

ATTESTATION ENGAGEMENT

Recorder of Deeds/ Register of Wills

Lawrence County, Pennsylvania
For the Period
January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2015

April 2017



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General

Eugene A. DePasquale • Auditor General



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EUGENE A. DePASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL

Independent Accountant's Report

The Honorable C. Daniel Hassell
Acting Secretary
Pennsylvania Department of Revenue
Harrisburg, PA 17128

We have examined the accompanying statements of receipts and disbursements (Statements) of the Recorder of Deeds/Register of Wills, Lawrence County, Pennsylvania (County Officer), for the period January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2015, pursuant to the requirements of Sections 401(b) and 401(d) of *The Fiscal Code*, 72 P.S. § 401(b) and § 401(d). The county office's management is responsible for these Statements. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these Statements based on our examination.

Our examination was conducted in accordance with attestation standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the standards applicable to attestation engagements contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States and, accordingly, included examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the Statements and performing such other procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances. We believe that our examination provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

We are mandated by Sections 401(b) and 401(d) of *The Fiscal Code* to audit the accounts of each county officer to determine whether all moneys collected on behalf of the Commonwealth have been correctly assessed, reported and promptly remitted. *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States include attestation engagements as a separate type of audit. An attestation engagement performed pursuant to *Government Auditing Standards* involves additional standards that exceed the standards provided by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. Accordingly, this attestation engagement complies with both *Government Auditing Standards* and Sections 401(b) and 401(d) of *The Fiscal Code*.

In our opinion, the Statements referred to above present, in all material respects, the operations of the County Officer as it pertains to receipts made on behalf of the Commonwealth for the period January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2015, in conformity with the criteria set forth in Note 1.

Independent Accountant's Report (Continued)

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we are required to report all deficiencies that are considered to be significant deficiencies or material weaknesses in internal control; fraud and noncompliance with provisions of laws or regulations that have a material effect on the Statements; and any other instances that warrant the attention of those charged with governance; noncompliance with provisions of contracts or grant agreements, and abuse that has a material effect on the Statements. We are also required to obtain and report the views of responsible officials concerning the findings, conclusions, and recommendations, as well as any planned corrective actions. We performed our examination to express an opinion on whether the Statements are presented in accordance with the criteria described above and not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on internal control over reporting on the Statements or on compliance and other matters; accordingly, we express no such opinions.

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 Statements 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 of expressing an opinion on whether the Statements are presented in accordance with the criteria described above and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control over reporting on the Statements that might be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies. Given these limitations, during our engagement 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.

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the Statements are free from material misstatement, we performed tests of the County Officer's compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements, noncompliance with which could have a direct and material effect on the determination of Statement amounts. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our engagement, 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*.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue, the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts, and the County Officer and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

Independent Accountant's Report (Continued)

We appreciate the courtesy extended by the Recorder of Deeds/Register of Wills, Lawrence County, to us during the course of our examination. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Michael B. Kashishian, CPA, CGAP, CFE, Director, Bureau of County Audits, at 717-787-1363.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eugene A. DePasquale". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

March 30, 2017

Eugene A. DePasquale
Auditor General

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RECORDER OF DEEDS
LAWRENCE COUNTY
REALTY TRANSFER TAXES
STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2012 TO DECEMBER 31, 2015

Receipts:

Realty Transfer Taxes (Note 2)	\$ 5,311,145
Commissions (Note 3)	<u>(52,326)</u>
Net Receipts	5,258,819
Disbursements to Commonwealth (Note 4)	<u>(5,258,820)</u>
Balance due Commonwealth (County) per settled reports (Note 5)	(1)
Examination adjustments	<u>-</u>
Adjusted balance due Commonwealth (County) for the period January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2015	<u><u>\$ (1)</u></u>

Notes to the Statements of Receipts and Disbursements are an integral part of this report.

RECORDER OF DEEDS
 LAWRENCE COUNTY
 WRIT TAXES AND JUDICIAL COMPUTER SYSTEM/ACCESS TO JUSTICE FEES
 STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
 FOR THE PERIOD
 JANUARY 1, 2012 TO DECEMBER 31, 2015

Receipts:

Writ Taxes	\$	32,521
Judicial Computer System/Access To Justice Fees		<u>1,095,610</u>
Total Receipts (Note 2)		1,128,131
Commissions (Note 3)		<u>(976)</u>
Net Receipts		1,127,155
Disbursements to Commonwealth (Note 4)		<u>(1,127,155)</u>
Balance due Commonwealth (County) per settled reports (Note 5)		-
Examination adjustments		<u>-</u>
Adjusted balance due Commonwealth (County) for the period January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2015	\$	<u><u>-</u></u>

Notes to the Statements of Receipts and Disbursements are an integral part of this report.

REGISTER OF WILLS
LAWRENCE COUNTY
STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2012 TO DECEMBER 31, 2015

Receipts:

Inheritance Taxes	\$ 18,617,847
Judicial Computer System/Access To Justice Fees	<u>48,038</u>
Total Receipts (Note 2)	18,665,885
Disbursements and credits to Commonwealth (Note 4)	<u>(18,665,885)</u>
Balance due Commonwealth (County) per settled reports (Note 5)	-
Examination adjustments	<u>-</u>
Adjusted balance due Commonwealth (County) for the period January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2015	<u>\$ -</u>

Notes to the Statements of Receipts and Disbursements are an integral part of this report.

