



Auditor of Public Accounts Allison Ball

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Ball Releases Audit of Martin County Sheriff's Fee Account

FRANKFORT, Ky. – State Auditor Allison Ball released the audit of the 2023 financial statement of Martin County Sheriff John Kirk. 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 Martin 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.

The audit contains the following finding:

The Martin County Sheriff's Office Lacks Adequate Segregation Of Duties: This is a repeat finding from the prior year audit. The Martin County Sheriff's Office lacks adequate segregation of duties over various accounting functions. The segregation of duties involving the collection and reporting of receipts, the preparation and recording of disbursements, and bank reconciliations is a basic internal control necessary to ensure the accuracy and reliability of financial reports. This deficiency increases the risk of misappropriation of assets, errors, and inaccurate financial reporting.

We recommend the county sheriff segregate duties involving the collection and reporting of receipts, the preparation and recording of disbursements, and bank reconciliations. If segregation of duties is not feasible due to a lack of staff, we recommend the county sheriff implement and document compensating controls to offset this control deficiency in the form of strong oversight from an employee not performing any of those functions.

Sheriff's Response: Due to a limited budget, we are unable to have adequate office staff to adequately separate duties. We will continue to use compensating controls as much as possible.

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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