

RECORDER OF DEEDS/REGISTER OF WILLS/
CLERK OF ORPHANS' COURT

WARREN COUNTY

EXAMINATION REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD

JANUARY 1, 2005 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007

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Independent Auditor's Report

Mr. 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/Clerk of Orphans' Court, Warren County, Pennsylvania (County Officer), for the period January 1, 2005 to December 31, 2007, pursuant to the requirements of Sections 401(b) and 401(d) of *The Fiscal Code*, 72 P.S. § 401(b) and § 401(d). These Statements are the responsibility of the county office's management. 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. An examination includes 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 ended December 31, 2007, 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 Statements 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 Statements are 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 Statements 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 County Officer'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 County Officer's Statements that is more than inconsequential will not be prevented or detected by the County Officer's internal control. We consider the deficiency described in the finding below to be a significant deficiency in internal control over reporting on the Statements:

- Inadequate Accountability Over Funds Held In Escrow.

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 Statements will not be prevented or detected by the County Officer's internal control. Our consideration of the internal control over reporting on the Statements 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*.

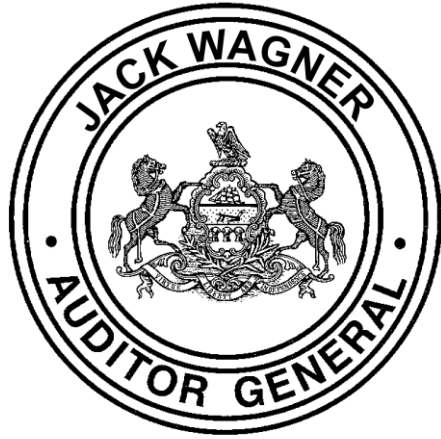
Independent Auditor's Report (Continued)

We are concerned in light of the County Officer's failure to correct a previously reported finding regarding inadequate accountability over funds held in escrow. This significant deficiency increases the risk for funds to be lost or misappropriated. The County Officer should strive to implement the recommendations 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 County Officer and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

April 17, 2009

JACK WAGNER
Auditor General



RECORDER OF DEEDS
WARREN COUNTY
REALTY TRANSFER TAXES
STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2005 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007

Receipts:

Realty Transfer Taxes (Note 2)	\$ 1,888,054
Disbursements to Commonwealth (Note 4)	<u>(1,873,205)</u>
Balance due Commonwealth (County) per settled reports (Note 5)	14,849
Examination adjustments	<u>-</u>
Adjusted balance due Commonwealth (County) for the period January 1, 2005 to December 31, 2007	<u><u>\$ 14,849</u></u>

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

RECORDER OF DEEDS
 WARREN COUNTY
 WRIT TAXES AND JUDICIAL COMPUTER SYSTEM/ACCESS TO JUSTICE FEES
 STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
 FOR THE PERIOD
 JANUARY 1, 2005 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007

Receipts:

Writ Taxes	\$ 12,425
Judicial Computer System/Access To Justice Fees	<u>195,660</u>
Total Receipts (Note 2)	208,085
Commissions (Note 3)	<u>(373)</u>
Net Receipts	207,712
Disbursements to Commonwealth (Note 4)	<u>(207,703)</u>
Balance due Commonwealth (County) per settled reports (Note 5)	9
Examination adjustments	<u>-</u>
Adjusted balance due Commonwealth (County) for the period January 5, 2005 to December 31, 2007	<u><u>\$ 9</u></u>

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

REGISTER OF WILLS
WARREN COUNTY
INHERITANCE TAXES
STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2005 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007

Receipts:

Inheritance Taxes (Note 2)	\$ 6,392,578
Disbursements and credits to Commonwealth (Note 4)	<u>(6,395,657)</u>
Balance due Commonwealth (County) per settled reports (Note 5)	(3,079)
Examination adjustments	<u>-</u>
Adjusted balance due Commonwealth (County) for the period January 1, 2005 to December 31, 2007	<u><u>\$ (3,079)</u></u>

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

CLERK OF ORPHANS' COURT
WARREN COUNTY
MARRIAGE LICENSE TAXES, SURCHARGES, FEES AND
JUDICIAL COMPUTER SYSTEM/ACCESS TO JUSTICE FEES
STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2005 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007

Receipts:

Marriage License Taxes	\$	417
Marriage License Application Surcharges		8,340
Marriage License Declaration Fees		8,340
Judicial Computer System/Access To Justice Fees		<u>6,680</u>
Total Receipts (Note 2)		23,777
Disbursements to Commonwealth (Note 4)		<u>(23,777)</u>
Balance due Commonwealth (County) per settled reports (Note 5)		-
Examination adjustments		<u>-</u>
Adjusted balance due Commonwealth (County) for the period January 1, 2005 to December 31, 2007	\$	<u><u>-</u></u>

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

RECORDER OF DEEDS/REGISTER OF WILLS/
CLERK OF ORPHANS' COURT
WARREN COUNTY
NOTES TO THE STATEMENTS OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2005 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007

1. Criteria

The Statements of Receipts and Disbursements provide a summary of receipts and disbursements by category. The categories and the amounts of taxes, fees, and surcharges 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 \$10 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.

