

**REPORT OF THE AUDIT OF THE  
HICKMAN COUNTY  
SHERIFF'S SETTLEMENT - 2022 TAXES**

**For The Period  
September 1, 2022 Through August 31, 2023**



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ALLISON BALL  
AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Independent Auditor's Report

To the People of Kentucky  
The Honorable Andy Beshear, Governor  
Holly M. Johnson, Secretary  
Finance and Administration Cabinet  
The Honorable Kenny Wilson, Hickman County Judge/Executive  
The Honorable Ben Natividad, Hickman County Sheriff  
Members of the Hickman County Fiscal Court

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

**Opinions**

We have audited the accompanying Hickman County Sheriff's Settlement - 2022 Taxes for the period September 1, 2022 through August 31, 2023 - Regulatory Basis, 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 taxes charged, credited, and paid for the period September 1, 2022 through August 31, 2023 of the Hickman County Sheriff, in accordance with the basis of accounting practices prescribed or permitted by the Commonwealth of Kentucky 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 taxes charged, credited, and paid of the Hickman County Sheriff, for the period September 1, 2022 through August 31, 2023.

**Basis for Opinions**

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*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, and the *Audit Program for Sheriffs' Tax Settlements*. 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 Hickman County Sheriff and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinions.



To the People of Kentucky  
The Honorable Andy Beshear, Governor  
Holly M. Johnson, Secretary  
Finance and Administration Cabinet  
The Honorable Kenny Wilson, Hickman County Judge/Executive  
The Honorable Ben Natividad, Hickman County Sheriff  
Members of the Hickman County Fiscal Court

### **Basis for Opinions (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 Hickman County Sheriff on the basis of 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 the 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.

### **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 an absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS 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 judgement made by a reasonable user based on the financial statement.

In performing an audit in accordance with GAAS, 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 Hickman County Sheriff'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 Hickman County Sheriff's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

To the People of Kentucky  
The Honorable Andy Beshear, Governor  
Holly M. Johnson, Secretary  
Finance and Administration Cabinet  
The Honorable Kenny Wilson, Hickman County Judge/Executive  
The Honorable Ben Natividad, Hickman County Sheriff  
Members of the Hickman 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 findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.

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

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we have also issued our report dated April 19, 2024, on our consideration of the Hickman County Sheriff’s internal control over financial reporting and on our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts and grant agreements, and other matters. The purpose of that report is 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 Hickman County Sheriff’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 findings:

- 2022-001 The Hickman County Sheriff Omitted \$31,916 Of Franchise Tax Collections From The Tax Settlement
- 2022-002 The Hickman County Sheriff Did Not Collect The Proper Amount Of Franchise Taxes For The School District

Respectfully submitted,



Allison Ball  
Auditor of Public Accounts  
Frankfort, Ky

April 19, 2024

HICKMAN COUNTY  
BEN NATIVIDAD, SHERIFF  
SHERIFF'S SETTLEMENT - 2022 TAXES

For The Period September 1, 2022 Through August 31, 2023

	Special Taxing			
	County	Districts	School	State
<u>Charges</u>				
Real Estate	\$ 374,643	\$ 347,187	\$ 1,392,190	\$ 265,959
Tangible	42,654	41,883	225,246	76,152
Fire Dues		73,350		
Fire Protection	309			
Total Per Sheriff's Official Receipt	<u>417,606</u>	<u>462,420</u>	<u>1,617,436</u>	<u>342,111</u>
<u>Other Taxes &amp; Charges</u>				
Court Ordered Increases	384	364	1,426	272
Franchise Taxes	128,458	104,452	542,601	
Additional Billings	34	43	129	25
Penalties	1,388	1,696	5,155	985
Gross Chargeable to Sheriff	547,870	568,975	2,166,747	343,393
<u>Credits</u>				
Exonerations	1,614	2,502	5,999	1,146
Discounts	6,864	7,496	26,714	5,742
Delinquent Real Estate	3,949	5,908	14,667	2,802
Delinquent Tangible	52	41	273	204
Total Credits	12,479	15,947	47,653	9,894
Taxes Collected	535,391	553,028	2,119,094	333,499
Less: Sheriff's Commissions*	22,754	21,570	84,764	14,174
Taxes Due Districts	512,637	531,458	2,034,330	319,325
Taxes Paid	512,576	531,416	2,034,116	319,282
Refunds (Current and Prior Year)	69	63	243	48
Taxes Due Districts (Refund Due Sheriff)	<u>\$ (8)</u>	<u>\$ (21)</u>	<u>\$ (29)</u>	<u>\$ (5)</u>

\*\*

\* and \*\* See next page.

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



HICKMAN COUNTY  
 BEN NATIVIDAD, SHERIFF  
 SHERIFF'S SETTLEMENT - 2022 TAXES  
 For The Period September 1, 2022 Through August 31, 2023  
 (Continued)

\* Commissions:

4.25% on	\$	1,362,421
4% on	\$	2,119,094
1% on	\$	59,497

\*\* Special Taxing Districts:

Extension District	\$	(3)
Health District		(2)
Soil Conservation District		(74)
Obion Creek Watershed District		(2)
Clinton Fire District		2
Columbus Fire District		<u>58</u>

Amounts Due Districts		
(Refunds Due Sheriff)	\$	<u>(21)</u>

HICKMAN COUNTY  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENT

August 31, 2023

Note 1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

A. Fund Accounting

The sheriff's office tax collection duties are limited to acting as an agent for assessed property owners and taxing districts. A fund is used to account for the collection and distribution of taxes. 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.