RECORDER OF DEEDS/
REGISTER OF WILLS
LAWRENCE COUNTY
NOTES TO THE STATEMENTS OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2012 TO DECEMBER 31, 2015

1. Criteria

The Statements of Receipts and Disbursements provide a summary of receipts and disbursements by category. The categories and the amounts of taxes and fees assessed are based on Pennsylvania laws and regulations.

The Statements were prepared in accordance with reporting requirements prescribed by the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue. Under this method, only the Commonwealth portion of cash receipts and disbursements are presented, revenues are recognized when received, and expenditures are recognized when paid.

2. Receipts

Recorder Of Deeds

Receipts consist of monies collected on behalf of the Commonwealth. These include monies collected for the following taxes and fees:

- The Pennsylvania Realty Transfer Tax is a documentary stamp tax of 1 percent on the value of the interest in real property transferred by deed.
- Writ Taxes represent a \$.50 tax imposed on various types of documents and a \$10 tax on notary public commissions processed through the office.
- Judicial Computer System/Access To Justice Fees represent a \$23.50 fee imposed for each filing of deeds in any form, mortgages, mortgage assignments, mortgage releases, mortgage satisfaction pieces, installment sales agreements, leases for a term of 30 years or longer, and easements. Effective July 10, 2014, Act 126 increased the fee to \$33.50. Effective August 8, 2014, Act 113 increased the fee to \$35.50.

Register Of Wills

Receipts consist of monies collected on behalf of the Commonwealth less commissions on these monies. These include monies collected for the following taxes and fees:

- Inheritance Taxes represent inheritance taxes filed with the Register of Wills.

RECORDER OF DEEDS/
 REGISTER OF WILLS
 LAWRENCE COUNTY
 NOTES TO THE STATEMENTS OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
 FOR THE PERIOD
 JANUARY 1, 2012 TO DECEMBER 31, 2015

2. Receipts (Continued)

Register Of Wills (Continued)

- Judicial Computer System/Access To Justice Fees represent a \$23.50 fee imposed for the initiation of any civil action or legal proceeding, including the filing of petitions for grants of letters, and first filing in petitions concerning adoptions, incompetents' estates, minors' estates, and inter vivos trusts. Effective July 10, 2014, Act 126 increased the fee to \$33.50. Effective August 8, 2014, Act 113 increased the fee to \$35.50.

3. Commissions

Acting in the capacity of an agent for the Commonwealth, the Recorder of Deeds/Register of Wills is authorized to collect a commission on the Commonwealth portion of taxes as follows:

<u>Tax</u>	<u>Commission</u>
Realty Transfer	1%
Writ	3%
Inheritance	4.25% \$1.00 to \$200,000.00
	1.75% next \$800,000.00
	.50% thereafter

Register of Wills commissions of \$163,088 for Inheritance Taxes were paid to the County by the Department of Revenue, which are not reflected in the Statement.

RECORDER OF DEEDS/
REGISTER OF WILLS
LAWRENCE COUNTY
NOTES TO THE STATEMENTS OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2012 TO DECEMBER 31, 2015

4. Disbursements And Credits

Recorder Of Deeds

Realty Transfer Taxes

The Recorder of Deeds participates in the Department of Revenue's cash management system for Realty Transfer Taxes. Under this system, the "Agent" deposits Realty Transfer Tax collections to a local account approved and established in the name of the Department of Revenue, thereby eliminating the need for the agent to issue a check to disburse these taxes.

Total disbursements are comprised as follows:

Deposits into the Department of Revenue's cash management account	<u>\$ 5,258,820</u>
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Writ Taxes And Judicial Computer System/Access To Justice Fees

Total disbursements are comprised as follows:

Recorder of Deeds checks issued to:

Department of Revenue	<u>\$ 1,127,155</u>
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RECORDER OF DEEDS/
 REGISTER OF WILLS
 LAWRENCE COUNTY
 NOTES TO THE STATEMENTS OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
 FOR THE PERIOD
 JANUARY 1, 2012 TO DECEMBER 31, 2015

4. Disbursements and Credits (Continued)

Register Of Wills

Inheritance Taxes

The Register of Wills participates in the Department of Revenue's cash management system for Inheritance Taxes. Under this system, the "Agent" deposits Inheritance Tax collections to a local account approved and established in the name of the Department of Revenue, thereby eliminating the need for the agent to issue a check to disburse these taxes.

Total disbursements are comprised as follows:

Deposits into the Department of Revenue's cash management account	\$ 18,616,432
Credits issued by the Department of Revenue	1,415
Checks issued to the Department of Revenue for Judicial Computer System/Access To Justice Fees	<u>48,038</u>
Total	<u><u>\$ 18,665,885</u></u>

5. Balance Due Commonwealth (County) For The Period January 1, 2012 To December 31, 2015

This balance reflects a summary of monthly transmittal reports as settled by the Department of Revenue.

6. County Officer Serving During Examination Period

Janet L. Kalajainen served as Recorder of Deeds/Register of Wills during the period January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2015.

RECORDER OF DEEDS/
REGISTER OF WILLS
LAWRENCE COUNTY
REPORT DISTRIBUTION
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2012 TO DECEMBER 31, 2015

This report was initially distributed to:

The Honorable C. Daniel Hassell
Acting Secretary
Pennsylvania Department of Revenue

The Honorable Thomas B. Darr
Court Administrator of Pennsylvania
Supreme Court of Pennsylvania Courts
Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts

The Honorable Janet L. Kalajainen
Recorder of Deeds/Register of Wills

The Honorable David Gettings
Controller

The Honorable Daniel J. Vogler
President/Chairperson of the Board of Commissioners

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at www.PaAuditor.gov. Media questions about the report can be directed to the Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General, Office of Communications, 229 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120; via email to: news@PaAuditor.gov.