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/
CLERK OF ORPHANS' COURT
WARREN COUNTY
NOTES TO THE STATEMENTS OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2005 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007

2. Receipts (Continued)

Register Of Wills (Continued)

- Judicial Computer System/Access To Justice Fees represent a \$10 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.

For the purpose of reporting the collection of Judicial Computer System/Access To Justice Fees to the Department of Revenue, the office combined the Register of Wills and Clerk of Orphans' Court collections and reported them on the Clerk of Orphans' Court's monthly report. Therefore, the amount reported on the Clerk of Orphans' Court's statement of receipts and disbursements includes the fees collected for the office of the Register of Wills.

Clerk Of Orphans' Court

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

- The Marriage License Tax is a \$.50 tax on all marriage licenses filed with the Clerk of Orphans' Court.
- The Marriage License Application Surcharge is a \$10 surcharge imposed on all marriage license applications.
- The Marriage License Declaration Fees is a \$13 fee imposed for the issuance of a marriage license or declaration and for returns thereof to the Department of Health, \$2.50 of which shall be for the use of the county where the license is issued, and \$.50 for the use of the Commonwealth (Marriage License Tax), plus \$10 (Marriage License/Declaration Fees). The statement of receipts and disbursements only reflects the portion collected on behalf of the Commonwealth.
- Judicial Computer System/Access To Justice Fees represent a \$10 fee imposed on all petitions for grant of letters, and first filings in petitions concerning adoptions, incompetents' estates, minors' estates, and inter vivos trusts.

RECORDER OF DEEDS/REGISTER OF WILLS/
 CLERK OF ORPHANS' COURT
 WARREN COUNTY
 NOTES TO THE STATEMENTS OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
 FOR THE PERIOD
 JANUARY 1, 2005 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007

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

Recorder of Deeds commissions of \$18,636 for Realty Transfer Taxes and Register of Wills commissions of \$85,210 for Inheritance Taxes were paid to the County by the Department of Revenue, which are not reflected in the Statements.

4. Disbursements And Credits To Commonwealth

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><u>\$ 1,873,205</u></u>
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RECORDER OF DEEDS/REGISTER OF WILLS/
CLERK OF ORPHANS' COURT
WARREN COUNTY
NOTES TO THE STATEMENTS OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2005 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007

4. Disbursements And Credits To Commonwealth (Continued)

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	\$ 207,703
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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 and credits are comprised as follows:

Deposits into the Department of Revenue's cash management account	\$ 6,395,637
Credits issued by the Department of Revenue	<u>20</u>
Total	<u>\$ 6,395,657</u>

Clerk Of Orphans' Court

Total disbursements are comprised as follows:

Clerk of Orphans' Court checks issued to:

Department of Revenue	\$ 23,777
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RECORDER OF DEEDS/REGISTER OF WILLS/
 CLERK OF ORPHANS' COURT
 WARREN COUNTY
 NOTES TO THE STATEMENTS OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
 FOR THE PERIOD
 JANUARY 1, 2005 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007

5. Balance Due Commonwealth (County) For The Period January 1, 2005 To December 31, 2007

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

6. Reconciliation Of Settled Reports

Recorder Of Deeds - Realty Transfer Tax

The following presents a reconciliation of monthly reports settled by the Department of Revenue for the period January 1, 2005 to December 31, 2007:

Date of Summary of Collections Report	Balance Due Settled Reports Commonwealth (County)	Adjustments	Adjusted Balance Due Commonwealth (County)
2005			
January	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
February	-	-	-
March	(20,097)	-	(20,097)
April	6,249	-	6,249
May	13,848	-	13,848
June	7,787	-	7,787
July	12,307	-	12,307
August	(5,243)	-	(5,243)
September	-	-	-
October	-	-	-
November	-	-	-
December	-	-	-
2006			
January	-	-	-
February	-	-	-
March	-	-	-
April	-	-	-
May	(2)	-	(2)
June	(561)	-	(561)
July	561	-	561
August	-	-	-
September	-	-	-
October	-	-	-
November	-	-	-
December	-	-	-

RECORDER OF DEEDS/REGISTER OF WILLS/
 CLERK OF ORPHANS' COURT
 WARREN COUNTY
 NOTES TO THE STATEMENTS OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
 FOR THE PERIOD
 JANUARY 1, 2005 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007

6. Reconciliation Of Settled Reports (Continued)

Recorder Of Deeds - Realty Transfer Tax (Continued)

Date of Summary of Collections Report	Balance Due Settled Reports Commonwealth (County)	Adjustments	Adjusted Balance Due Commonwealth (County)
2007			
January	-	-	-
February	(2,535)	-	(2,535)
March	2,535	-	2,535
April	4,254	-	4,254
May	(4,254)	-	(4,254)
June	890	-	890
July	(890)	-	(890)
August	-	-	-
September	-	-	-
October	62	-	62
November	(62)	-	(62)
December	-	-	-
Balance due Commonwealth (County) per settled reports			14,849
Examination adjustments			-
Adjusted balance due Commonwealth (County) January 1, 2005 to December 31, 2007			<u>\$ 14,849</u>

