

**REPORT OF THE AUDIT OF THE  
CALDWELL COUNTY  
CLERK**

**For The Year Ended  
December 31, 2023**



**ALLISON BALL  
AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS  
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**ALLISON BALL**  
**AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS**

**Independent Auditor's Report**

The Honorable William D. Young, Caldwell County Judge/Executive  
The Honorable Jennifer Hale, Caldwell County Clerk  
Members of the Caldwell County Fiscal Court

**Report on the Audit of the Financial Statement**

**Opinions**

We have audited the accompanying Statement of Receipts, Disbursements, and Excess Fees - Regulatory Basis of the County Clerk of Caldwell County, Kentucky, for the year ended December 31, 2023, and the related notes to the financial statement.

*Unmodified Opinion on Regulatory Basis of Accounting*

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statement presents fairly, in all material respects, the receipts, disbursements, and excess fees of the Caldwell County Clerk for the year ended December 31, 2023, in accordance with the basis of accounting practices prescribed or permitted by the Commonwealth of Kentucky to demonstrate compliance with the Commonwealth of Kentucky's regulatory basis of accounting and budget laws as described in Note 1.

*Adverse Opinion on U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles*

In our opinion, because of the significance of the matter discussed in the Basis for Adverse Opinion on U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles section of our report, the financial statement does not present fairly, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, the financial position of the Caldwell County Clerk, as of December 31, 2023, or changes in financial position or cash flows thereof for the year then ended.

**Basis for Opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS) and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* (GAS), issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, and the *Audit Program for County Fee Officials* issued by the Auditor of Public Accounts, Commonwealth of Kentucky. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statement section of our report. We are required to be independent of the Caldwell County Clerk and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinions.



The Honorable William D. Young, Caldwell County Judge/Executive  
The Honorable Jennifer Hale, Caldwell County Clerk  
Members of the Caldwell County Fiscal Court

### **Basis for Opinion (Continued)**

#### *Basis for Adverse Opinion on U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles*

As described in Note 1 of the financial statement, the financial statement is prepared by the Caldwell County Clerk on the basis of the accounting practices prescribed or permitted by the laws of Kentucky to demonstrate compliance with the Commonwealth of Kentucky's regulatory basis of accounting and budget laws, which is a basis of accounting other than accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

The effects on the financial statement of the variances between the regulatory basis of accounting described in Note 1 and accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, although not reasonably determinable, are presumed to be material and pervasive.

### **Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statement**

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of this financial statement in accordance with accounting practices prescribed or permitted by the laws of Kentucky to demonstrate compliance with the Commonwealth of Kentucky's regulatory basis of accounting and budget laws. Management is also responsible for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of a financial statement that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statement, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Caldwell County Clerk's ability to continue as a going concern for twelve months beyond the financial statement date, including any currently known information that may raise substantial doubt shortly thereafter.

### **Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statement**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statement as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinions. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS and GAS will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statement.

In performing an audit in accordance with GAAS and GAS, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statement, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statement.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Caldwell County Clerk's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statement.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Caldwell County Clerk's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

The Honorable William D. Young, Caldwell County Judge/Executive  
The Honorable Jennifer Hale, Caldwell County Clerk  
Members of the Caldwell County Fiscal Court

**Auditor’s Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statement (Continued)**

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we have identified during the audit.

**Other Reporting Required by *Government Auditing Standards***

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we have also issued our report dated August 29, 2024, on our consideration of the Caldwell County Clerk’s internal control over financial reporting and on our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, grant agreements, and other matters. The purpose of that report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting or on compliance. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the Caldwell County Clerk’s internal control over financial reporting and compliance.

Based on the results of our audit, we have presented the accompanying Schedule of Findings and Responses, included herein, which discusses the following report finding:

2023-001 The Caldwell County Clerk Lacks Adequate Segregation Of Duties Over Disbursements And The Reconciliation Process

Respectfully submitted,



Allison Ball  
Auditor of Public Accounts  
Frankfort, KY

August 29, 2024

CALDWELL COUNTY  
 JENNIFER HALE, COUNTY CLERK  
STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS, DISBURSEMENTS, AND EXCESS FEES - REGULATORY BASIS

