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Auditor of Public Accounts

Commonwealth of Virginia

Auditor of Public Accounts

P.O. Box 1295
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December 5, 2018

The Honorable Alfred W. Bates III
Chief Judge
City of Suffolk General District Court
150 N. Main Street
Suffolk, VA 23434

Audit Period: July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018
Court System: City of Suffolk
Judicial District: Fifth

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:

Properly Bill and Collect Court Costs

Repeat: No

The Clerk and her staff did not properly bill and collect court costs. In 32 of 67 cases tested, we noted the following errors.

- In six cases, defendants were not charged for psychological evaluation fees of \$4,000.
- In twelve cases, defendants were not charged for attorney fees totaling \$1,348.
- In three cases, the Clerk did not bill the locality \$360 for the use of the Public Defender or other court appointed attorney assigned to a local case.
- In eleven cases, miscellaneous errors resulted in revenue losses to the state of \$216, to the locality of \$140, and defendants being overcharged \$85.

The Clerk and her staff should correct the specific cases noted above and should establish a system of review to minimize the likelihood of assessment and billing errors going undetected. In all cases, the Clerk should bill and collect court 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:vks

cc: Matthew A. Glassman, Judge
Deborah J. Gardner, Clerk
Paul F. DeLosh, Director of Judicial Services
Supreme Court of Virginia