RECORDER OF DEEDS/REGISTER OF WILLS/
 CLERK OF ORPHANS' COURT
 WARREN COUNTY
 NOTES TO THE STATEMENTS OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
 FOR THE PERIOD
 JANUARY 1, 2005 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007

6. Reconciliation Of Settled Reports (Continued)

Register Of Wills - Inheritance Tax

Date of Summary of Collections Report	Balance Due Settled Reports Commonwealth (County)	Adjustments	Adjusted Balance Due Commonwealth (County)
2005			
January	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
February	-	-	-
March	-	-	-
April	-	-	-
May	-	-	-
June	873	-	873
July	-	-	-
August	(873)	-	(873)
September	-	-	-
October	-	-	-
November	-	-	-
December	-	-	-
2006			
January	-	-	-
February	-	-	-
March	-	-	-
April	-	-	-
May	-	-	-
June	-	-	-
July	-	-	-
August	-	-	-
September	-	-	-
October	-	-	-
November	-	-	-
December	-	-	-

RECORDER OF DEEDS/REGISTER OF WILLS/
 CLERK OF ORPHANS' COURT
 WARREN COUNTY
 NOTES TO THE STATEMENTS OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
 FOR THE PERIOD
 JANUARY 1, 2005 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007

6. Reconciliation Of Settled Reports (Continued)

Register Of Wills - Inheritance Tax (Continued)

Date of Summary of Collections Report	Balance Due Settled Reports Commonwealth (County)	Adjustments	Adjusted Balance Due Commonwealth (County)
2007			
January	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
February	1,139	-	1,139
March	(1,139)	-	(1,139)
April	-	-	-
May	(21)	-	(21)
June	21	-	21
July	-	-	-
August	-	-	-
September	-	-	-
October	-	-	-
November	-	-	-
December	(3,079)	-	(3,079)
Balance due Commonwealth (County) per settled reports			(3,079)
Examination adjustments			-
Adjusted balance due Commonwealth (County) January 1, 2005 to December 31, 2007			\$ (3,079)

7. County Officer Serving During Examination Period

Lori A. Bimber served as Recorder of Deeds/Register of Wills/Clerk of Orphans' Court during the period January 1, 2005 to December 31, 2007.

RECORDER OF DEEDS/REGISTER OF WILLS/
CLERK OF ORPHANS' COURT
WARREN COUNTY
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2005 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007

Finding - Inadequate Accountability Over Funds Held In Escrow

The Recorder of Deeds/Register of Wills/Clerk of Orphans' Court deposits all collections, except for inheritance taxes, into one bank account (general account). Our examination disclosed that there was no accountability over funds held in escrow in the general account. There was an adjusted bank balance of \$101,434 without a corresponding liabilities report indicating to whom the monies were due.

Good internal accounting control procedures ensure that the ending adjusted bank balance is reconciled with liabilities on a monthly basis and any discrepancies are immediately investigated and resolved. Since the office bank account is essentially an escrow account on behalf of the Commonwealth, County, and other participating entities, all available funds on hand should equal unpaid obligations.

This condition existed because the office failed to establish and implement an adequate system of internal controls over funds held in escrow.

Without a good system of internal controls over funds held in escrow, the possibility of funds being lost or misappropriated increases significantly.

This condition was cited in the prior audit for the period ending December 31, 2004 under the title "Inadequate Internal Controls Over Cash."

Recommendations

We again recommend that the office attempt to identify the existing cash overage. Any unidentified funds should be accounted for under normal escheat procedures. Furthermore, we recommend that the office should ensure that reconciled cash equals unpaid obligations monthly.

Management's Response

The County Officer stated:

We will investigate this issue to try to determine what is causing this condition.

Auditor's Conclusion

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

RECORDER OF DEEDS/REGISTER OF WILLS/
CLERK OF ORPHANS' COURT
WARREN COUNTY
COMMENT
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2005 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007

Comment - Compliance With Prior Audit Recommendation

During our prior audit, we recommended that the office implement a receipting system that tracks each collection transaction to deposit.

During our current examination, we noted that the office complied with our recommendation.

RECORDER OF DEEDS/REGISTER OF WILLS/
CLERK OF ORPHANS' COURT
WARREN COUNTY
REPORT DISTRIBUTION
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2005 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007

This report was initially distributed to:

Mr. C. Daniel Hassell
Acting Secretary
Pennsylvania Department of Revenue

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

Recorder of Deeds/Register of Wills/
Clerk of Orphans' Court
Warren County
Warren County Courthouse
204 Fourth Avenue
Warren, PA 16365

The Honorable Lori A. Bimber

Recorder of Deeds/Register of Wills/
Clerk of Orphans' Court

The Honorable John E. Eggleston

Chairman of the Board of Commissioners

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.