For The Year Ended December 31, 2023

Receipts

Libraries and Archives Grant	\$	9,671
State Revenue Supplement		69,995
State Fees For Services		4,613
Fiscal Court		21,415
Licenses and Taxes:		
Motor Vehicle-		
Licenses and Transfers	\$	558,419
Usage Tax		1,780,819
Tangible Personal Property Tax		1,742,398
Lien Fees		9,060
Other-		
Fish and Game Licenses		4,990
Marriage Licenses		3,276
City Vehicle Tax		31,538
Deed Transfer Tax		45,184
Delinquent Tax		129,619
Delinquent Tax Deposits		24,569
		4,329,872
Fees Collected for Services:		
Recordings-		
Library and Archives		2,811
Deeds, Easements, and Contracts		33,797
Real Estate Mortgages		34,633
Chattel Mortgages and Financing Statements		31,936
Powers of Attorney		3,072
Affordable Housing Trust		12,150
All Other Recordings		16,028
Charges for Other Services-		
Copy Work		3,251
Postage		1,566
Document Storage Fee		21,220
OCC Liens		3,632

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this financial statement.



CALDWELL COUNTY  
 JENNIFER HALE, COUNTY CLERK  
 STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS, DISBURSEMENTS, AND EXCESS FEES - REGULATORY BASIS  
 For The Year Ended December 31, 2023  
 (Continued)

Receipts (Continued)

Other:

Miscellaneous	\$	356	
Web Renewals		22,239	
E Recordings		16,803	
Overpayments		<u>15,092</u>	\$ 218,586

Interest Earned			<u>1,512</u>
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Total Receipts			4,655,664
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Disbursements

Payments to State:

Motor Vehicle-			
Licenses and Transfers	\$	419,161	
Usage Tax		1,726,413	
Tangible Personal Property Tax		637,096	
Licenses, Taxes, and Fees-			
Fish and Game Licenses		4,868	
Delinquent Tax		11,183	
Legal Process Tax		10,627	
Candidate Filing Fees		1,134	
Affordable Housing Trust		<u>12,150</u>	2,822,632

Payments to Fiscal Court:

Tangible Personal Property Tax		136,531	
Delinquent Tax		9,969	
Deed Transfer Tax		43,110	
Document Storage Fees		<u>21,220</u>	210,830

Payments to Other Districts:

Tangible Personal Property Tax		896,782	
Delinquent Tax		65,980	
City of Princeton		<u>27,319</u>	990,081

Payments to Sheriff			11,293
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Payments to County Attorney			16,476
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The accompanying notes are an integral part of this financial statement.

CALDWELL COUNTY  
 JENNIFER HALE, COUNTY CLERK  
 STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS, DISBURSEMENTS, AND EXCESS FEES - REGULATORY BASIS  
 For The Year Ended December 31, 2023  
 (Continued)

Disbursements (Continued)

Other Regulatory Payments:

Delinquent Tax Deposit Refunds	\$ 24,569	
Other Refunds	<u>1,090</u>	\$ 25,659

Operating Disbursements and Capital Outlay:

Personnel Services-		
Deputies' Salaries	171,386	
Employee Benefits-		
Employer's Share Social Security	20,722	
Employer's Share Retirement	59,516	
Contracted Services-		
Accounting Services	1,072	
Printing and Binding	2,776	
Materials and Supplies-		
Office Supplies	6,956	
Other Charges-		
Library and Archives Grant	9,671	
Overpayments	15,345	
Convention and Travel	5,846	
Dues	3,800	
Telephone	5,650	
Miscellaneous	15,345	
Postage	5,628	
OCC Liens	3,786	
Web Transactions	22,239	
E Recordings	<u>16,803</u>	366,541
Capital Outlay-		
Office Equipment		<u>984</u>

Total Disbursements		<u>\$ 4,444,496</u>
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CALDWELL COUNTY  
 JENNIFER HALE, COUNTY CLERK  
 STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS, DISBURSEMENTS, AND EXCESS FEES - REGULATORY BASIS  
 For The Year Ended December 31, 2023  
 (Continued)

Net Receipts		\$	211,168
Less: Statutory Maximum			<u>97,126</u>
Excess Fees			114,042
Less: Expense Allowance	\$	3,600	
Training Incentive Benefit		<u>1,246</u>	<u>4,846</u>
Balance Due Fiscal Court at Completion of Audit*		\$	<u><u>109,196</u></u>

\* - The county clerk presented a check to the fiscal court for excess fees in the amount of \$109,152 on April 22, 2024.

