



Martha S. Mavredes, CPA
Auditor of Public Accounts

Commonwealth of Virginia

Auditor of Public Accounts

P.O. Box 1295
Richmond, Virginia 23218

June 17, 2014

The Honorable Stephen D. Bloom
Chief Judge
City of Hopewell General District Court
315 South Main Street
Emporia, VA 23847

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

Audit Period: July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013
Court System: City of Hopewell
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 Fines and Costs

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. We noted the following errors:

- In six cases, the Clerk incorrectly entered the cases in the court's automated information system as being Commonwealth offenses instead of local offenses. This resulted in the Commonwealth being billed erroneously for court-appointed attorney fees totaling \$698 and a loss to the locality of \$750 in fines.

- In two cases, the Clerk incorrectly entered the cases in the court's automated information system as local offenses instead of Commonwealth offenses, which would have resulted in a loss to the Commonwealth when the accounts were paid.
- In one local case, the Clerk incorrectly billed the Commonwealth instead of the locality for \$120 in court-appointed attorney fees.
- In two cases the Clerk did not assess fines totaling \$400, resulting in a loss to the Commonwealth.
- In nine cases, the Clerk overcharged defendants \$1,004 for court appointed attorney fees. Seven of these cases involved juveniles, who are not supposed to be assessed fees for court appointed attorneys.

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

Properly Maintain Court Appointed Attorney Records

In four cases, the Clerk could not locate adequate supporting documentation to allow us to determine whether or not the Commonwealth or locality were properly billed for court appointed attorney fees or if the correct amount was assessed to the defendants. We recommend the Clerk maintain these records in accordance with the Court Appointed Counsel Guidelines and Procedures Manual.

Escheat Unclaimed Property and Restitution

The Clerk did not escheat unclaimed property and restitution, totaling \$4,177, as required by Section 55-210.26:1 of the Code of Virginia. We recommend the Clerk remit unclaimed property to the Division of Unclaimed Property and unclaimed restitution to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund as required by the Code of Virginia.

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

AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

MSM: clj

cc: The Honorable Bruce A. Clark, Jr., Judge
The Honorable Jacqueline R. Waymack, Judge
The Honorable C. Ridley Bain, Judge
Deborah A. Hatcher, Clerk
Paul F. DeLosh, Director of Judicial Services
Supreme Court of Virginia