell
Chief Judge
County of Washington Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court

Audit Period: July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019
Court System: County of Washington
Judicial District: Twenty-Eighth

We are performing a statewide audit of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations 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:

Transfer Excess Credit Card Fees

Repeat: No

The Clerk held excess credit card surcharge fee collections of \$1,013 until the audit, rather than depositing them with the State Treasurer. The courts collect a fee when defendants pay fines and costs with a credit card to cover surcharges assessed to the court. The Clerk pays the surcharge fees monthly when the credit card statement is received.

The financial management system user's guide requires clerks to maintain an average of three months of surcharge payments and transfer the excess funds to the Commonwealth. The Clerk should deposit all excess credit card surcharge fees to the Commonwealth on a quarterly basis.

Review Daily Financial Reports

Repeat: No

The Clerk completes the daily financial reports detailing court collections, but has not designated an employee to review them. Proper oversight of daily financial transactions, which includes reviewing financial reports, is an essential internal control. Without proper internal controls over daily collections, the risk of error and loss of funds increases. The Clerk should ensure daily financial reports are reviewed as required by the financial management system user's guide.

Properly Bill and Collect Court Costs

Repeat: No

The Clerk and his staff did not properly bill and collect court costs. In 35 cases tested, we noted the following errors.

- In seven cases, defendants were not charged \$549 in court costs.
- In one local case, the Commonwealth, rather than the locality, was erroneously billed for attorney fees of \$130.

The Clerk and his staff should correct the specific cases noted above and should establish a system of review to minimize the likelihood of billing errors going undetected. In all cases, the Clerk should bill and collect court costs in accordance with Code of Virginia.

We acknowledge the cooperation extended to us by the Clerk and his staff during this engagement.

Martha S. Mavredes
AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

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cc: The Honorable Richard S. Buddington, Jr., Judge
The Honorable Joseph B. Lyle, Judge
Joshua D. Osborne, Clerk
Paul F. DeLosh, Director of Judicial Services
Supreme Court of Virginia