CALDWELL COUNTY  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENT

December 31, 2023

Note 1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

A. Fund Accounting

A fee official uses a fund to report on the results of operations. A fund is a separate accounting entity with a self-balancing set of accounts. Fund accounting is designed to demonstrate legal compliance and to aid financial management by segregating transactions related to certain government functions or activities.

A fee official uses a fund for fees to account for activities for which the government desires periodic determination of the excess of receipts over disbursements to facilitate management control, accountability, and compliance with laws.

B. Basis of Accounting

KRS 64.820 directs the fiscal court to collect any amount due from the county clerk as determined by the audit. KRS 64.152 requires the county clerk to pay to the governing body of the county any fees, commissions, and other income of his or her office, including income from investments, which exceed the sum of his or her maximum salary as permitted by the Constitution and other reasonable expenses, including compensation of deputies and assistants by March 15 of each year. KRS 64.830 requires an outgoing clerk to make a final settlement with the fiscal court by March 15 immediately following the expiration of his or her term of office.

The financial statement has been prepared on a regulatory basis of accounting, which is a comprehensive basis of accounting other than accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. This basis demonstrates compliance with the laws of Kentucky and is a special purpose framework. Under this regulatory basis of accounting, receipts and disbursements are generally recognized when cash is received or disbursed, with the exception of accrual of the following items (not all-inclusive) as of December 31 that may be included in the excess fees calculation:

- Interest receivable
- Collection on accounts due from others for 2023 services
- Reimbursements for 2023 activities
- Payments due other governmental entities for December tax and fee collections and payroll
- Payments due vendors for goods or services provided in 2023

The measurement focus of a fee official's financial statement is upon current financial resources. Per KRS 64.152(2), remittance of excess fees is due to the fiscal court when the county clerk makes their final settlement.

C. Cash and Investments

KRS 66.480 authorizes the county clerk's office to invest in obligations of the United States and of its agencies and instrumentalities, obligations and contracts for future delivery or purchase of obligations backed by the full faith and credit of the United States, obligations of any corporation of the United States government, bonds or certificates of indebtedness of this state, and certificates of deposit issued by or other interest-bearing accounts of any bank or savings and loan institution which are insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) or which are collateralized, to the extent uninsured, by any obligation permitted by KRS 41.240(4).

CALDWELL COUNTY  
 NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENT  
 December 31, 2023  
 (Continued)

Note 2. Employee Retirement System and Other Post-Employment Benefits

The clerk's office has elected to participate, pursuant to KRS 78.530, in the County Employees Retirement System (CERS), which is administered by the Kentucky Public Pensions Authority (KPPA). This is a cost-sharing, multiple-employer, defined benefit pension plan, which covers all eligible full-time employees and provides for retirement, disability, and death benefits to plan members. Benefit contributions and provisions are established by statute.

The county clerk's contribution for calendar year 2021 was \$60,383, calendar year 2022 was \$77,786, and calendar year 2023 was \$59,516.

Nonhazardous covered employees are required to contribute five percent of their salary to the plan. Nonhazardous covered employees who begin participation on or after September 1, 2008, are required to contribute six percent of their salary to be allocated as follows: five percent will go to the member's account and one percent will go to the CERS insurance fund.

In accordance with Senate Bill 2, signed by the Governor on April 4, 2013, plan members who began participating on or after January 1, 2014, were required to contribute to the Cash Balance Plan. The Cash Balance Plan is known as a hybrid plan because it has characteristics of both a defined benefit plan and a defined contribution plan. Members in the plan contribute a set percentage of their salary each month to their own accounts. Nonhazardous covered employees contribute five percent of their annual creditable compensation. Nonhazardous members also contribute one percent to the health insurance fund which is not credited to the member's account and is not refundable. The employer contribution rate is set annually by the CERS Board of Directors based on an actuarial valuation. The employer contributes a set percentage of the member's salary. Each month, when employer contributions are received, an employer pay credit is deposited to the member's account. A member's account is credited with a four percent employer pay credit. The employer pay credit represents a portion of the employer contribution.

Benefits fully vest on reaching five years of service for nonhazardous employees. Aspects of benefits for nonhazardous employees include retirement after 27 years of service or age 65. Nonhazardous employees who begin participation on or after September 1, 2008, must meet the rule of 87 (member's age plus years of service credit must equal 87, and the member must be a minimum of 57 years of age) or the member is age 65, with a minimum of 60 months service credit.

