



Auditor of Public Accounts
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Harmon Releases Audit of Johnson County Sheriff's Office

FRANKFORT, Ky. – State Auditor Mike Harmon today released the audit of the 2016 financial statement of Johnson County Sheriff Dwayne Price. 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 Johnson 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 sheriff's office lacks adequate segregation of duties. This is a repeat finding and was included in the prior year audit report as Finding 2015-001. The sheriff's office lacks adequate segregation of duties. The sheriff's bookkeeper prepares deposits, writes checks, posts transactions to the receipts ledger, and prepares monthly and quarterly reports. The sheriff or another employee did not document oversight of any of these activities.

A lack of oversight could result in undetected misappropriation of assets and inaccurate financial reporting to external agencies such as Department for Local Government.

According to the sheriff, this condition is a result of a limited budget, which restricts the number of employees the sheriff can hire or delegate duties to. The segregation of duties over various accounting functions such as preparing deposits, recording receipts, 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.

The sheriff should separate the duties involved in preparing deposits, writing checks, posting to ledgers, preparing monthly bank reconciliations, and comparing financial reports to ledgers. If this is not feasible due to a limited budget, cross checking procedures could be implemented and documented by the individual performing the procedure.

Sheriff's response: Do not generate enough fees to hire adequate staff to segregate duties.

Auditor's Reply: Without additional staff, compensating controls, such as cross checking by the official, should be implemented.

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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