



DISTRICT COURT 05-2-19

ALLEGHENY COUNTY

EXAMINATION REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD

JANUARY 1, 2006 TO DECEMBER 31, 2008

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**Department of the Auditor General
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120-0018**

**JACK WAGNER
AUDITOR GENERAL**

Independent Auditor's Report

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

We have examined the accompanying statement of receipts and disbursements (Statement) of District Court 05-2-19, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania (District Court), for the period January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2008, 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*.

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 ended December 31, 2008, in conformity with the criteria set forth in Note 1.

Independent Auditor's Report (Continued)

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. We consider the deficiency described in the finding below to be a significant deficiency in internal control over the reporting on the Statement:

- Required Downtime Manual Receipt Procedures Were Not Always Followed.

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 the internal control over reporting on the Statement would not necessarily disclose all matters in the internal control that might be significant deficiencies and, accordingly, would not necessarily disclose all significant deficiencies that are also considered to be material weaknesses. We consider the significant deficiency described above to be a material weakness.

The results of our tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*.

Independent Auditor's Report (Continued)

We are concerned in light of the District Court's failure to correct a previously reported finding regarding required downtime manual receipt procedures not always being followed. This significant deficiency increases the risk for funds to be lost or misappropriated. The District Court should strive to implement the recommendation and corrective action noted in this examination report.

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.

February 3, 2010

JACK WAGNER
Auditor General



DISTRICT COURT 05-2-19
 ALLEGHENY COUNTY
 STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
 FOR THE PERIOD
 JANUARY 1, 2006 TO DECEMBER 31, 2008

Receipts:

Department of Transportation		
Title 75 Fines	\$ 224,197	
Motor Carrier Road Tax Fines	73	
Overweight Fines	125	
Commercial Driver Fines	3,000	
Littering Law Fines	100	
Child Restraint Fines	595	
Department of Revenue Court Costs	205,650	
Crime Victims' Compensation Bureau Costs	37,541	
Crime Commission Costs/Victim Witness Services Costs	26,959	
Department of Public Welfare		
Domestic Violence Costs	10,693	
Attend Care Fines	48	
Emergency Medical Service Fines	89,537	
CAT/MCARE Fund Surcharges	277,118	
Judicial Computer System Fees	98,551	
Access to Justice Fees	24,355	
Constable Service Surcharges	10,294	
Firearm Education and Training Costs	<u>5</u>	
 Total receipts (Note 2)		 \$ 1,008,841
 Disbursements to Commonwealth (Note 3)		 <u>(1,008,841)</u>
 Balance due Commonwealth (District Court) per settled reports (Note 4)		 -
 Examination adjustments		 <u>-</u>
 Adjusted balance due Commonwealth (District Court) for the period January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2008		 <u><u>\$ -</u></u>

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

DISTRICT COURT 05-2-19
ALLEGHENY COUNTY
NOTES TO THE STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2006 TO DECEMBER 31, 2008

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	\$ 1,008,841
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4. Balance Due Commonwealth (District Court) For The Period January 1, 2006 To December 31, 2008

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

5. Magisterial District Judge Serving During Examination Period

Blaise P. Larotonda served at District Court 05-2-19 for the period January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2008.

DISTRICT COURT 05-2-19
ALLEGHENY COUNTY
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2006 TO DECEMBER 31, 2008

Finding - Required Computer Downtime Manual Receipt Procedures Were Not Always Followed

The Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts' (AOPC) policies require computer downtime manual receipts to be issued in the event of a temporary power loss to the district court's computer system. When the computer system is operating again, the computer downtime manual receipt is replaced by an official computer-generated receipt and included in the daily receipts. When the AOPC's policies are not followed, the possibility that funds received by the District Court could be lost or misappropriated increases significantly.

Our examination disclosed that required computer downtime manual receipt procedures were not always followed. Of 25 receipts tested, there were 4 instances in which the computer receipt was not generated timely after the issuance of the corresponding downtime manual receipt. The time lapse from the date of the computer downtime manual receipt to the corresponding computer receipt ranged from 4 days to 7 days.

The *Magisterial District Judge Automated Office Clerical Procedures Manual* (Manual) establishes the uniform written internal control policies and procedures for all district courts. The Manual requires that downtime manual receipts be issued in the event of a temporary power loss to the computer system. When the computer system is not operational, the receipt and log sheet should be filled out for each receipt number and the initials of the employee receiving the payment should be documented on the log sheet. The receipts should be used in numerical order; the log sheet should be filled out using the appropriate receipt number; a copy of that receipt should be given to the remitter; and the second copy of the receipt should be kept, along with the associated log, in a secure location. When the computer system is running again, the second copy of the receipt should be attached to the new system-generated receipt and placed in the case file and the date the payment was entered into the system should be documented on the log sheet. Additionally, the Manual requires that when a manual receipt number is issued, the manual receipt number should be entered in the manual receipt number field when creating the computer receipt. This will link the manual receipt to the computer receipt.

Good internal accounting controls ensure that computer receipts are generated timely after the issuance of the corresponding computer downtime manual receipts.

This condition existed because the district court failed to establish and implement an adequate system of internal controls over computer downtime manual receipts.

DISTRICT COURT 05-2-19
ALLEGHENY COUNTY
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2006 TO DECEMBER 31, 2008

Finding - Required Computer Downtime Manual Receipt Procedures Were Not Always Followed (Continued)

Adherence to good internal accounting controls and the uniform internal control policies and procedures, as set forth in the Manual, would have ensured that there were adequate internal controls over collections.

This finding was cited in our last two audit periods, the most recent ending December 31, 2005.

Recommendation

We again recommend that the district court establish and implement an adequate system of internal controls over computer downtime manual receipts as noted above.

Management's Response

No formal response was offered at this time.

Auditor's Conclusion

This is a recurring finding. We strongly recommend that the office comply with our recommendation.

DISTRICT COURT 05-2-19
ALLEGHENY COUNTY
REPORT DISTRIBUTION
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2006 TO DECEMBER 31, 2008

This report was initially distributed to:

The Honorable C. Daniel Hassell
Secretary
Pennsylvania Department of Revenue

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

The Honorable Blaise P. Larotonda	Magisterial District Judge
The Honorable Mark Patrick Flaherty	Controller
The Honorable Dan Onorato	Allegheny County Chief Executive
Mr. Raymond L. Billotte	District Court Administrator

This report is a matter of public record. Copies of this report may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General, Office of Communications, 318 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120. To view this report online or to contact the Department of the Auditor General, please access our web site at www.auditorgen.state.pa.us.