



DISTRICT COURT 05-2-26
ALLEGHENY COUNTY
EXAMINATION REPORT
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2010 TO DECEMBER 31, 2011

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE - AUDITOR GENERAL

DEPARTMENT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL



DISTRICT COURT 05-2-26

ALLEGHENY COUNTY

EXAMINATION REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD

JANUARY 1, 2010 TO DECEMBER 31, 2011

CONTENTS

| | <u>Page</u> |
|--|-------------|
| Independent Auditor's Report..... | 1 |
| Financial Section: | |
| Statement Of Receipts And Disbursements..... | 4 |
| Notes To The Statement Of Receipts And Disbursements..... | 5 |
| Finding And Recommendations: | |
| Finding No. 1 - Failure To Follow The <i>Supreme Court Of Pennsylvania Administrative Office Of Pennsylvania Courts Record Retention & Disposition Schedule With Guidelines Procedures</i> | 6 |
| Report Distribution | 8 |



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0018
Facebook: Pennsylvania Auditor General
Twitter: @PAAuditorGen

EUGENE A. DePASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL

Independent Auditor's Report

The Honorable Daniel P. Meuser
Secretary
Pennsylvania Department of Revenue
Harrisburg, PA 17128

We have examined the accompanying statement of receipts and disbursements (Statement) of District Court 05-2-26, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania (District Court), for the period January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2011, pursuant to the requirements of Section 401(c) of *The Fiscal Code*, 72 P.S. § 401(c). This Statement is the responsibility of the District Court's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on this Statement 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. An examination includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the Statement 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 Section 401(c) of *The Fiscal Code* to audit the accounts of each district court 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 Section 401(c) of *The Fiscal Code*.

Independent Auditor's Report (Continued)

In our opinion, the Statement referred to above presents, in all material respects, the operations of the District Court as it pertains to receipts made on behalf of the Commonwealth for the period January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2011, in conformity with the criteria set forth in Note 1.

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we are required to report findings of significant deficiencies in internal control, violations of provisions of contracts or grant agreements, and abuse that are material to the Statement and any fraud and illegal acts that are more than inconsequential that come to our attention during our examination. We are also required to obtain the views of management on those matters. We performed our examination to express an opinion on whether the Statement is presented in accordance with the criteria described above and not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the internal control over reporting on the Statement or on compliance and other matters; accordingly, we express no such opinions.

A control deficiency 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 misstatements on a timely basis. A significant deficiency is a control deficiency, or combination of control deficiencies, that adversely affects the District Court's ability to initiate, authorize, record, process, or report data reliably in accordance with the applicable criteria such that there is more than a remote likelihood that a misstatement of the District Court's Statement that is more than inconsequential will not be prevented or detected by the District Court's internal control.

A material weakness is a significant deficiency or combination of significant deficiencies that results in more than a remote likelihood that a material misstatement of the Statement will not be prevented or detected by the District Court's internal control.

Our consideration of internal control over reporting on the Statement was for the limited purpose described in the first paragraph of this section and would not necessarily identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be significant deficiencies or material weaknesses. We did not identify any significant deficiencies or material weaknesses, as defined above, in internal control over reporting on the Statement.

Independent Auditor's Report (Continued)

The results of our tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*. However, we did note an other matter that, while not required to be included in this report by *Government Auditing Standards*, has been included in the finding below:

- Failure To Follow *The Supreme Court Of Pennsylvania Administrative Office Of Pennsylvania Courts Record Retention & Disposition Schedule With Guidelines Procedures*.

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



EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE
Auditor General

April 26, 2013

DISTRICT COURT 05-2-26
 ALLEGHENY COUNTY
 STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
 FOR THE PERIOD
 JANUARY 1, 2010 TO DECEMBER 31, 2011

Receipts:

| | | |
|---|----|-----------------|
| Department of Transportation | | |
| Title 75 Fines | \$ | 45,079 |
| Littering Law Fines | | 322 |
| Child Restraint Fines | | 150 |
| Department of Revenue Court Costs | | 74,577 |
| Crime Victims' Compensation Bureau Costs | | 5,351 |
| Crime Commission Costs/Victim Witness Services Costs | | 3,826 |
| Domestic Violence Costs | | 1,432 |
| Emergency Medical Service Fines | | 15,917 |
| CAT/MCARE Fund Surcharges | | 49,575 |
| Judicial Computer System Fees | | 24,792 |
| Access to Justice Fees | | 7,614 |
| Criminal Justice Enhancement Account Fees | | 3,192 |
| Judicial Computer Project Surcharges | | 14,536 |
| Constable Service Surcharges | | 3,171 |
| Miscellaneous State Fines | | 5,292 |
| | | <hr/> |
| Total receipts (Note 2) | | 254,826 |
| Disbursements to Commonwealth (Note 3) | | <hr/> (254,826) |
| Balance due Commonwealth (District Court) per settled reports (Note 4) | | - |
| Examination adjustments | | <hr/> - |
| Adjusted balance due Commonwealth (District Court) for the period January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2011 | \$ | <hr/> <hr/> - |

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

DISTRICT COURT 05-2-26
ALLEGHENY COUNTY
NOTES TO THE STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2010 TO DECEMBER 31, 2011

1. Criteria

The Statement of Receipts and Disbursements provides a summary of receipts and disbursements by category. The categories and the amounts of fines, costs, fees, and surcharges assessed are based on Pennsylvania laws and regulations.

