

**REPORT OF THE AUDIT OF THE  
FORMER OWSLEY COUNTY  
SHERIFF'S SETTLEMENT – 2022 TAXES**

**For The Period  
September 1, 2022 Through December 31, 2022**



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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 Zeke Little, Jr., Owsley County Judge/Executive  
The Honorable Brent Lynch, Former Owsley County Sheriff  
The Honorable Tara Roberts, Owsley County Sheriff  
Members of the Owsley County Fiscal Court

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

**Opinions**

We have audited the accompanying former Owsley County Sheriff's Settlement – 2022 Taxes for the period September 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022 - 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 December 31, 2022 of the former Owsley 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 former Owsley County Sheriff, for the period September 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022.

**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 Guide for Sheriffs' Tax Settlements* issued by the Auditor of Public Accounts, Commonwealth of Kentucky. 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 former Owsley 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 Zeke Little, Jr., Owsley County Judge/Executive  
 The Honorable Brent Lynch, Former Owsley County Sheriff  
 The Honorable Tara Roberts, Owsley County Sheriff  
 Members of the Owsley 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 former Owsley 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 former Owsley 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 former Owsley 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 Zeke Little, Jr., Owsley County Judge/Executive  
The Honorable Brent Lynch, Former Owsley County Sheriff  
The Honorable Tara Roberts, Owsley County Sheriff  
Members of the Owsley 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 October 10, 2023, on our consideration of the former Owsley 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 former Owsley 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 finding:

2022-001 The Former Sheriff’s Office Did Not Have Adequate Segregation Of Duties

Respectfully submitted,



Allison Ball  
Auditor of Public Accounts  
Frankfort, Ky

October 10, 2023

OWSLEY COUNTY  
BRENT LYNCH, FORMER SHERIFF  
SHERIFF'S SETTLEMENT – 2022 TAXES

For The Period September 1, 2022 Through December 31, 2022

	Special Taxing			
	County	Districts	School	State
<u>Charges</u>				
Real Estate	\$ 148,047	\$ 620,008	\$ 458,026	\$ 106,413
Tangible	3,760	24,143	11,632	6,100
Fire Protection	1,470			
Total Per Sheriff's Official Receipt	<u>153,277</u>	<u>644,151</u>	<u>469,658</u>	<u>112,513</u>
Gross Chargeable to Sheriff	153,277	644,151	469,658	112,513
<u>Credits</u>				
Exonerations	2,447	9,649	7,571	1,759
Discounts	1,965	8,201	6,022	1,439
Transfer To Incoming Sheriff - Real Estate	37,316	154,963	114,179	26,527
Transfer To Incoming Sheriff - Tangible	<u>340</u>	<u>1,895</u>	<u>1,051</u>	<u>416</u>
Total Credits	42,068	174,708	128,823	30,141
Taxes Collected	111,209	469,443	340,835	82,372
Less: Sheriff's Commissions*	<u>4,727</u>	<u>19,951</u>	<u>13,633</u>	<u>3,501</u>
Taxes Due Districts	106,482	449,492	327,202	78,871
Taxes Paid	106,544	449,676	327,355	78,906
Refunds (Current and Prior Year)				
Taxes Due Districts (Refund Due Sheriff)	<u>\$ (62)</u>	<u>\$ (184)</u>	<u>\$ (153)</u>	<u>\$ (35)</u>

\*\*

\* Commissions:

4.25% on	\$ 663,024
4% on	\$ 340,835

\*\* Special Taxing Districts:

Library District	\$ (55)
Health District	(21)
Extension District	(87)
Soil Conservation District	<u>(21)</u>

Refunds Due Sheriff \$ (184)

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



OWSLEY COUNTY  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENT

December 31, 2022

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. The 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 that are recognized in the tax period in which they become available and measurable. Credits are reductions of revenue that are recognized when there is proper authorization. Taxes paid are uses of revenue that 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 former Owsley 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.

