



KARLA ORTTS  
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT  
FOR THE  
COUNTY OF SHENANDOAH

FOR THE PERIOD  
JANUARY 1, 2024 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2024

Auditor of Public Accounts  
Staci A. Henshaw, CPA

[www.apa.virginia.gov](http://www.apa.virginia.gov)  
(804) 225-3350



## COMMENTS TO MANAGEMENT

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

### **Properly Assess and Bill Court Fines and Costs**

Repeat: Yes (First issued in 2017 to the former Clerk as Properly Bill and Collect Court Costs. New finding for the current Clerk.)

The Clerk and Clerk's staff did not properly assess and bill court costs. In 17 of 85 (20%) cases tested, we noted the following errors.

- In fifteen cases, the Clerk did not charge defendants a total of \$6,079 in court costs.
- The Clerk overcharged defendants in two cases a total of \$3,840 in court costs.

The amounts above are based on actual errors noted within our sample of court transactions, the impact of which we did not project to all transactions of the court. The Clerk should correct the specific cases noted above, seek additional training in the assessment and billing of court costs, and establish a system of review to minimize the likelihood of billing errors going undetected. In all cases, the Clerk should assess and bill court costs in accordance with the Code of Virginia.

### **Monitor and Disburse Liabilities**

Repeat: Yes (First issued in 2018 to the former Clerk. New finding for the current Clerk.)

The Clerk does not properly monitor and disburse court liabilities. At the end of the audit period, the Clerk was holding \$70,375 in liabilities that she should have either paid or escheated. The Clerk should review all liabilities she is currently holding and disburse, as applicable. In the event the Clerk cannot locate the owners of the funds, the Clerk should escheat the funds as required by § 55.1-2518 and § 55.1-2524 of the Code of Virginia. Going forward, the Clerk should routinely monitor and disburse, when appropriate, all court liabilities as recommended by the Financial Accounting System User's Guide.

### **Update Individual Receivable Accounts Status**

Repeat: No

The Clerk and her staff do not monitor and correct accounts listed on the Individual Receivable Account Status Report. Currently, there are six credit balance accounts dating back to July 2024 and more than 80 additional accounts, such as bonds and refunds, that the Clerk should disburse. There is also one restitution account listed as "sum uncertain" for which the court order reflects a known restitution amount. The Clerk should review the accounts noted above and take appropriate action. Going forward, the Clerk should review this report daily and take appropriate action as needed.

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# Commonwealth of Virginia

## Auditor of Public Accounts

Staci A. Henshaw, CPA  
Auditor of Public Accounts

P.O. Box 1295  
Richmond, Virginia 23218

June 9, 2025

The Honorable Karla Ortts  
Clerk of the Circuit Court  
County of Shenandoah

Josh Stevens, Board Chair  
County of Shenandoah

Audit Period: January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024  
Court System: County of Shenandoah

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 lead to noncompliance with laws and regulations, the loss of assets or revenues, or otherwise compromise the Clerk's fiscal accountability.

We noted matters involving internal control and its operation necessary to bring to management's attention. These matters are discussed in the section titled Comments to Management. Any written corrective action plan to remediate these matters provided by the Clerk is included as an enclosure to this report. We did not validate the Clerk's corrective action plan and, accordingly, cannot take a position on whether it adequately addresses the issues in this report.

The Clerk has taken corrective action to remediate the findings that we reported in the previous audit that are not repeated in this report.

We discussed these comments with the Clerk, and we acknowledge the cooperation extended to us by the Clerk and the Clerk's staff during this engagement.

Staci A. Henshaw  
AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

LJH/clj

cc: The Honorable Kevin Black, Chief Judge  
Evan Vass, County Administrator  
Robyn M. de Socio, Executive Secretary  
Compensation Board  
Paul F. DeLosh, Director of Judicial Services  
Supreme Court of Virginia



## SHENANDOAH COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT

112 South Main Street, P.O. Box 406  
Woodstock, VA 22664  
Phone (540) 459-6150 • Fax (540) 459-6155

**KARLA S. ORTTS, CLERK**

**October 9, 2025**

**DEPUTY CLERKS**  
Shelby L. Sherfey  
Kristin J. Hamman  
Megan Lazaro-Lopez  
Lawana V. Elbon  
Dana Copp  
Susan P. Crider  
Cameron Painter  
Deirdre Dillon

Staci A. Henshaw  
Auditor of Public Accounts  
Post Office Box 1295  
Richmond, VA 23218

In Re: Shenandoah County Circuit Court 2024 Audit

Dear Ms. Henshaw:

This letter is in response to the Audit Report which was conducted in the Shenandoah Circuit Court for my first year as Clerk. Before I address the issues that were found, I would like to thank the APA for the help our office has received when we had questions. I was always told, if you don't know, ask.

The first item to discuss is Properly Assess and Bill Court Fines and Costs. The Clerk and her staff have worked together diligently to ensure the costs are assessed correctly and billed appropriately. The Clerk and Deputy Clerks have used the Webinars provided to further understand and make sure that costs are assessed correctly.

Next, we come to Monitor and Disburse Liabilities. Again, the first year was a learning experience and we had numerous questions which have been answered by the auditors. Every month, we use due diligence to disburse restitution funds collected to the appropriate parties in a timely fashion. We have also made every effort to escheat funds when every effort has been made to locate these individuals and they are nowhere to be found.

Last, Update Individual Receivable Accounts Status. The Clerk and her staff now monitor and review these reports and by working together, hopefully we have resolved this issue. When you are uncertain of what you can do and what you cannot do, you have to ask questions and figure out the appropriate course of action. I would like to say that we have improved significantly. Are we perfect? Probably not, but we are working diligently to get there.

As of this date, the Clerk's Office is fully staffed, and I have instructed my deputy clerks to take advantage of the trainings and webinars available to them. We work together and strive to make our office the best possible Clerk's office we can be. The revolving door here has stopped and that has made a tremendous difference. We can focus on in depth learning instead of spending numerous hours training new employees

Staci Henshaw  
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Thank you for your attention to this response. I look forward to working with you in the future and I hope each year you will see improvement.

Sincerely yours,  
**Signature on File**

KARLA S. ORTTS, CLERK

/kso  
cc: Josh Stephens, Chairman  
Shenandoah County Board of Supervisors