

**REPORT OF THE AUDIT OF THE  
LAUREL COUNTY  
CLERK**

**For The Year Ended  
December 31, 2020**



**MIKE HARMON  
AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS  
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**MIKE HARMON**  
**AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS**

The Honorable David Westerfield, Laurel County Judge/Executive  
The Honorable Tony Brown, Laurel County Clerk  
Members of the Laurel County Fiscal Court

Independent Auditor's Report

**Report on the Financial Statement**

We have audited the accompanying Statement of Receipts, Disbursements, and Excess Fees - Regulatory Basis of the County Clerk of Laurel County, Kentucky, for the year ended December 31, 2020, and the related notes to the financial statement.

**Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statement**

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of this financial statement in accordance with accounting practices prescribed or permitted by the laws of Kentucky to demonstrate compliance with the Commonwealth of Kentucky's regulatory basis of accounting and budget laws. Management is also responsible for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of a financial statement that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

**Auditor's Responsibility**

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on this financial statement based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, and the *Audit Guide for County Fee Officials* issued by the Auditor of Public Accounts, Commonwealth of Kentucky. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statement is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statement. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statement, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statement in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statement.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.



The Honorable David Westerfield, Laurel County Judge/Executive  
The Honorable Tony Brown, Laurel County Clerk  
Members of the Laurel County Fiscal Court

**Basis for Adverse Opinion on U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles**

As described in Note 1 of the financial statement, the financial statement is prepared by the Laurel County Clerk on the basis of the accounting practices prescribed or permitted by the laws of Kentucky to demonstrate compliance with the Commonwealth of Kentucky’s regulatory basis of accounting, which is a basis of accounting other than accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

The effects on the financial statement of the variances between the regulatory basis of accounting described in Note 1 and accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, although not reasonably determinable, are presumed to be material.

**Adverse Opinion on U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles**

In our opinion, because of the significance of the matter discussed in the Basis for Adverse Opinion on U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles paragraph, the financial statement referred to above does not present fairly, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, the financial position of the Laurel County Clerk, as of December 31, 2020, or changes in financial position or cash flows thereof for the year then ended.

**Opinion on Regulatory Basis of Accounting**

In our opinion, the financial statement referred to above presents fairly, in all material respects, the receipts, disbursements, and excess fees of the Laurel County Clerk for the year ended December 31, 2020, in accordance with the basis of accounting practices prescribed or permitted by the Commonwealth of Kentucky as described in Note 1.

**Other Reporting Required by *Government Auditing Standards***

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we have also issued our report dated June 14, 2021, on our consideration of the Laurel County Clerk’s internal control over financial reporting and on our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, grant agreements, and other matters. The purpose of that report is to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the internal control over financial reporting or on compliance. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the Laurel County Clerk’s internal control over financial reporting and compliance.

Respectfully submitted,



Mike Harmon  
Auditor of Public Accounts

June 14, 2021

LAUREL COUNTY  
 TONY BROWN, COUNTY CLERK  
STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS, DISBURSEMENTS, AND EXCESS FEES - REGULATORY BASIS

For The Year Ended December 31, 2020

Receipts

Federal Grant		\$ 37,444
State Grant		11,150
State Fees For Services		
Registration of Voters	\$ 297	
Election Personnel Reimbursement	16,413	
Delinquent Tax Commission	<u>7,485</u>	24,195
Fiscal Court		
Tax Bill Preparation Fee	11,775	
Election Expense Reimbursement	<u>24,181</u>	35,956
Licenses and Taxes:		
Motor Vehicle-		
Licenses and Transfers	2,119,727	
Usage Tax	8,470,729	
Tangible Personal Property Tax	4,440,093	
Notary Fees	1,128	
Other-		
Marriage Licenses	18,480	
Miscellaneous Licenses	236	
Deed Transfer Tax	201,142	
Delinquent Tax	1,074,737	
Delinquent Tax Deposits	<u>679,571</u>	17,005,843
Fees Collected for Services:		
Recordings-		
Deeds, Easements and Contracts	82,921	
Real Estate Mortgages	173,418	
Chattel Mortgages and Financing Statements	207,460	
Powers of Attorney	6,766	
Affordable Housing Trust	57,894	
All Other Recordings	127,814	
Storage Fees	101,350	

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this financial statement.