The Statement was 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

Receipts are comprised of fines, costs, fees, and surcharges collected on behalf of the Commonwealth. These fines, costs, fees, and surcharges represent collections made on traffic, non-traffic, civil, and criminal cases filed with the District Court.

3. Disbursements

Total disbursements are comprised as follows:

District Court checks issued to:

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Department of Revenue | \$ <u>254,826</u> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|

4. Balance Due Commonwealth (District Court) For The Period January 1, 2010 To December 31, 2011

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

5. Magisterial District Judge Serving During Examination Period

Beth S. Mills served at District Court 05-2-26 for the period January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2011.

DISTRICT COURT 05-2-26
ALLEGHENY COUNTY
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2010 TO DECEMBER 31, 2011

Finding No. 1 - Failure To Follow The *Supreme Court Of Pennsylvania Administrative Office Of Pennsylvania Courts Record Retention & Disposition Schedule With Guidelines Procedures*

Our examination disclosed that traffic/non-traffic citations issued between January 1, 2007 and December 31, 2009 were not available for examination and were destroyed in January 2011, October 2011, and January 2013 by the district court without being in compliance with the procedures described in the *Supreme Court of Pennsylvania Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts Record Retention & Disposition Schedule with Guidelines* (Schedule).

The Schedule outlines the proper procedures for the destruction of non-permanent court records. Disposal request procedures include:

A request to destroy non-permanent scheduled records must be submitted by the record custodian requesting permission to dispose of the record(s) to the Record Retention Officer utilizing a Unified Judicial System Disposal Log for Non-Permanent Records form adopted by the AOPC as provided in Pa.R.J.A. No. 507. The Record Retention Officer shall review the Records Disposal Log Form for completeness and shall grant written permission to dispose of such non-permanent records upon ascertaining that the applicable retention period as set forth in the schedule has been met. Written approval from the AOPC is not necessary before destroying non-permanent records as identified in the schedule. A log of individual disposition actions involving non-permanent records must be maintained. Copies of the Records Disposal Log Form shall be submitted on an annual basis to the AOPC. (See §4.5 Form Retention)

Although the Schedule identifies traffic and non-traffic citations as records that may be destroyed after three years, the Schedule also states in part:

Records subject to audit must be retained for the periods listed in the schedule and must be audited and all findings resolved before such records may be destroyed. [Emphasis added.]

The failure to maintain these records resulted in an unclear examination trail. Additionally, collections associated with missing case files and documents could be lost or misappropriated.

DISTRICT COURT 05-2-26
ALLEGHENY COUNTY
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2010 TO DECEMBER 31, 2011

Finding No. 1 - Failure To Follow The *Supreme Court Of Pennsylvania Administrative Office Of Pennsylvania Courts Record Retention & Disposition Schedule With Guidelines Procedures (Continued)*

The Magisterial District Judge and court staff indicated they were under the assumption that all cases docketed in a particular year could be destroyed. They were not aware that if one of these cases had final action upon it in a subsequent year, the case had to be retained in the subsequent year's closed file until audited.

Recommendations

We recommend that the district court comply with the procedures listed in the Schedule. We further recommend that the district court not destroy citations until after they have been subject to examination by the Department of the Auditor General.

Management's Response

The Magisterial District Judge responded as follows:

Record Retention – reviewed rules with staff & implemented procedure, signed and dated upon exit conference Friday, April 25, 2013 at 11:00am.

DISTRICT COURT 05-2-26
ALLEGHENY COUNTY
REPORT DISTRIBUTION
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2010 TO DECEMBER 31, 2011

This report was initially distributed to:

The Honorable Daniel P. Meuser
Secretary
Pennsylvania Department of Revenue

The Honorable Zygmunt Pines
Court Administrator of Pennsylvania
Supreme Court of Pennsylvania
Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| The Honorable Beth S. Mills | Magisterial District Judge |
| The Honorable Rich Fitzgerald | County Executive |
| The Honorable Chelsa Wagner | Controller |
| Mr. Matthew O. Zoccole | Deputy Court Administrator |

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at <http://www.auditorgen.state.pa.us>. Media questions about the report can be directed to the Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General, Office of Communications, 231 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120; via email to: news@auditorgen.state.pa.us.