



Auditor of Public Accounts
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Harmon Releases Audit of Garrard County Sheriff's Fee Account

FRANKFORT, Ky. – State Auditor Mike Harmon today released the audit of the 2021 financial statement of Garrard County Sheriff Tim Davis. State law requires the auditor to annually audit the accounts of each county sheriff. In compliance with this law, the auditor issues two sheriff's reports each year: one reporting on the audit of the sheriff's tax account, and the other reporting on the audit of the fee account used to operate the office.

Auditing standards require the auditor's letter to communicate whether the financial statement presents fairly the receipts, disbursements and excess fees of the Garrard County Sheriff in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. The sheriff's financial statement did not follow this format. However, the sheriff's financial statement is fairly presented in conformity with the regulatory basis of accounting, which is an acceptable reporting methodology. This reporting methodology is followed for all 120 sheriff audits in Kentucky.

As part of the audit process, the auditor must comment on noncompliance with laws, regulations, contracts, and grants. The auditor must also comment on material weaknesses involving the internal control over financial operations and reporting.

The audit contains the following comments:

The Garrard County Sheriff materially misstated his quarterly report: This is a repeat finding and was included in the prior year audit report as Finding 2020-001. The Garrard County Sheriff maintained a bank account for payroll expenditures. This is in accordance with the County's Fee Pooling Ordinance. The sheriff deposited \$293,678 in funds from the county and disbursed these funds for payroll expenditures. These funds were not recorded on the sheriff's fourth quarter report, which serves as his financial statement, requiring material audit adjustments. The sheriff did not have controls in place to ensure that his financial statement was materially accurate. A

misstatement could result in an increased risk of uncorrected errors, theft, loss, or misappropriated assets.

KRS 134.192(11) requires a complete statement of all funds received by his or her office for official services, showing separately the total incomes received by his or her office for services rendered, exclusive of his or her commissions for collecting taxes, and the total funds received as commissions for collecting state, county, and school taxes, and a complete statement of all expenditures of his or her office.

We recommend the Garrard County Sheriff post all receipts and disbursements on his quarterly reports.

County Sheriff's Response: This is an issue that occurred due to fee pooling that is ending so the issue will be corrected.

The Garrard County Sheriff's Office does not have adequate segregation of duties: This is a repeat finding and was included in the prior year audit report as Finding 2020-005. The sheriff's office does not have segregation of duties over receipts, disbursements, and monthly reconciliations. Internal control procedures indicate the sheriff's bookkeeper opens mail, collects payments from customers, prepares deposits, prepares/signs checks, posts transactions to the receipts and disbursements ledgers, prepares monthly and quarterly reports, and prepares monthly bank reconciliations. According to the sheriff, the lack of segregation of duties as part of his daily office functions is due to lack of funding. The sheriff does not have segregation of duties as part of the internal control procedures for his office. The lack of segregation of duties increases the risk that undetected errors could occur. Additionally, the lack of adequate segregation of duties could result in misappropriation of assets or inaccurate financial reporting to external agencies, such as the Department for Local Government (DLG).

Good internal controls dictate the same employee should not handle, record, and reconcile receipts. Further, the same employee should not be responsible for preparing, recording, and reconciling disbursements. The segregation of duties over various accounting functions such as opening mail, preparing deposits, recording receipts and disbursements, and preparing monthly reports, or the implementation of compensating controls is essential for providing protection from asset misappropriation and inaccurate financial reporting. Additionally, proper segregation of duties protects employees in the normal course of performing their daily responsibilities. If this is not feasible due to budgetary constraints, cross checking procedures could be implemented and documented by the individual performing the procedure.

We recommend the sheriff separate the duties involved in receiving cash, preparing deposits, writing checks, posting to ledgers, preparing monthly bank reconciliations, and comparing financial reports to the ledgers. However, if an adequate segregation of duties is not feasible, compensating controls should be implemented and documented by the individual performing the procedure.

County Sheriff's Response: This issue has occurred for years due to lack of monies for adequate staffing, this should improve and we are putting extra steps in.

The Garrard County Sheriff's Office lacks adequate internal controls over payroll: This is a repeat finding and was included in the prior year audit report as Finding 2020-004. Garrard County Sheriff's employees are separated into two groups for payroll purposes. The Garrard County Sheriff's Office prepares payroll for court security and administrative staff including the sheriff. The personnel in each of these groups have various requirements for employment such as full-time, part-time, and salaried and our testing of payroll included an examination of these requirements and the documentation maintained by the sheriff to support payroll expenditures.