LAUREL COUNTY  
 TONY BROWN, COUNTY CLERK  
 STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS, DISBURSEMENTS, AND EXCESS FEES - REGULATORY BASIS  
 For The Year Ended December 31, 2020  
 (Continued)

Receipts (Continued)

Fees Collected for Services: (Continued)

Charges for Other Services-

Candidate Filing Fees	\$	670	
Copywork		21,139	
Postage		11,546	
Miscellaneous		8,519	
Refunds/Overpayments		<u>31,397</u>	\$ 830,894

Other:

Outstanding Accounts Receivable			22
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Interest Earned			<u>270</u>
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Total Receipts			17,945,774
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Disbursements

Payments to State:

Motor Vehicle-

Licenses and Transfers	\$	1,508,639	
Usage Tax		8,216,409	
Tangible Personal Property Tax		1,881,065	

Licenses, Taxes, and Fees-

Delinquent Tax		113,681	
Legal Process Tax		57,241	
Affordable Housing Trust		<u>57,894</u>	11,834,929

Payments to Fiscal Court:

Tangible Personal Property Tax		371,220	
Delinquent Tax		66,310	
Deed Transfer Tax		<u>191,084</u>	628,614

Payments to Other Districts:

Tangible Personal Property Tax		2,009,987	
Delinquent Tax		<u>570,670</u>	2,580,657

Payments to Sheriff			84,193
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Payments to County Attorney			145,381
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The accompanying notes are an integral part of this financial statement.



LAUREL COUNTY  
 TONY BROWN, COUNTY CLERK  
 STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS, DISBURSEMENTS, AND EXCESS FEES - REGULATORY BASIS  
 For The Year Ended December 31, 2020  
 (Continued)

Disbursements (Continued)

Other Regulatory Payments:

Delinquent Tax Deposit Refunds	\$ 679,571	
Other Refunds	<u>42,773</u>	\$ 722,344

Operating Disbursements and Capital Outlay:

Personnel Services-		
Deputies' Salaries	773,828	
Employee Benefits-		
Employer's Share Social Security	66,334	
Employer's Paid Health Insurance	162,146	
Contracted Services-		
Microfilming and Indexing	100	
Accountant - CPA	3,750	
Lease Equipment and Software	76,181	
Advertising	823	
Materials and Supplies-		
Office Supplies	44,777	
Miscellaneous Expense	29,160	
Office Equipment	21,761	
Uniforms	1,220	
Other Charges-		
Election Expense Reimbursement	20,667	
CARES Election Fund	38,631	
Phone	13,353	
Printing and Binding	802	
Postage	17,427	
Miscellaneous Bank Transactions	129	
Travel/Convention/Training	1,216	
Dues and Memberships	<u>2,480</u>	1,274,785
Capital Outlay-		
Library & Archives Project		<u>11,150</u>

Total Disbursements \$ 17,282,053

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this financial statement.

LAUREL COUNTY  
 TONY BROWN, COUNTY CLERK  
 STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS, DISBURSEMENTS, AND EXCESS FEES - REGULATORY BASIS  
 For The Year Ended December 31, 2020  
 (Continued)

Net Receipts		\$	663,721
Less: Statutory Maximum			<u>107,813</u>
Excess Fees			555,908
Less: Expense Allowance	\$	3,600	
Training Incentive Benefit		<u>2,156</u>	<u>5,756</u>
Excess Fees Due County for 2020			550,152
Payment to Fiscal Court - February 25, 2021			<u>494,000</u>
Balance Due Fiscal Court at Completion of Audit		\$	<u><u>56,152</u></u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this financial statement.

LAUREL COUNTY  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENT

December 31, 2020

Note 1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

A. Fund Accounting

A fee official uses a fund to report on the results of operations. A fund is a separate accounting entity with a self-balancing set of accounts. Fund accounting is designed to demonstrate legal compliance and to aid financial management by segregating transactions related to certain government functions or activities.

A fee official uses a fund for fees to account for activities for which the government desires periodic determination of the excess of receipts over disbursements to facilitate management control, accountability, and compliance with laws.

B. Basis of Accounting

KRS 64.820 directs the fiscal court to collect any amount, including excess fees, due from the county clerk as determined by the audit. KRS 64.152 requires the county clerk to settle excess fees with the fiscal court by March 15 each year.

