



Martha S. Mavredes, CPA
Auditor of Public Accounts

Commonwealth of Virginia

Auditor of Public Accounts

P.O. Box 1295
Richmond, Virginia 23218

May 22, 2019

The Honorable Claiborne H. Stokes, Jr.
Chief Judge
City of Charlottesville General District Court
P. O. Box 47
Goochland, VA 23063

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

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 Fines and Costs

Repeat: No

The Clerk and her staff did not properly bill and collect court fines and costs. In 38 cases tested, we noted the following errors.

- In two cases, defendants were overcharged \$412 in court costs.
- In one case, the \$120 attorney fee was miscoded as Commonwealth rather than local.
- In one local case, the public defender fee of \$120 was not billed to the locality.
- In two cases, the defendants were not charged \$30 in court costs.

The Clerk and her staff should correct the specific cases noted above and institute a more diligent 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 the Code of Virginia.

Claiborne H. Stokes, Jr.
Chief Judge
May 22, 2019
Page Two

Promptly Reconcile Bank Account

Repeat: No

The Clerk did not consistently perform the monthly bank reconciliation timely. Specifically, the January 2018 reconciliation was completed two months late and the February 2018, April 2018, and June 2018 reconciliations were completed one month late. Timely and complete reconciliations are an essential internal control. Allowing reconciling items to go unresolved can lead to errors and irregularities going undetected and increases the risk of loss of funds.

The Clerk should perform monthly bank reconciliations upon receiving the bank statements and resolve all reconciling items timely as required by the Financial Accounting System User's Guide.

Improve Accounts Receivable Management

Repeat: No

In seven of 11 cases tested, the Clerk and her staff did not retain a signed time to pay agreement. If defendants cannot pay their fines and court costs within 30 days of sentencing, § 19.2-354 of the Code of Virginia requires a court order or payment agreement indicating the payment due dates for fines and costs. Maintaining documentation that supports due dates for individual accounts entered in the automated system is critical when it comes to collection efforts and could result in a loss of revenue to both the Commonwealth and the locality.

The Clerk and her staff should retain the signed time to pay agreements in accordance with the General District Court Manual.

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

AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

MSM:vks

cc: The Honorable Robert H. Downer, Jr., Judge
Mary Alice Trimble, Clerk
Paul F. DeLosh, Director of Judicial Services
Supreme Court of Virginia