The county's contribution rate for nonhazardous employees was 26.79 percent for the first six months and 23.34 percent for the last six months.

Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB)

A. Health Insurance Coverage - Tier 1

CERS provides post-retirement health care coverage as follows:

For members participating prior to July 1, 2003, years of service and respective percentages of the maximum contribution are as follows:

CALDWELL COUNTY  
 NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENT  
 December 31, 2023  
 (Continued)

Note 2. Employee Retirement System and Other Post-Employment Benefits (Continued)

Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) (Continued)

A. Health Insurance Coverage - Tier 1 (Continued)

<b>Years of Service</b>	<b>% Paid by Insurance Fund</b>	<b>% Paid by Member through Payroll Deduction</b>
20 or more	100%	0%
15-19	75%	25%
10-14	50%	50%
4-9	25%	75%
Less than 4	0%	100%

As a result of House Bill 290 (2004 General Assembly), medical insurance benefits are calculated differently for members who began participation on or after July 1, 2003. Once members reach a minimum vesting period of ten years, non-hazardous employees whose participation began on or after July 1, 2003, they earn ten dollars per month for insurance benefits at retirement for every year of earned service without regard to a maximum dollar amount. This dollar amount is subject to adjustment annually based on the retiree cost of living adjustment, which is updated annually due to changes in the Consumer Price Index.

Benefits are covered under KRS 78.5536.

B. Health Insurance Coverage - Tier 2 and Tier 3 - Nonhazardous

Once members reach a minimum vesting period of 15 years, they earn ten dollars per month for insurance benefits at retirement for every year of earned service without regard to a maximum dollar amount. This dollar amount is subject to adjustment annually by 1.5 percent. This was established for Tier 2 members during the 2008 Special Legislative Session by House Bill 1. During the 2013 Legislative Session, Senate Bill 2 was enacted, creating Tier 3 benefits for members.

The monthly insurance benefit has been increased annually as a 1.5 percent cost of living adjustment (COLA) since July 2003 when the law changed. The annual increase is cumulative and continues to accrue after the member's retirement.

Tier 2 member benefits are covered by KRS 78.5536. Tier 3 members are not covered by the same provisions.

C. Cost of Living Adjustments - Tier 1

The 1996 General Assembly enacted an automatic cost of living adjustment (COLA) provision for all recipients of KRS benefits. During the 2008 Special Session, the General Assembly determined that each July beginning in 2009, retirees who have been receiving a retirement allowance for at least 12 months will receive an automatic COLA of 1.5 percent. The COLA is not a guaranteed benefit. If a retiree has been receiving a benefit for less than 12 months, and a COLA is provided, it will be prorated based on the number of months the recipient has been receiving a benefit.

CALDWELL COUNTY  
 NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENT  
 December 31, 2023  
 (Continued)

Note 2. Employee Retirement System and Other Post-Employment Benefits (Continued)

Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) (Continued)

D. Cost of Living Adjustments - Tier 2 and Tier 3

No COLA is given unless authorized by the legislature with specific criteria. To this point, no COLA has been authorized by the legislature for Tier 2 or Tier 3 members.

E. Death Benefit

If a retired member is receiving a monthly benefit based on at least 48 months of service credit, KRS will pay a \$5,000 death benefit payment to the beneficiary designated by the member specifically for this benefit. Members with multiple accounts are entitled to only one death benefit.

Kentucky Retirement Systems Annual Financial Report and Proportionate Share Audit Report

Kentucky Retirement Systems issues a publicly available annual financial report that includes financial statements and required supplementary information on CERS. This report may be obtained by writing the Kentucky Retirement Systems, 1260 Louisville Road, Frankfort, KY 40601-6124, or by telephone at (502) 564-4646.

Kentucky Retirement Systems also issues proportionate share audit reports for both total pension liability and other post-employment benefits for CERS determined by actuarial valuation as well as each participating county's proportionate share. Both the Schedules of Employer Allocations and Pension Amounts by Employer and the Schedules of Employer Allocations and OPEB Amounts by Employer reports and the related actuarial tables are available online at <https://kyret.ky.gov>. The complete actuarial valuation report, including all actuarial assumptions and methods, is also available on the website or can be obtained as described in the paragraph above.

