



REPRESENTING  
**ALEX SINK**  
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER  
STATE OF FLORIDA

**ESCAMBIA COUNTY**  
**CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT**  
**BUDGET REVIEW**

REPORT DATE:  
May 5, 2009

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# ALEX SINK

## CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

### INTRODUCTION

The Department of Financial Services (DFS) has completed a review of the budget certifications made by the Escambia County Clerk of Circuit Court's Office to the Clerks of Court Operations Corporation (CCOC), pursuant to Section 28.35(3)(b), Florida Statutes (F.S.). The scope of our review focused on validating the processes and methodologies utilized in the development of the Clerk's budgets for fiscal years 2006-2007 (FY 06-07), 2007-2008 (FY 07-08) and 2008-2009 (FY 08-09).

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) has contracted with CCOC to establish a process for review and certification of court-related budgets submitted by the Clerks of Circuit Courts. The CCOC is responsible for calculating the maximum authorized annual budget, identifying budgets exceeding the maximum expenditure amounts for a standard list of court-related functions and identifying budgets that have insufficient revenues to cover court-related expenditures, pursuant to Section 28.36, F.S.

### SUMMARY

- The FY 06-07, FY 07-08 and FY 08-09 approved budgets were \$7,595,081, \$8,018,212 and \$7,942,717 respectively.
- Escambia County has a population of 311,775 and had 159.11, 165.50, and 166.77 Full Time Employees (FTEs) budgeted to support court-related activities for FY 06-07, FY 07-08 and FY 08-09 respectively.
- Budgeted revenues and expenditures for FY 06-07 were \$7,133,064 and \$7,595,081 respectively, resulting in a budgeted deficit of \$462,017. Actual revenues and expenditures as reported by the Clerk for FY 06-07 detailed a surplus of \$128,862. The Clerk remitted the FY 06-07 surplus to the Department of Revenue (DOR) on December 14, 2007 for deposit in the General Revenue Fund, pursuant to the provisions of Section 28.37(4), F.S.
- Budgeted revenues and expenditures for FY 07-08 were \$7,389,418 and \$8,018,212 respectively, resulting in a budgeted deficit of \$628,794. Monthly payments from the Clerks of the Court Trust Fund are scheduled to fund the Clerk's projected deficit pursuant to CCOC directive.

- Budgeted revenues and expenditures for FY 08-09 are \$7,259,403 and \$7,942,717 respectively, resulting in a \$683,314 budgeted deficit. Monthly payments from the Clerks of the Court Trust Fund are scheduled to fund the Clerk's projected deficit pursuant to CCOC directive.
- The Clerk has an internal system and reporting procedures for measuring and reporting on all required performance standards.

## **SCOPE, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY**

### **Scope**

The Scope of our review included an analysis of the development of the Clerk's FY 06-07, FY 07-08 and FY 08-09 budgets. Our review was conducted December 3 – 5, 2008 at the Escambia County Clerk of Circuit Court's Office.

### **Objectives and Methodology**

The budget review was conducted with the following objectives:

- Each Clerk shall develop a budget funded from fees, services charges, court costs and fines, pursuant to Sections 28.35, 28.36 and 28.37, F.S. Clerks must provide detailed information on expenditures necessary for the performance of court-related functions using the court-related codes in the Uniform Accounting System Manual (UASM). The budget shall be submitted annually to CCOC for review and approval. The CCOC budget approval process focuses on the following key components:
  - Overhead Cost Allocation – The Escambia County Clerk's Office applied a 67.49 and 69.56 percent cost allocation rate to the FY 06-07 and FY 07-08 certified annual budgets. A 72.01 percent cost allocation rate is being utilized for the FY 08-09 budget.
  - Our review of supporting documentation disclosed that the methodologies used to calculate and distribute overhead costs were reasonable.
  - Distribution of Court-Related FTEs – The Escambia County Clerk's Office budgeted 159.11 of 235.77, 165.50 of 237.93 and 166.77 of 231.59 FTEs for FY 06-07, FY 07-08 and FY 08-09 respectively, to support court-related functions.
  - General Fund Expenditures –The final approved budget for FY 06-07 was \$7,595,081. Major expenditure categories were: Personal Services (\$7,140,468) and Operating Expenses (\$454,613). The final approved budget for FY 07-08 was \$8,018,212. Major expenditure categories are: Personal Services (\$7,489,783) and Operating Expenses (\$528,429). The final approved budget for FY 08-09 is \$7,942,717. Major expenditure categories are: Personal Services (\$7,369,416) and Operating Expenses (\$573,301).