The financial statement has been prepared on a regulatory basis of accounting, which is a comprehensive basis of accounting other than accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. This basis demonstrates compliance with the laws of Kentucky and is a special purpose framework. Under this regulatory basis of accounting, receipts and disbursements are generally recognized when cash is received or disbursed, with the exception of accrual of the following items (not all-inclusive) at December 31 that may be included in the excess fees calculation:

- Interest receivable
- Collection on accounts due from others for 2020 services
- Reimbursements for 2020 activities
- Payments due other governmental entities for December tax and fee collections and payroll
- Payments due vendors for goods or services provided in 2020

The measurement focus of a fee official is upon excess fees. Remittance of excess fees is due to the county treasurer in the subsequent year.

C. Cash and Investments

KRS 66.480 authorizes the county clerk's office to invest in obligations of the United States and of its agencies and instrumentalities, obligations and contracts for future delivery or purchase of obligations backed by the full faith and credit of the United States, obligations of any corporation of the United States government, bonds or certificates of indebtedness of this state, and certificates of deposit issued by or other interest-bearing accounts of any bank or savings and loan institution which are insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) or which are collateralized, to the extent uninsured, by any obligation permitted by KRS 41.240(4).

Note 2. Employee Retirement System and Other Post-Employment Benefits

The clerk's office has elected to participate, pursuant to KRS 78.530, in the County Employees Retirement System (CERS), which is administered by the Board of Trustees of the Kentucky Retirement Systems (KRS). This is a cost-sharing, multiple-employer, defined benefit pension plan, which covers all eligible full-time employees and provides for retirement, disability, and death benefits to plan members. Benefit contributions and provisions are established by statute.

LAUREL COUNTY  
 NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENT  
 December 31, 2020  
 (Continued)

Note 2. Employee Retirement System and Other Post-Employment Benefits (Continued)

Nonhazardous covered employees are required to contribute five percent of their salary to the plan. Nonhazardous covered employees who begin participation on or after September 1, 2008, are required to contribute six percent of their salary to be allocated as follows: five percent will go to the member's account and one percent will go to the KRS insurance fund.

In accordance with Senate Bill 2, signed by the Governor on April 4, 2013, plan members who began participating on or after January 1, 2014, were required to contribute to the Cash Balance Plan. The Cash Balance Plan is known as a hybrid plan because it has characteristics of both a defined benefit plan and a defined contribution plan. Members in the plan contribute a set percentage of their salary each month to their own accounts. Nonhazardous covered employees contribute five percent of their annual creditable compensation. Nonhazardous members also contribute one percent to the health insurance fund which is not credited to the member's account and is not refundable. The employer contribution rate is set annually by the KRS Board of Directors based on an actuarial valuation. The employer contributes a set percentage of the member's salary. Each month, when employer contributions are received, an employer pay credit is deposited to the member's account. A member's account is credited with a four percent employer pay credit. The employer pay credit represents a portion of the employer contribution.

Benefits fully vest on reaching five years of service for nonhazardous employees. Aspects of benefits for nonhazardous employees include retirement after 27 years of service or age 65. Nonhazardous employees who begin participation on or after September 1, 2008, must meet the rule of 87 (member's age plus years of service credit must equal 87, and the member must be a minimum of 57 years of age) or the member is age 65, with a minimum of 60 months service credit.

The county's contribution rate for nonhazardous employees was 24.06 percent for the year.

Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB)

A. Health Insurance Coverage - Tier 1

CERS provides post-retirement health care coverage as follows:

For members participating prior to July 1, 2003, years of service and respective percentages of the maximum contribution are as follows:

<b>Years of Service</b>	<b>% Paid by Insurance Fund</b>	<b>% Paid by Member through Payroll Deduction</b>
20 or more	100%	0%
15-19	75%	25%
10-14	50%	50%
4-9	25%	75%
Less than 4	0%	100%

LAUREL COUNTY  
 NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENT  
 December 31, 2020  
 (Continued)

Note 2. Employee Retirement System and Other Post-Employment Benefits (Continued)

Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) (Continued)

A. Health Insurance Coverage - Tier 1 (Continued)

As a result of House Bill 290 (2004 General Assembly), medical insurance benefits are calculated differently for members who began participation on or after July 1, 2003. Once members reach a minimum vesting period of ten years, non-hazardous employees whose participation began on or after July 1, 2003, earn ten dollars per month for insurance benefits at retirement for every year of earned service without regard to a maximum dollar amount. This dollar amount is subject to adjustment annually based on the retiree cost of living adjustment, which is updated annually due to changes in the Consumer Price Index.