The Garrard County Sheriff does not have appropriate internal controls over the payroll process. During our testing of payroll, we found two timesheets for April were not signed by a supervisor. Due to the lack of oversight by the sheriff or his designee, timesheets were not signed to support hours worked. The sheriff is not in compliance with federal and state labor regulations or the county's personnel policy and procedure manual.

KRS 337.320(1) states, "[e]very employer shall keep a record of: (a) The amount paid each pay period to each employee; (b) The hours worked each day and each week by each employee; and (c) Such other information as the executive director requires."

Good internal controls dictate that timesheets be kept for payroll verification, as a record of leave time used, and to document employees are working at least the minimum number of hours to be eligible for full-time benefits such as retirement and health insurance.

We recommend the Garrard County Sheriff strengthen internal controls over payroll by requiring employees and supervisors to sign timesheets.

County Sheriff's Response: We are adding separate responsibilities for employees to correct this.

The Garrard County Sheriff failed to properly classify employees as hourly or salaried: This is a repeat finding and was included in the prior year audit report as Finding 2020-003. The Garrard County Sheriff's Office paid its school resource officer and bookkeeper on a monthly basis. Payroll checks were issued around the 25th of each month. We were not able to support paycheck amounts by comparing payroll summary reports and timesheets. Both employees prepared a timesheet. According to the sheriff, a significant portion of the Garrard County Sheriffs' employees (school resource officer and bookkeeper) are being treated as salaried. The sheriff's bookkeeper and school resource officer payroll summaries were not supported by timesheets for each employee. Payroll summaries did not include a breakdown of hours worked. Good internal controls dictate that timesheets be kept for payroll verification, as a record of leave time used, and to document employees are working at least the minimum number of hours to be eligible for full-time benefits such as retirement and health insurance.

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OAG 79-448, discusses Section 3 of the Kentucky Constitution stating that Section 3 “is unequivocal on the point that public emolument to any person must be based on the consideration of public services. By the strongest implication this means ‘public services actually rendered.’ It does not mean ‘public services to be rendered.’”

803 KAR 1:070 Section 3(3)(a) states “[t]o qualify for the administrative exemption, an employee’s primary duty shall include the exercise of discretion and independent judgment with respect to matters of significance. The exercise of discretion and independent judgment shall involve the comparison and the evaluation of possible courses of conduct, and acting or making a decision after the various possibilities have been considered. The term ‘matters of significance’ refers to the level of importance or consequence of the work performed. (b)...Factors to consider if determining whether an employee exercises discretion and independent judgment with respect to matters of significance include, but are not limited to:...whether the employee has authority to commit the employer in matters that have significant financial impact; whether the employee has authority to waive or deviate from established policies and procedures without prior approval; whether the employee has authority to negotiate and bind the company on significant matters...”

803 KAR 1:070 section 10 defines a salaried employee as one being paid on a “salary basis”, meaning an employee regularly receives a predetermined amount of compensation each pay period on a weekly, or less frequent, basis. The predetermined amount cannot be reduced because of variations in the quality or quantity of the employee’s work. Subject to certain exceptions, an exempt employee must receive the full salary for any week in which the employee performs any work, regardless of the number of days or hours worked. In addition, Section 11 states that in order to qualify for exemption, employees generally must be paid at not less than \$455 per week on a salary basis. If the employer makes deductions from an employee’s predetermined salary, i.e., because of the operating requirements of the business, that employee is not paid on a “salary basis”.

Per the IRS website “Under common-law rules, anyone who performs services for you is your employee *if you can control what will be done and how it will be done*. This is so even when you give the employee freedom of action. What matters is that you have the right to control the details of how the services are performed. The general rule is that an individual is an independent contractor if the payer has the right to control or direct only the result of the work, not ‘what’ will be done and ‘how’ it will be done.

We recommend the sheriff contact the county attorney and/or the U.S. Department of Labor to obtain an opinion if any employee under his supervision can be considered a salaried employee and if so, how their payroll payments are to be supported and documented.

County Sheriff’s Response: Everyone will be classified correctly for next year.

The sheriff’s responsibilities include collecting property taxes, providing law enforcement and performing services for the county fiscal court and courts of justice. The sheriff’s office is funded through statutory commissions and fees collected in conjunction with these duties.

The audit report can be found on the [auditor’s website](#).

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