Commonwealth of Virginia

Auditor of Public Accounts

Staci A. Henshaw, CPA
Auditor of Public Accounts

P.O. Box 1295
Richmond, Virginia 23218

January 27, 2025

The Honorable Claiborne H. Stokes, Jr.
Chief Judge
County of Goochland General District Court

The Honorable Deborah S. Tinsley
Chief Judge
County of Goochland Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court

Audit Period:	July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024
Court System:	County of Goochland
Judicial District:	Sixteenth

We are performing a statewide audit of the Combined 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 the following matters requiring management's attention and corrective action.

Request Tax Set-Off Refunds

Repeat: Yes (first issued in fiscal year 2023)

The former Clerk did not submit claims to the Virginia Department of Taxation (Taxation) for tax set-off of refunds for delinquent court fines and costs totaling $7,061, resulting in a loss of revenue to the Commonwealth and locality. Section 58.1-521 of the Code of Virginia requires that all courts use the tax set-off program to collect unpaid fines and costs. Courts must submit claims for set-off of tax refunds through Taxation's automated accounting system. The Clerk should use the tax refund set-off process to maximize collections as required by the Code of Virginia.

Properly Assess and Bill Court Fines and Costs
Repeat: No

The former Clerk and her staff did not properly assess and bill court fines and costs. In 17 of 55 (31%) cases tested, we noted the following errors.

- The Clerk overcharged defendants in six cases a total of $1,395 in fines and court costs.
- The Clerk did not charge defendants in 11 cases a total of $1,052 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 current Clerk and her staff should correct the specific cases noted above, seek additional training in the assessment and billing of fines and 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.

Promptly Allocate Tax Set-Off Revenues
Repeat: No

The former Clerk did not allocate tax set-off collections promptly. At the end of the audit period, the former Clerk was holding $2,468 in tax refunds that should have been allocated to defendants' accounts over 18 months ago. Courts recover some delinquent fines and costs through Taxation's Set-Off Collection Program. Upon receipt, clerks record tax set-off collections in one general ledger account. The clerks must then credit the defendants' individual accounts before the Commonwealth and locality can recognize the revenues and ensure appropriate collection activity and interest accrual. The current Clerk should allocate the amount noted during the audit and, going forward, should allocate tax set-off collections immediately upon receipt.

We acknowledge the cooperation extended to us by the Clerk and her staff during this engagement.

Staci A. Henshaw
AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

LJH: clj

cc: Jennifer L. Liptak, Clerk
Paul F. DeLosh, Director of Judicial Services
Supreme Court of Virginia