Benefits are covered under KRS 161.714 with exception of COLA and retiree health benefits after July 2003.

B. Health Insurance Coverage - Tier 2 and Tier 3 - Nonhazardous

Once members reach a minimum vesting period of 15 years, earn ten dollars per month for insurance benefits at retirement for every year of earned service without regard to a maximum dollar amount. This dollar amount is subject to adjustment annually by 1.5 percent. This was established for Tier 2 members during the 2008 Special Legislative Session by House Bill 1. During the 2013 Legislative Session, Senate Bill 2 was enacted, creating Tier 3 benefits for members.

The monthly insurance benefit has been increased annually as a 1.5 percent cost of living adjustment (COLA) since July 2003 when the law changed. The annual increase is cumulative and continues to accrue after the member's retirement.

Tier 2 member benefits are covered by KRS 161.714 with exception of COLA and retiree health benefits after July 2003. Tier 3 members are not covered by the same provisions.

C. Cost of Living Adjustments - Tier 1

The 1996 General Assembly enacted an automatic cost of living adjustment (COLA) provision for all recipients of KRS benefits. During the 2008 Special Session, the General Assembly determined that each July beginning in 2009, retirees who have been receiving a retirement allowance for at least 12 months will receive an automatic COLA of 1.5 percent. The COLA is not a guaranteed benefit. If a retiree has been receiving a benefit for less than 12 months, and a COLA is provided, it will be prorated based on the number of months the recipient has been receiving a benefit.

D. Cost of Living Adjustments - Tier 2 and Tier 3

No COLA is given unless authorized by the legislature with specific criteria. To this point, no COLA has been authorized by the legislature for Tier 2 or Tier 3 members.

E. Death Benefit

If a retired member is receiving a monthly benefit based on at least 48 months of service credit, KRS will pay a \$5,000 death benefit payment to the beneficiary designated by the member specifically for this benefit. Members with multiple accounts are entitled to only one death benefit.

LAUREL COUNTY  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENT  
December 31, 2020  
(Continued)

Note 2. Employee Retirement System and Other Post-Employment Benefits (Continued)

KRS Annual Financial Report and Proportionate Share Audit Report

KRS issues a publicly available annual financial report that includes financial statements and required supplementary information on CERS. This report may be obtained by writing the Kentucky Retirement Systems, 1260 Louisville Road, Frankfort, KY 40601-6124, or by telephone at (502) 564-4646.

KRS also issues proportionate share audit reports for both total pension liability and other post-employment benefits for CERS determined by actuarial valuation as well as each participating county's proportionate share. Both the Schedules of Employer Allocations and Pension Amounts by Employer and the Schedules of Employer Allocations and OPEB Amounts by Employer reports and the related actuarial tables are available online at <https://kyret.ky.gov>. The complete actuarial valuation report, including all actuarial assumptions and methods, is also available on the website or can be obtained as described in the paragraph above.

Note 3. Deposits

The Laurel County Clerk maintained deposits of public funds with federally insured banking institutions as required by the Department for Local Government's (DLG) *County Budget Preparation and State Local Finance Officer Policy Manual*. The DLG Manual strongly recommends perfected pledges of securities covering all public funds except direct federal obligations and funds protected by federal insurance. In order to be perfected in the event of failure or insolvency of the depository institution, this pledge or provision of collateral should be evidenced by an agreement between the county clerk and the depository institution, signed by both parties, that is (a) in writing, (b) approved by the board of directors of the depository institution or its loan committee, which approval must be reflected in the minutes of the board or committee, and (c) an official record of the depository institution. These requirements were met.

Custodial Credit Risk - Deposits

Custodial credit risk is the risk that in the event of a depository institution failure, the county clerk's deposits may not be returned. The Laurel County Clerk does not have a deposit policy for custodial credit risk, but rather follows the requirements of the DLG *County Budget Preparation and State Local Finance Officer Policy Manual*. As of December 31, 2020, all deposits were covered by FDIC insurance or a properly executed collateral security agreements.