Note 3. Deposits

The Caldwell County Clerk maintained deposits of public funds with federally insured banking institutions as required by the Department for Local Government's (DLG) *County Budget Preparation and State Local Finance Officer Policy Manual*. The DLG Manual strongly recommends perfected pledges of securities covering all public funds except direct federal obligations and funds protected by federal insurance. In order to be perfected in the event of failure or insolvency of the depository institution, this pledge or provision of collateral should be evidenced by an agreement between the county clerk and the depository institution, signed by both parties, that is (a) in writing, (b) approved by the board of directors of the depository institution or its loan committee, which approval must be reflected in the minutes of the board or committee, and (c) an official record of the depository institution. The Caldwell County Clerk maintained deposits of public funds with a federally insured banking institution, however perfected pledges of securities covering all public funds was not evidenced by an agreement between the county clerk and the depository institution.

Custodial Credit Risk - Deposits

Custodial credit risk is the risk that in the event of a depository institution failure, the county clerk's deposits may not be returned. The Caldwell County Clerk does not have a deposit policy for custodial credit risk, but rather follows the requirements of the DLG *County Budget Preparation and State Local Finance Officer Policy Manual*. As of December 31, 2023, all deposits were covered by FDIC insurance or a properly executed collateral security agreement.

CALDWELL COUNTY  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENT  
December 31, 2023  
(Continued)

Note 4. Grant

The Caldwell County Clerk's office received a local records microfilming grant from the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives in the amount of \$9,671. Funds totaling \$9,671 were expended during the year.

Note 5. Lease Agreement

The Caldwell County Clerk's office was committed to a lease agreement for the acquisition and use of a postage meter. The lease agreement requires a monthly payment of \$66 for 60 months to be completed on January 30, 2025. The total lease liability balance of the agreement was \$857 as of December 31, 2023.

Note 6. Subscription-Based Information Technology Arrangements (SBITA)

The Caldwell County Clerk entered into a subscription-based information technology arrangement for software. The subscription terms are five years totaling \$27,000 and the Caldwell County Clerk will receive the right-to-use subscription asset (intangible asset). The Caldwell County Fiscal Court is required to make monthly payment of \$450 on behalf of the county clerk.

Note 7. Fiduciary Account

A. Escrow Account

The Caldwell County Clerk deposited outstanding checks (checks the clerk wrote during the calendar that have not cleared the bank) into a custodial bank account. When statutorily required, the county clerk will turn over the escrowed funds to the Kentucky State Treasurer as unclaimed property.



REPORT ON INTERNAL CONTROL OVER FINANCIAL REPORTING AND  
ON COMPLIANCE AND OTHER MATTERS BASED ON AN AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL  
STATEMENT PERFORMED IN ACCORDANCE WITH *GOVERNMENT AUDITING STANDARDS*

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## ALLISON BALL AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Report On Internal Control Over Financial Reporting And  
On Compliance And Other Matters Based On An Audit Of The Financial  
Statement Performed In Accordance With *Government Auditing Standards*

### Independent Auditor's Report

The Honorable William D. Young, Caldwell County Judge/Executive  
The Honorable Jennifer Hale, Caldwell County Clerk  
Members of the Caldwell County Fiscal Court

We have audited, in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, and the *Audit Program for County Fee Officials* issued by the Auditor of Public Accounts, Commonwealth of Kentucky, the Statement of Receipts, Disbursements, and Excess Fees - Regulatory Basis of the Caldwell County Clerk for the year ended December 31, 2023, and the related notes to the financial statement and have issued our report thereon dated August 29, 2024. The Caldwell County Clerk's financial statement is prepared on a regulatory basis of accounting, which demonstrates compliance with the Commonwealth of Kentucky's regulatory basis of accounting and budget laws, which is a basis of accounting other than accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

### Report on Internal Control over Financial Reporting

In planning and performing our audit of the financial statement, we considered the Caldwell County Clerk's internal control over financial reporting (internal control) as a basis for designing audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances for the purpose of expressing our opinion on the financial statement, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Caldwell County Clerk's internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of the Caldwell County Clerk's internal control.

*A deficiency in internal control* exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct misstatements on a timely basis. A *material weakness* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control, such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the entity's financial statement will not be prevented, or detected and corrected on a timely basis. A *significant deficiency* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control that is less severe than a material weakness, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance.