- Revenue Forecasting – Budgeted revenues of \$7,133,064, \$7,389,418 and \$7,259,403 were calculated for FY 06-07, FY 07-08 and FY 08-09 respectively, based on prior period data and management’s assessment of future operational activities.
  - Our review determined that the Clerk’s FY 06-07, FY 07-08 and FY 08-09 budgets were prepared pursuant to CCOC instructions and submitted in accordance with the provisions of Section 28.36, F.S.
- Expenditures during the review period were limited to court-related functions as specified in Section 28.35(4)(a), F.S
  - Revenues for fees, services charges, court costs and funding for court-related functions for FY 06-07, FY 07-08 were assessed pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 28, F.S. The Clerk’s budget for FY 08-09 was based on projected revenues from the same sources, pursuant to Section 28.36, F.S.
  - Clerks are required to maintain a partial fee payment system, pursuant to Section 28.246, F.S. The Escambia County Clerk’s Office is currently utilizing an internal database system to account for partial fee payments. The Clerk is contracting with an external collection agency to assist with collecting delinquent accounts 90 days past due.
  - Escambia County Clerk of Court was designated a “recipient” office for FY 06-07 by CCOC based upon a budgeted deficit of \$462,017. Monthly remittances from the Clerks of the Court Trust Fund were scheduled to fund the Clerk’s projected deficit pursuant to CCOC directive. The Clerk reported a FY 06-07 surplus of \$128,862 based on actual revenues and expenditures of \$7,722,739 and \$7,593,877 respectively, which included payments from the Clerks of the Court Trust Fund. The Clerk remitted the FY 06-07 surplus to DOR on December 14, 2007 for deposit in the General Revenue Fund, pursuant to the provisions of Section 28.37(4), F.S.
  - Escambia County Clerk of Court was designated a “recipient” office for FY 07-08 by CCOC based upon a budgeted deficit of \$628,794. Projected revenues and expenditures for FY 07-08 are \$7,389,418 and \$8,018,212 respectively. The Clerk reported a FY 07-08 surplus of \$1,656 based on revenues and expenditures of \$7,622,458 and \$7,620,802 respectively, which included payments to and from the Clerks of the Court Trust Fund.
  - Escambia County Clerk of Court is designated a “recipient” office for FY 08-09 by CCOC based upon a budgeted deficit of \$683,314. Projected revenues and expenditures for FY 08-09 are \$7,259,403 and \$7,942,717 respectively. Through the time of our review (based on report data through October 2008), the Clerk’s Office reported a FY 08-09 surplus of \$27,139 based on revenues and expenditures of \$570,303 and \$543,164 respectively, which includes a payment from the Clerks of the Court Trust Fund.

- The following performance measures were adopted by CCOC, pursuant to Section 28.35, F.S., for FY 05-06, FY 06-07, FY 07-08 and FY 08-09:
  - Outputs – The outputs consist of the number of civil cases filed and the number of criminal defendants handled, by Court Divisions, as identified by the Clerk’s Office. The Clerk reported 67,972 cases filed and 24,440 defendants during FY 06-07. The Clerk reported 62,523 cases filed and 22,264 defendants during FY 07-08. The Clerk reported 202,726 financial receipts for FY 07-08.
  - Outcome Measures – Timeliness and Collection Rate:
    - Timeliness – New cases opened within a designated number of business days after the initial filing. The Clerk has the ability to collect data and report timeliness measures on new cases. The Clerk reported meeting or exceeding 20 of 20 performance standards to CCOC for FY 06-07. The Clerk reported meeting or exceeding 20 of 20 performance standards to CCOC for FY 07-08.
    - Collection Rate – The collection rate is calculated by dividing collections by the adjusted assessments. The Clerk reported meeting or exceeding 8 of 9 collections performance standards to CCOC for FY 06-07. The Clerk reported meeting or exceeding 7 of 9 collections performance standards to CCOC for FY 07-08.
  - Fiscal Management Measures – Fiscal Management Standards:
    - Status Report – The Clerk reported meeting or exceeding 9 of 9 fiscal management standards to CCOC for FY 05-06. The Clerk reported meeting or exceeding 9 of 9 fiscal management standards to CCOC for FY 06-07.
  - Jury Management Measures – Percentage of juror payments issued timely:
    - Jurors Report – The Clerk reported meeting or exceeding 100 percent of juror payments issued timely to CCOC for FY 07-08.

## FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Finding:**

Based upon our review, we found the Clerk's budgeting practices and expenditure and revenue methodologies for State funds to be efficient and accurate. We concluded the Escambia County Clerk's Office is currently able to report on all required performance standards.

## REVIEW TEAM

Burton Marshall, *Chief, Bureau of Local Government*  
Priscilla Bailey-Brown, *Financial Administrator*  
Mark Gressel, *Professional Accountant Specialist*  
Angie Lawson, *Professional Accountant Specialist*  
Jessica Robinson, *Professional Accountant Specialist*  
Jeremy Smith, *Professional Accountant Specialist*

# APPENDIX



## Appendix A



REPRESENTING  
**ALEX SINK**  
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER  
STATE OF FLORIDA



September 16, 2008

The Honorable Ernie Lee Magaha  
Clerk of Circuit Court  
Escambia County  
190 Governmental Center  
Pensacola, Florida 32502-5773

Dear Mr. Magaha:

The Department of Financial Services (DFS) has rescheduled a review of your budget processes in accordance with Section 28.35, Florida Statutes. The dates mutually selected for this review are December 3 – 5, 2008. Our review will encompass the following objectives: Analyze the methodologies used to develop both the current and prior fiscal years Clerks of Court Operations Corporation (CCOC) certified budget; review expenditures to ensure compliance with Florida Statutes; analyze projected and year-to-date revenues; and review methods used to collect and report data regarding performance measures.

