



DISTRICT COURT 15-1-02

CHESTER COUNTY

EXAMINATION REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD

JANUARY 1, 2006 TO DECEMBER 31, 2009

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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 15-1-02, Chester County, Pennsylvania (District Court), for the period January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2009, 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.

Except as discussed in the fourth paragraph, 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*.

As discussed in Finding and Recommendations Section, the closed 2006 traffic/non-traffic citations were destroyed and not available for examination. Without these records, we could not perform our standard examination procedures. As a result, the scope of our examination of the District Court's Statement was limited, and we were unable to satisfy ourselves by other examination procedures.

Independent Auditor's Report (Continued)

In our opinion, except for the effects, if any, of the matters noted in the preceding paragraph, 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, 2009, 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. We consider the deficiency described in the finding below to be a significant deficiency in internal control over the reporting on the Statement:

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

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 County Officer'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.

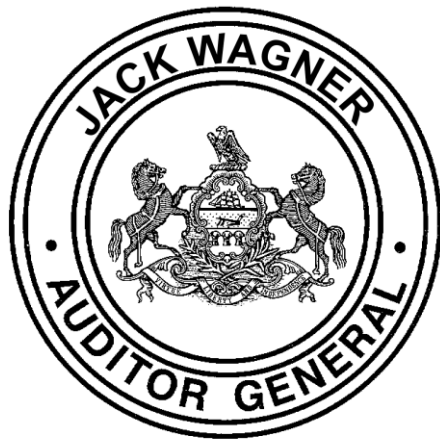
Independent Auditor's Report (Continued)

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

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.

July 13, 2010

JACK WAGNER
Auditor General



DISTRICT COURT 15-1-02
 CHESTER COUNTY
 STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
 FOR THE PERIOD
 JANUARY 1, 2006 TO DECEMBER 31, 2009

Receipts:

Department of Transportation			
Title 75 Fines	\$	264,425	
Overweight Fines		216	
Littering Law Fines		484	
Child Restraint Fines		499	
Department of Revenue Court Costs		262,283	
Crime Victims' Compensation Bureau Costs		25,997	
Crime Commission Costs/Victim Witness Services Costs		27,421	
Domestic Violence Costs		6,898	
Emergency Medical Service Fines		142,485	
CAT/MCARE Fund Surcharges		431,694	
Judicial Computer System Fees		134,925	
Access to Justice Fees		33,546	
Criminal Justice Enhancement Account Fees		29	
Judicial Computer Project Surcharges		133	
Constable Service Surcharges		12,370	
Miscellaneous State Fines		520	
		264,425	
 Total receipts (Note 2)			\$ 1,343,925
 Disbursements to Commonwealth (Note 3)			<u>(1,343,925)</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, 2009			<u><u>\$ -</u></u>

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

DISTRICT COURT 15-1-02
CHESTER COUNTY
NOTES TO THE STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2006 TO DECEMBER 31, 2009

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

District Court checks issued to:

Department of Revenue	\$ 1,343,925
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4. Balance Due Commonwealth (District Court) For The Period January 1, 2006 To December 31, 2009

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

5. Magisterial District Judges Serving During Examination Period

John F. Anthony served at District Court 15-1-02 for the period January 1, 2006 to May 31, 2008.

Susann Welsh served at District Court 15-1-02 for the period June 1, 2008 to December 31, 2008.

Thomas W. Tartaglio served at District Court 15-1-02 for the period January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009.

DISTRICT COURT 15-1-02
CHESTER COUNTY
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2006 TO DECEMBER 31, 2009

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

Our examination disclosed that closed 2006 traffic/non-traffic citations were not available for examination and had been archived by the district court and destroyed by the retention center 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 cases files and documents could be lost or misappropriated.

DISTRICT COURT 15-1-02
CHESTER COUNTY
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2006 TO DECEMBER 31, 2009

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

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:

The former office manager had sent the 2006 closed cases to the Chester County Archive Office. This action was done without the knowledge or authorization of the sitting judge.

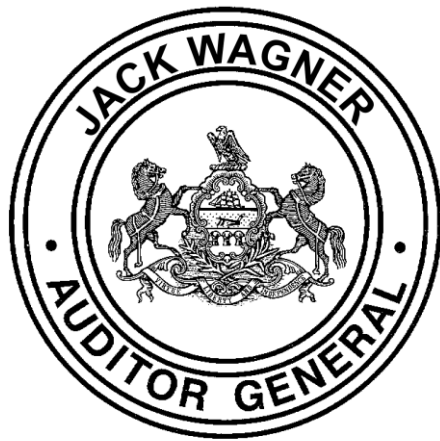
DISTRICT COURT 15-1-02
CHESTER COUNTY
COMMENT
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2006 TO DECEMBER 31, 2009

Comment - Compliance With Prior Examination Recommendations

During our prior examination, we recommended:

- That the office review the tickler reports for warrants daily and take appropriate action as required by the *Magisterial District Judge Automated Office Clerical Procedures Manual*.
- That the office review warrant control reports and notify police or other officials to return warrants that are unserved for 60 days for summary traffic and non-traffic cases as required by the *Magisterial District Judge Automated Office Clerical Procedures Manual*.

Our current examination found that the office substantially complied with our prior examination recommendations. Insignificant instances of noncompliance were verbally communicated to the office.



DISTRICT COURT 15-1-02
CHESTER COUNTY
REPORT DISTRIBUTION
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2006 TO DECEMBER 31, 2009

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 Thomas W. Tartaglio	Magisterial District Judge
The Honorable Valentino F. Di Giorgio, III	Controller
The Honorable Carole Aichele	Chairwoman of the Board of Commissioners
Ms. Margaret M. Yokemick	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.