B. Basis of Accounting

The financial statement has been prepared on a regulatory basis of accounting, which demonstrates compliance with the laws of Kentucky and is a special purpose framework. Basis of accounting refers to when charges, credits, and taxes paid are reported in the settlement statement. It relates to the timing of measurements regardless of the measurement focus.

Charges are sources of revenue which are recognized in the tax period in which they become available and measurable. Credits are reductions of revenue which are recognized when there is proper authorization. Taxes paid are uses of revenue which are recognized when distributions are made to the taxing districts and others.

C. Cash and Investments

KRS 66.480 authorizes the sheriff'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).

D. Preparation of State Settlement

The Kentucky Department of Revenue prepares the settlement relating to taxes collected for the state under the provision of KRS 134.192(2)(a). This is reported as the "State Taxes" column on the financial statement.

Note 2. Deposits

The Hickman County Sheriff 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 sheriff 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. These requirements were met.

HICKMAN COUNTY  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENT  
August 31, 2023  
(Continued)

Note 2. Deposits (Continued)

Custodial Credit Risk - Deposits

Custodial credit risk is the risk that in the event of a depository institution failure, the sheriff's deposits may not be returned. The Hickman County Sheriff 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 August 31, 2023, all deposits were covered by FDIC insurance or a properly executed collateral security agreement.

Note 3. Tax Collection Period

A. Property Taxes

The real and personal property tax assessments were levied as of January 1, 2022. Property taxes were billed to finance governmental services for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023. Liens are effective when the tax bills become delinquent. The collection period for these assessments was September 7, 2022 through April 17, 2023.

B. Franchise Taxes

The franchise tax assessments were levied by the Department of Revenue for various tax years. Franchise taxes are billed to finance governmental services. Liens are effective when the tax bills become delinquent. The collection period for these assessments was May 1, 2022 through April 30, 2023.

Note 4. Interest Income

The Hickman County Sheriff earned \$51 as interest income on 2022 taxes. The sheriff was in substantial compliance with his statutory responsibilities.

Note 5. Sheriff's 10% Add-On Fee

The Hickman County Sheriff collected \$6,500 of 10% add-on fees allowed by KRS 134.119(7). This amount was used to operate the sheriff's office.

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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 Kenny Wilson, Hickman County Judge/Executive  
The Honorable Ben Natividad, Hickman County Sheriff  
Members of the Hickman County Fiscal Court

We have audited, in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, the Hickman County Sheriff's Settlement - 2022 Taxes for the period September 1, 2022 through August 31, 2023 - Regulatory Basis and the related notes to the financial statement and have issued our report thereon dated April 19, 2024. The Hickman County Sheriff'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 Hickman County Sheriff'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 Hickman County Sheriff's internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of the Hickman County Sheriff'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. However, material weaknesses may exist that have not been identified. We did identify certain deficiencies in internal control, which are described in the accompanying Schedule of Findings and Responses as items 2021-001 and 2021-002 that we consider to be significant deficiencies.



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 Hickman County Sheriff's financial statement is free from 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**

The Hickman County Sheriff's views and planned corrective action for the findings identified in our audit are described in the accompanying Schedule of Findings and Responses. The Hickman County Sheriff's responses were not subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the financial statement and, accordingly, we express no opinion on them.

**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

April 19, 2024



## SCHEDULE OF FINDINGS AND RESPONSES

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HICKMAN COUNTY  
BEN NATIVIDAD, SHERIFF  
SCHEDULE OF FINDINGS AND RESPONSES

For The Period September 1, 2022 Through August 31, 2023

INTERNAL CONTROL - SIGNIFICANT DEFICIENCIES:

2022-001 The Hickman County Sheriff Omitted \$31,916 Of Franchise Tax Collections From The Tax Settlement

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The Hickman County Sheriff omitted \$31,916 of franchise tax collections and distributions from the tax settlement. This is due to the sheriff not reviewing the settlement to determine if it was accurate and complete. The sheriff's tax settlement was misstated by \$31,916.

Comparing annual tax reports to supporting documentation such as monthly reports and bank records is a control necessary to ensure the report is complete and accurate.

We recommend the sheriff review annual tax settlements and compare amounts reported to monthly tax reports and bank records to ensure the report is accurate and complete.

*Sheriff's Response: Monies were disbursed correctly, however totals on the report were incorrect. The report totals have been changed to correctly reflect the monies disbursed.*

2022-002 The Hickman County Sheriff Did Not Collect The Proper Amount Of Franchise Taxes For The School District

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The Hickman County Sheriff did not collect the proper amount of franchise taxes for the school district. The 2022 tangible franchise tax bills prepared for the school district were calculated using the wrong tangible tax rate. Once the county clerk discovered the error, supplemental bills were prepared and mailed to the applicable taxpayers. The supplemental bills totaled \$26,534.

The sheriff did not review franchise tax bills for accuracy prior to mailing them to taxpayers. The school district and sheriff missed out on funds that could have been used to support operations.

Reviewing franchise tax bills for accuracy is a basic control to ensure the proper tax rates are used for the tax year being billed.

We recommend that the sheriff review all franchise tax bills to ensure the proper assessments are being billed at the proper rates.

*Sheriff's Response: The incorrect amount was discovered by the clerk's office. They corrected the amount and re-billed for the correct amounts.*