Note 4. Grants

A. Federal

The Laurel County Clerk's office received an election expense grant from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) in the amount of \$37,444. Funds totaling \$37,444 were expended during the year. The unexpended grant balance was \$0, as of December 31, 2020.

B. State

The Laurel County Clerk's office received a local records microfilming grant from the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives in the amount of \$11,150. Funds totaling \$11,150 were expended during the year. The unexpended grant balance was \$0, as of December 31, 2020.

LAUREL COUNTY  
 NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENT  
 December 31, 2020  
 (Continued)

Note 5. Lease Agreements

The Laurel County Clerk's office was committed to the following lease agreements as of December 31, 2020:

Item Purchased	Monthly Payment	Term Of Agreement	Ending Date	Principal Balance December 31, 2020
Hardware Service Agreement	\$ 1,752	60 Months	1/6/2024	\$ 63,072
Software Agreement	3,425	60 Months	1/6/2024	123,300
Postage Meter Lease	75	36 Months	10/20/2021	675
Copy Machine Lease	48	12 Months	5/18/2021	192
Total	<u>\$ 5,300</u>			<u>\$ 187,239</u>

Note 6. Escrow Account

The county clerk maintains an escrow account for deposits required by Kentucky Revised Statutes. As of January 1, 2020, the county clerk's escrow balance totaled \$67,791. The county clerk received deposits of \$771 and bank fee transactions of \$9 during the year, leaving an ending balance of \$68,553. The ending balance is comprised of the following:

- The county clerk has deposited a total of \$1,816 of stale checks into the escrow account.
- The county clerk has deposited a total of \$342 in accordance with a Notice of Allowance of Claims filed pursuant to Chapter 13 bankruptcy filed in United States Bankruptcy Court, Eastern District of Kentucky, London Division.
- A business provided a \$1,000 bond to the county clerk in accordance with KRS 365.410 to 365.480 and 365.992 (Going out of business sale).
- Owners of property in Laurel County, provided a cash bond in the amount of \$65,409 to the county clerk in accordance to release lien pursuant to KRS 376.100.

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REPORT ON INTERNAL CONTROL OVER FINANCIAL REPORTING AND  
ON COMPLIANCE AND OTHER MATTERS BASED ON AN AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL  
STATEMENT PERFORMED IN ACCORDANCE WITH *GOVERNMENT AUDITING STANDARDS*

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**MIKE HARMON**  
**AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS**

The Honorable David Westerfield, Laurel County Judge/Executive  
The Honorable Tony Brown, Laurel County Clerk  
Members of the Laurel County Fiscal Court

Report On Internal Control Over Financial Reporting And  
On Compliance And Other Matters Based On An Audit Of The Financial  
Statement Performed In Accordance With *Government Auditing Standards*

Independent Auditor's Report

We have audited, in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, the Statement of Receipts, Disbursements, and Excess Fees - Regulatory Basis of the Laurel County Clerk for the year ended December 31, 2020, and the related notes to the financial statement and have issued our report thereon dated June 14, 2021. The Laurel County Clerk's financial statement is prepared on a regulatory basis of accounting, which demonstrates compliance with the Commonwealth of Kentucky's regulatory basis of accounting and budget laws, which is a basis of accounting other than accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

**Internal Control over Financial Reporting**

In planning and performing our audit of the financial statement, we considered the Laurel County Clerk's internal control over financial reporting (internal control) as a basis for designing audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances for the purpose of expressing our opinion on the financial statement, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Laurel County Clerk's internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of the Laurel County Clerk's internal control.

*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 combination of deficiencies, in internal control, such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the entity's financial statement 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 described in the first paragraph of this section and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies. Given these limitations, during our audit 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.

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Report On Internal Control Over Financial Reporting And  
On Compliance And Other Matters Based On An Audit Of The Financial  
Statement Performed In Accordance With *Government Auditing Standards*  
(Continued)

**Compliance And Other Matters**

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the Laurel County Clerk's financial statement is free of material misstatement, we performed tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements, noncompliance with which could have a direct and material effect on the financial statement. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our audit 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*.

**Purpose of this Report**

The purpose of this report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control or on compliance. This report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the entity's internal control and compliance. Accordingly, this communication is not suitable for any other purpose.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Harmon", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mike Harmon  
Auditor of Public Accounts

June 14, 2021