To minimize disruptions to your daily operations, we request you have the following copies available upon our arrival:

1. Current organization chart.
2. Internal documentation of methodologies used to allocate FTEs to court-related activities.
3. Payroll subsidiary ledger for the most recent pay date and current annual salary listing by employee. Please do not include Social Security Numbers on documentation.
4. Listing of General Ledger codes (500-700 range) as prescribed by the DFS Uniform Accounting System Manual Chart of Accounts.
5. General Ledger report of court-related revenues and expenditures for FY 06-07, FY 07-08 and FY 08-09 (through October 2008).
6. Revenue and Expenditure Tracking Reports submitted to CCOC for FY 06-07, FY 07-08 and FY 08-09 (through October 2008).
7. Copies of monthly transmittals to the Department of Revenue for revenues remitted, pursuant to Sections 28.241(1)(a), 28.37(2) and 28.37(4), Florida Statutes.
8. Report detailing outstanding balance for each partial payment account.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL SERVICES  
Burton S. Marshall, CPA • Chief  
Division of Accounting and Auditing • Bureau of Local Government  
200 E. Gaines St. • Tallahassee, FL 32399-0354 • Tel. 850-413-5588 • Fax 850-413-5548  
Email • [Burton.Marshall@myfloridacfo.com](mailto:Burton.Marshall@myfloridacfo.com)  
Affirmative Action • Equal Opportunity Employer

## Appendix A (continued)

The Honorable Ernie Lee Magaha  
September 16, 2008  
Page 2

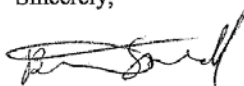
9. Contract, outstanding balance of accounts assigned, and supporting records for remittances by collection agency for FY 06-07, FY 07-08 and FY 08-09, if applicable.
10. Submissions of timeliness and collections performance measure data and any related supporting documentation to CCOC for FY 06-07 and FY 07-08.
11. Any internal documentation used to complete a Budget Amendment Request(s) approved by CCOC, if applicable.
12. Management Letter from the Annual Audit Report for FY 05-06 and FY 06-07.
13. Fiscal Management Measures Status Report Form to CCOC for FY 05-06 and FY 06-07.
14. FY 07-08 and FY 08-09 Rebasing worksheets for Budget Submission to the CCOC.

Please have the requested report information available for fiscal years 2006-2007, 2007-2008 and 2008-2009, as our review will cover these periods. Mr. Mark Gressel and Ms. Jessica Robinson will represent DFS during this review.

We ask that you provide workspace for DFS and a lead from your staff to assist in the review. It is not our intent to disrupt your operations. You may contact us to reschedule if, for any reason, the dates selected cannot be accommodated. Please use Ms. Priscilla Bailey-Brown as our primary point of contact at (850) 413-5592 or [priscilla.bailey-brown@myfloridacfo.com](mailto:priscilla.bailey-brown@myfloridacfo.com).

Thank you for your advanced preparation. We look forward to working with you and your staff.

Sincerely,



Burton S. Marshall

BSM:cc

## Appendix B



EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATION  
ACCOUNTING DIVISION  
APPEALS DIVISION  
ARCHIVES AND RECORDS  
CENTURY DIVISION  
CLERK TO THE BOARD  
COUNTY CIVIL  
COUNTY CRIMINAL  
COURT DIVISION  
CIRCUIT CIVIL  
CIRCUIT CRIMINAL  
DOMESTIC RELATIONS  
FAMILY LAW

**ERNIE LEE MAGAHA**  
**CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT AND COMPTROLLER**  
**ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA**

• AUDITOR • ACCOUNTANT • EX-OFFICIO CLERK TO THE BOARD • CUSTODIAN OF COUNTY FUNDS •

FINANCE  
JURY ASSEMBLY  
GUARDIANSHIP  
HUMAN RESOURCES  
JUVENILE DIVISION  
MARRIAGE  
MENTAL HEALTH  
MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS  
OFFICIAL RECORDS  
ONE STOP  
OPERATIONAL SERVICES  
PROBATE DIVISION  
TRAFFIC DIVISION  
TREASURY

April 15, 2009

Alex Sink  
Chief Financial Officer  
Department of Financial Services

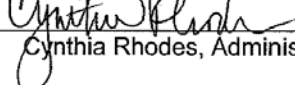
Dear Ms. Sink:

We have received your Budget Review in accordance with Section 28.35(3)(b), Florida Statutes, for fiscal years 2006-2007, 2007-2008, and 2008-2009. We have examined and confirmed the information provided in your analysis.

We would like to acknowledge the professionalism of your staff during their visit. It was a pleasure working with them. If you have any questions in regards to our response, please contact Cindy Rhodes at (850) 595-4137.

Sincerely,

Ernie Lee Magaha  
Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller  
Escambia County, Florida

By:   
Cynthia Rhodes, Administrator

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