OWSLEY COUNTY  
 NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENT  
 December 31, 2022  
 (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 former Owsley County Sheriff did not have a deposit policy for custodial credit risk but rather followed the requirements of the *DLG County Budget Preparation and State Local Finance Officer Policy Manual*. As of December 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 October 10, 2022 through December 31, 2022.

Note 4. Interest Income

The former Owsley County Sheriff earned \$68 as interest income on 2022 taxes. The former sheriff did not distribute interest to the school district and his fee account as required by statute. As of October 10, 2023, the former sheriff owed \$23 in interest to the school district and \$45 in interest to his fee account.

Note 5. Escrow Account

The former Owsley County Sheriff deposited nonrefundable payments in an interest-bearing account. The former sheriff's escrowed beginning balance was \$54. The former sheriff received and disbursed no funds resulting in a total ending balance as of December 31, 2022, of \$54. The ending balance consists of escrowed funds of:

2020 \$54

The former sheriff officially left the office on December 31, 2022. On January 5, 2023, the former sheriff transferred the escrow account balance to the incoming sheriff. When statutorily required, the sheriff's office will turn over the escrowed funds to the Kentucky State Treasurer as unclaimed property.

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 Zeke Little, Jr., Owsley County Judge/Executive  
The Honorable Brent Lynch, Former Owsley County Sheriff  
The Honorable Tara Roberts, Owsley County Sheriff  
Members of the Owsley 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 former Owsley County Sheriff's Settlement – 2022 Taxes for the period September 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022 - Regulatory Basis and the related notes to the financial statement and have issued our report thereon dated October 10, 2023. The former Owsley 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 former Owsley 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 former Owsley County Sheriff's internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of the former Owsley County Sheriff's internal control.

Our consideration of internal control over financial reporting was for the limited purpose described in the preceding paragraph 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. However, as described in the accompanying Schedule of Findings and Responses, we identified a certain deficiency in internal control that we consider to be a material weakness.

*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. We consider the deficiency described in the accompanying Schedule of Findings and Responses as item 2022-001 to be a material weakness.

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 former Owsley 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

October 10, 2023

## SCHEDULE OF FINDINGS AND RESPONSES

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OWSLEY COUNTY  
BRENT LYNCH, FORMER SHERIFF  
SCHEDULE OF FINDINGS AND RESPONSES

For The Period September 1, 2022 Through December 31, 2022

INTERNAL CONTROL - MATERIAL WEAKNESS:

2022-001 The Former Sheriff's Office Did Not Have Adequate Segregation Of Duties

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This is a repeat finding and was included in the prior year's audit report as finding 2021-001. The former sheriff's office did not have adequate segregation of duties. The former sheriff's office bookkeeper collected payments from customers, prepared deposits, wrote checks, posted transactions to the receipt ledger, posted checks to the disbursement ledger, prepared monthly and quarterly reports, and prepared all reconciliations. Without adequate segregation of duties, there is an increased risk of misappropriation of assets, errors, and inaccurate financial reporting to external agencies, such as the Department for Local Government.

The former sheriff or another employee did not document oversight of any of these activities. According to the former sheriff, the limited budget placed restrictions on the number of employees the sheriff's office could hire.

Strong internal controls dictate the same employee should not handle, record, and reconcile receipts. Further, the same employee should not be responsible for preparing, recording, and reconciling disbursements. The segregation of duties over various accounting functions such as opening mail, preparing deposits, recording receipts and disbursements, 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.

We recommend the sheriff's office separate the duties of receiving, processing, recording, reconciling, and reporting financial activity to separate individuals or implement and document compensating controls to offset this weakness. If these duties cannot be segregated, then the sheriff's office should implement compensating controls to strengthen oversight of duties performed by the same person. This could include, but is not limited to, the sheriff (or designee) reviewing and initialing the daily checkout sheet to agree to the daily deposit and initial the deposit slip.

*Former Sheriff's Response: The former official did not provide a response.*