



Commonwealth of Virginia

Auditor of Public Accounts

Walter J. Kucharski
Auditor of Public Accounts

P.O. Box 1295
Richmond, Virginia 23218

February 27, 2012

The Honorable Robert G. Woodson, Jr.
Chief Judge
County of Buckingham General District Court
P.O. Box 24
Cumberland, VA 23040

The Honorable Michael M. Rand
Chief Judge
County of Buckingham Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court
P.O. Box 430
Halifax, VA 24558-0430

Audit Period: July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011
Court System: County of Buckingham
Judicial District: Tenth

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:

Transfer Excess Credit Card Fees

The Clerk held excess credit card surcharge fee collections of \$1,496, rather than depositing them with the State Treasurer. The courts collect a fee to cover credit card surcharges, when defendants pay their fines and cost with a credit card.

The court pays the surcharge fee monthly, when they receive their credit card statement and the Financial Management System User's Guide requires the Clerks maintain an average of three-months of surcharge payments in the credit card surcharge account.

An analysis of the surcharge payment for the past fiscal year found the average three month balance should be \$523 and the clerk had \$2,019. We recommend the Clerk deposit the excess credit card surcharge fee of \$1,496 with the State Treasurer. Further, the Clerk should monitor the surcharge fee account for excessive balances and make deposits with the State Treasurer.

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Properly Bill and Collect Court Costs

In two of 20 cases, the Clerk erroneously billed the defendants for court appointed attorney fees without the list of allowances totaling \$240. In one local case, the Clerk incorrectly billed the Commonwealth instead of the locality for court appointed attorney fees totaling \$120. We recommend the Clerk correct these specific cases. The Clerk should bill the locality and reimburse the Commonwealth. Further, the Clerk should bill and collect court costs in accordance with the Code of Virginia.

Improve Management of the Clerk's Office

During our audit we noted the Clerk either takes no action or waits until the annual audit to resolve errors on the daily and monthly financial reports. Additionally, the Clerk does not follow the recommended approved accounting procedures when cash discrepancies occur. Specifically, we noted the following.

The Clerk did not resolve a reconciling item on her bank account for over a year.

The Clerk requires her staff to use personal funds to account for insignificant cash shortages.

The Clerk does not correct criminal and traffic accounts when they appear on the daily Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) exceptions report. The report helps the court to detect case dispositions and status conditions that prevent the transmittals of the electronic abstracts and notices.

The Clerk should complete a monthly bank reconciliation including resolving any differences between the court's accounting system and the bank account. The Clerk should follow the Financial Management Systems User's Guide for handling cash overages and shortages. Because driver's license suspension is an important collection tool, the Clerk should review and immediately correct all accounts on the daily DMV exceptions report.

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

AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

WJK: clj

cc: The Honorable Marvin H. Dunkum, Judge
Judy P. Jamerson, Clerk
Paul F. DeLosh, Director of Judicial Services
Supreme Court of Virginia