Our consideration of internal control was for the limited purpose described in the first paragraph of this section and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies and therefore, material weaknesses or significant deficiencies may exist that were not identified. Given these limitations, during our audit we did not identify any deficiencies in internal control that we consider to be material weaknesses. We did identify a certain deficiency in internal control, which is described in the accompanying Schedule of Findings and Responses as item 2023-001 that we consider to be a significant deficiency.



Report On Internal Control Over Financial Reporting And  
On Compliance And Other Matters Based On An Audit Of The Financial  
Statement Performed In Accordance With *Government Auditing Standards*  
(Continued)

**Report on Compliance and Other Matters**

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the Caldwell County Clerk's financial statement is free of material misstatement, we performed tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements, noncompliance with which could have a direct and material effect on the financial statement. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our audit and, accordingly, we do not express such an opinion. The results of our tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*.

**Views of Responsible Official and Planned Corrective Action**

*Government Auditing Standards* requires the auditor to perform limited procedures on the Caldwell County Clerk's response to the finding identified in our audit and described in the accompanying Schedule of Findings and Responses. The Caldwell County Clerk's response was not subjected to the other auditing procedures applied in the audit of the financial statement and, accordingly, we express no opinion on the response.

**Purpose of this Report**

The purpose of this report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control or on compliance. This report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the entity's internal control and compliance. Accordingly, this communication is not suitable for any other purpose.

Respectfully submitted,



Allison Ball  
Auditor of Public Accounts  
Frankfort, KY

August 29, 2024

## SCHEDULE OF FINDINGS AND RESPONSES

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CALDWELL COUNTY  
JENNIFER HALE, COUNTY CLERK  
SCHEDULE OF FINDINGS AND RESPONSES

For The Year Ended December 31, 2023

INTERNAL CONTROL - SIGNIFICANT DEFICIENCY:

2023-001 The Caldwell County Clerk Lacks Adequate Segregation Of Duties Over Disbursements And The Reconciliation Process

---

The Caldwell County Clerk's Office does not have adequate segregation of duties. The county clerk prepares monthly and quarterly reports, posts disbursements to the ledgers, writes and signs checks, and performs the monthly bank reconciliations.

The county clerk indicated this condition is a result of a limited budget, which restricts the number of employees the Caldwell County Clerk's Office can hire for accounting functions. A lack of oversight could result in the undetected misappropriation of assets or inaccurate financial reporting to external agencies such as the Department for Local Government, which could occur and go undetected.

KRS 46.010(2) requires, "each county treasurer, and each county officer who receives or disburses state funds, to keep an accurate account of receipts and disbursements, showing a daily balance of receipts and disbursements." KRS 46.010(3) requires, "all county officers handling state funds, other than taxes, to make an annual report to the Department for Local Government showing receipts and disbursements, and to make other financial statements as the Department for Local Government requires." A lack of adequate segregation of duties is a basic internal control necessary to ensure the accuracy and reliability of financial reports. Proper segregation of duties over the accounting and reporting functions or the implementation of compensating controls is essential for providing protection from errors occurring and not being detected. Additionally, proper segregation of duties protects employees in the normal course of performing their daily responsibilities.

We recommend the county clerk separate the duties involved in posting to the disbursement ledgers, preparing checks, preparing monthly bank reconciliations, and preparing weekly and quarterly reports. If this is not feasible due to a limited budget, cross-checking procedures could be implemented and documented by the individual performing the procedure.

*County Clerk's Response: My office is a rather small one, and as a result, it is difficult to pull many of my deputies away from helping customers to take care of the many responsibilities of the reconciliation process. I have one deputy who has the authority to sign checks. [Employee name redacted] writes refund checks, overpayments, and out of county lien filing payments. I only have five employees at this time. I have spoken with [employee name redacted], and trained her on entering the daily deposits into the computer. She also checks the KAVIS report every morning to make sure everything balances out. I have an employee that started this year, but has experience in reconciliation of accounts for a business with many locations. I am also training her to be able to enter, and check daily reconciliation in the [software name redacted] account. I began training her September 3, 2024. I am adding another deputy to the bank account for next year to be able to sign checks. The implementation of this change will take place after opening my 2025 Fee Account. I am moving the Fee Account to a different local bank next year to try to make the accounts easier to tell apart.*