



SUSAN W. MINARCHI  
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT  
OF THE  
COUNTY OF CAROLINE

FOR THE PERIOD  
OCTOBER 1, 2015 THROUGH MARCH 31, 2017

Auditor of Public Accounts  
Martha S. Mavredes, CPA  
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## COMMENTS TO MANAGEMENT

We noted the following matters involving internal control and its operation that has led or could lead to the loss of revenues, assets, or otherwise compromise the Clerk's fiscal accountability.

### **Properly Bill and Collect Court Fines and Costs (New)**

The Clerk and her staff did not properly bill and collect court fines and costs, resulting in a loss of revenue to the Commonwealth and locality. In 11 cases tested, we noted the following errors.

- In two local cases, fines of \$1,000 and costs of \$436 were incorrectly coded as state.
- In two local cases, the Clerk did not bill the locality for court appointed attorney fees of \$316.
- In four cases, the Clerk did not charge defendants for fines of \$1,000 and costs of \$418.
- In five cases, the Clerk did not calculate due dates in accordance with court orders.

The Clerk and her 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 the Code of Virginia.

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Martha S. Mavredes, CPA  
Auditor of Public Accounts

# Commonwealth of Virginia

*Auditor of Public Accounts*

P.O. Box 1295  
Richmond, Virginia 23218

August 30, 2017

The Honorable Susan W. Minarchi  
Clerk of the Circuit Court  
County of Caroline

Jeffrey Black, Board Chairman  
County of Caroline

Audit Period: October 1, 2015 through March 31, 2017  
Court System: County of Caroline

We have audited the cash receipts and disbursements of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of this locality for the period noted above. Our primary objectives were to test the accuracy of financial transactions recorded on the Court's financial management system; evaluate the Court's internal controls; and test its compliance with significant state laws, regulations, and policies.

## **Management's Responsibility**

Court management has responsibility for establishing and maintaining internal controls and complying with applicable laws and regulations. Internal control is a process designed to provide reasonable, but not absolute, assurance regarding the reliability of financial reporting, effectiveness and efficiency of operations, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Deficiencies in internal controls could possibly lead to the loss of revenues or assets, or otherwise compromise fiscal accountability.

We noted a matter involving internal control and its operation necessary to bring to management's attention. This matter is discussed in the section titled Comments to Management. Any response and written corrective action plan to remediate these matters provided by the Clerk are included as an enclosure to this report.

The Clerk has taken adequate corrective action with respect to the internal control finding reported in the prior year that is not repeated in this letter.

We discussed these comments with the Clerk and we acknowledge the cooperation extended to us by the court during this engagement.

AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

MSM:ljh

cc: The Honorable J. Overton Harris, Chief Judge  
Charles M. Culley, Jr., County Administrator  
Robyn M. de Socio, Executive Secretary  
Compensation Board  
Paul F. DeLosh, Director of Judicial Services  
Supreme Court of Virginia  
Director, Admin and Public Records  
Department of Accounts

CAROLINE COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT  
CLERKS'S OFFICE  
P. O. Box 309  
Bowling Green, Virginia 22427  
Susan W. Minarchi Clerk  
804-633-1095

Auditor of Public Accounts  
Attn: Laurie Hicks, Director  
P.O. Box 1295  
Richmond, VA 23218

October 17, 2017

Dear Ms. Mavredes,

Thank you for your letter in regard to a draft copy of the audit report for the County of Caroline Circuit Court. I have initiated the following corrective actions:

1. All personnel who enter criminal fines and costs have been instructed to review all information from the General District Court carefully and enter all fines and costs with the correct coding and amount accordingly as either local or State.
2. All personnel who enter criminal files have been instructed to carefully examine the information received from the General District Court to determine if the offense is a violation of the Code of Virginia or of the Caroline County Ordinance to insure that fines and costs are correctly assessed as State or Locality. A specific form has been developed for the payment of court appointed attorneys for payment by the locality. The deputy Clerks reviewing the Court Appointed Attorney forms have been instructed to pay special attention to these codes. Additional training on the entry of fines and costs will be given to all Criminal Clerk personnel as available.  
Payment has been requested from the County of Caroline in the amount specified by the auditor for erroneous billing of court appointed counsel.
3. All Criminal Clerk personnel who enter fines and cost have been instructed to pay strict attention to Court Orders for accurate entry of fines and costs. The Criminal deputy clerk has corrected the cases noted.
4. All personnel who enter any information in regard to due dates have been given additional instruction in regard as how to calculate and update due dates according to the final order and for any payment plans.
5. A review system to proof entry of fines, costs and due dates has been established. Work entered by a Criminal Clerk will be reviewed by another Clerk for accuracy. A system has also been established to flag cases from General District Court with coding for fines and cost to be billed under locality codes.

This office has had significant personal turnover in the last two years. At present this office has one Criminal Clerk with experience and one new trainee. Every effort will be made to ensure that the billing and collection of court costs and fines will be in accordance with the Code of Virginia.

Sincerely,



Susan W Minarchi, Clerk