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Auditor of Public Accounts

Commonwealth of Virginia

Auditor of Public Accounts

P.O. Box 1295
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March 20, 2017

The Honorable Ashley K. Tunner
Chief Judge
City of Richmond Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court
1600 Oliver Hill Way – Suite C181
Richmond, VA 23219-1214

Audit Period: July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016
Court System: City of Richmond
Judicial District: Thirteenth

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:

Properly Bill and Collect Court Costs (Repeat)

The Clerk and her staff did not properly bill and collect court costs. In 20 of 55 cases tested, we noted the following errors:

- In two cases, defendants were incorrectly charged \$1,655 as court-appointed attorney fees instead of restitution.
- In seven cases, the defendants were not charged \$1,604 in court costs.
- In six cases, defendants were undercharged \$1,245 in court-appointed attorney fees.
- In four cases, defendants were overcharged \$480 in court-appointed attorney fees.
- In one case, court costs were not properly documented on an appealed case to the Circuit Court resulting in a loss of \$227.

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The Clerk 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.

Retain Supporting Documentation (New)

In ten of 14 cases tested, 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, review, 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 Marilyn C. Goss, Judge
The Honorable Richard B. Campbell, Judge
The Honorable Mary E. Langer, Judge
Patricia R. Batley, Clerk
Paul F. DeLosh, Director of Judicial Services
Supreme Court of Virginia