

**REPORT OF THE AUDIT OF THE
LAUREL 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 David Westerfield, Laurel County Judge/Executive
The Honorable John Root, Laurel County Sheriff
Members of the Laurel County Fiscal Court

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statement

Opinions

We have audited the accompanying Laurel 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 Laurel 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 Laurel 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 Laurel 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 David Westerfield, Laurel County Judge/Executive
The Honorable John Root, Laurel County Sheriff
Members of the Laurel 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 Laurel 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 Laurel 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 Laurel 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 David Westerfield, Laurel County Judge/Executive
The Honorable John Root, Laurel County Sheriff
Members of the Laurel 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 March 20, 2024, on our consideration of the Laurel 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 Laurel County Sheriff's internal control over financial reporting and compliance.

Respectfully submitted,



Allison Ball
Auditor of Public Accounts
Frankfort, Ky

March 20, 2024

LAUREL COUNTY
JOHN ROOT, SHERIFF
SHERIFF'S SETTLEMENT - 2022 TAXES

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

	County	Special Taxing Districts	School Taxing Districts	State
<u>Charges</u>				
Real Estate	\$ 1,627,276	\$ 5,153,452	\$ 14,247,674	\$ 3,538,173
Tangible	192,771	950,156	1,758,953	1,546,336
Fire Protection	1,577			
Total Per Sheriff's Official Receipt	<u>1,821,624</u>	<u>6,103,608</u>	<u>16,006,627</u>	<u>5,084,509</u>
<u>Other Taxes & Charges</u>				
CY Additional Bills	578	1,806	5,061	2,260
PY Additional Bills	316	1,015	2,690	
Current Year Franchise Real Estate & Tangible	95,494	411,697	860,697	
Court Ordered Increases - Real Estate	367	1,136	3,213	796
Court Ordered Increases - Tangible	34	158	315	676
Transient Tax	709,159			
Penalties	<u>7,826</u>	<u>26,435</u>	<u>68,874</u>	<u>22,893</u>
Gross Chargeable to Sheriff	2,635,398	6,545,855	16,947,477	5,111,134
<u>Credits</u>				
Exonerations - Real Estate	5,821	18,461	50,973	12,632
Exonerations - Tangible	1,309	6,011	11,953	8,017
Delinquent Real Estate	45,824	143,416	400,728	99,312
Delinquent Tangible	2,011	9,235	18,364	13,145
Delinquent Franchise	881	3,718	7,495	
Delinquent PY Additional Bills	78	286	660	162
Discounts	<u>29,896</u>	<u>100,636</u>	<u>262,756</u>	<u>81,602</u>
Total Credits	85,820	281,763	752,929	214,870
Taxes Collected	2,549,578	6,264,092	16,194,548	4,896,264
Less: Sheriff's Commissions*	<u>108,357</u>	<u>262,503</u>	<u>298,203</u>	<u>208,091</u>
Taxes Due Districts	2,441,221	6,001,589	15,896,345	4,688,173
Taxes Paid	2,417,788	5,915,618	15,852,856	4,665,271
Taxes Paid Per State Settlement				106
Refunds (Current and Prior Year)	<u>23,376</u>	<u>89,621</u>	<u>43,044</u>	<u>22,796</u>
Taxes Due Districts (Refund Due Sheriff)	<u>\$ 57</u>	<u>\$ (3,650)</u>	<u>\$ 445</u>	<u>\$ 0</u>
		**	***	

*, **, and *** See next page.

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

LAUREL COUNTY
 JOHN ROOT, SHERIFF
 SHERIFF'S SETTLEMENT - 2022 TAXES
 For The Period September 1, 2022 Through August 31, 2023
 (Continued)

* Commissions:

4.25%	\$	13,595,437
2.50%	\$	320,008
2.1%	\$	1,938
2%	\$	1,778
1.828%	\$	15,870,824
1%	\$	114,497

** Special Taxing Districts:

Library District	\$	86
Health District		38
Extension District		41
Soil Conservation District		<u>(3,815)</u>

Due Districts or (Refund Due Sheriff)	\$	<u>(3,650)</u>
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*** School Taxing Districts

Common School District	\$	662
East Bernstadt Independent District		<u>(217)</u>

Due Districts or (Refunds Due Sheriff)	\$	<u>445</u>
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LAUREL 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 Laurel 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.

LAUREL 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 Laurel 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 30, 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.

C. Transient Taxes

In September 1979, the Laurel County Fiscal Court passed an ordinance establishing the London-Laurel County Tourist and Convention Commission and levying a 3 percent transient room tax. In the ordinance, the Laurel County Sheriff was designated as the collector of the tax. For the period May 1, 2022 through April 30, 2023, the sheriff's office collected \$709,142 of transient room tax receipts. In accordance with the ordinance, the sheriff's office disbursed \$679,004 to the Laurel County Fiscal Court, who in turn remitted the tax to the London-Laurel County Tourist and Convention Commission. The sheriff's office retained \$30,139 as his collection fee and used these fees for the operation of the office.

Note 4. Interest Income

The Laurel County Sheriff earned \$1,114 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 Laurel County Sheriff collected \$113,052 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
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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 David Westerfield, Laurel County Judge/Executive
The Honorable John Root, Laurel County Sheriff
Members of the Laurel 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 Laurel 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 March 20, 2024. The Laurel 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 Laurel 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 Laurel County Sheriff's internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of the Laurel 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 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. 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.



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 Laurel 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*.

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

March 20, 2024