



Auditor of Public Accounts
Mike Harmon

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Contact: Michael Goins
Michael.Goins@ky.gov
502.564.5841
502.209.2867

Harmon Releases Audit of Letcher County Sheriff's Fee Account

FRANKFORT, Ky. – State Auditor Mike Harmon today released the audit of the 2021 financial statement of Letcher County Sheriff Mickey Stines. 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 Letcher 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 comment:

The Letcher 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 2020-001. The sheriff's bookkeeper collected payments from customers and prepared receipts, prepared deposits, and posted receipts to the receipts ledger. In addition, the bookkeeper prepared disbursement checks, distributed payroll checks, posted checks to the disbursements ledger, and prepared the monthly bank reconciliations. The sheriff has put some controls in place such as two employees review and initial daily checkout sheets and all disbursement checks are signed by two people, one being the sheriff. There were not sufficient evidence available that would show that the sheriff, or another

employee, periodically reviewed deposits, ledgers, invoices, or the bank reconciliations to offset the risk caused by the lack of segregation of duties.

The sheriff stated they did not have enough funds to hire additional personnel to segregate duties. A lack of sufficient oversight could result in undetected misappropriation of assets and inaccurate financial reporting to external agencies such as the Department for Local Government (DLG).

The segregation of duties over various accounting functions such as preparing deposits, recording receipts and disbursements, and preparing bank reconciliation, or the implementation of compensating controls, is essential for providing protection from asset misappropriation and inaccurate financial reporting. Additionally, proper segregation of duties could protect employees in the normal course of performing their daily responsibilities.

We recommend the sheriff segregate the duties within his office. If this is not possible due to lack of funds, the sheriff should implement strong oversight over these areas, either by an employee independent of those functions or by the sheriff. Any oversight or reviews should be evidenced by the individual's signature or initials on the source documentation.

County Sheriff's Response: Due to lack of funds, we do the best that we can with the number of staff.

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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