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Auditor of Public Accounts

Commonwealth of Virginia

Auditor of Public Accounts

P.O. Box 1295
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October 25, 2017

The Honorable Pamela O'Berry
Chief Judge
City of Colonial Heights General District Court
P.O. Box 144 - 9500 Courthouse Road
Chesterfield, VA 23832

Audit Period: July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017
Court System: City of Colonial Heights
Judicial District: Twelfth

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:

Escheat Unclaimed Property and Restitution

The Clerk did not escheat unclaimed property and restitution totaling \$425 as required by §55-210 and §19.2-305.1 of the Code of Virginia. The Clerk should remit these funds to the Division of Unclaimed Property and the Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund, respectively, and ensure that unclaimed funds are escheated annually as required by the Code of Virginia.

Properly Bill and Collect Court Fines and Costs

The Clerk and her staff did not properly bill and collect court fines and costs. In 34 cases tested, we noted the following errors.

- In three cases, defendants were erroneously charged a total of \$1,050 in court fines and in two cases defendants were overcharged \$240 in court-appointed attorney fees.

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- In seven cases, defendants were not charged for court-appointed attorney fees of \$521 and in four cases defendants were not billed for \$266 in court costs.

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

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

AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

MSM:alh

cc: The Honorable Keith Nelson Hurley, Judge
The Honorable Matthew Nelson, Judge
The Honorable Thomas L. Vaughn, Judge
Brenda D. Leber, Clerk
Paul F. DeLosh, Director of Judicial Services
Supreme Court of Virginia