



CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
JEFF ATWATER
STATE OF FLORIDA

November 19, 2012

The Honorable Tim Smith
Clerk of Circuit Court
Putnam County
410 St. Johns Avenue
Palatka, Florida 32177

Dear Mr. Smith:

We completed our Article V Clerk of the Circuit Court Performance and Compliance Review in accordance with Florida Statutes. Enclosed is a copy of our final report which includes your response to our review.

We appreciate your advanced preparation for our review and the courtesy extended to our team. We look forward to working with your office in the future.

Please contact Mark Merry at (850) 413-3074 or mark.merry@myfloridacfo.com if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Christina Smith.

Christina Smith

CS:sa

Enclosure



**JEFF ATWATER
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
STATE OF FLORIDA**

Florida Department of Financial Services

**PUTNAM COUNTY
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT
PERFORMANCE AND COMPLIANCE REVIEW**

**Report No. 2012-04
September 28, 2012**

SUMMARY

The Chief Financial Officer for the State of Florida is authorized by law to conduct performance and compliance reviews for each of the Clerk of the Circuit Court's accounting of Article V State funding. The Department of Financial Services has completed a review of the Putnam County Clerk of Circuit Court's Office as required by Section 28.36(8), Florida Statutes (F.S.). It is the practice of the Department of Financial Services to conduct these reviews for each Clerk of the Circuit Court every three years.

- The Putnam County Clerk of Circuit Court serves a population of 74,364.
- The review verified the Clerk's budgeting practices for each county fiscal year (CFY), October through September, and each state fiscal year (SFY), July through June, are in compliance with the Florida Clerks of Court Operations Corporation (CCOC) guidelines.
- The review verified the Clerk's remittances and recording of revenues/liabilities due to the State were accurate and timely, as required by Section 28.245, F.S.
- The review verified the Clerk's court-related expenditures were not limited to those that are allowable and compliant with Sections 28.35(3) and 29.008, F.S.
- The Clerk's office was able to meet or exceed all performance standards established by the CCOC.

BACKGROUND

In 1998, revisions to Article V, Section 14, of the Florida Constitution, specified portions of the state courts system and court-related functions that were to be funded from State revenues derived from statutory fines, fees, service charges, and court costs collected by the Clerks of Court.

Prior to July 1, 2009, Clerks prepared budgets using a revenue-based model independent of the State appropriations process. Clerks collected fines, fees, service charges, and court costs to fund their approved budgets and remitted any excess revenues to the Department of Revenue for deposit into the Clerks of Court Trust Fund. The Florida Legislature passed Florida Laws Chapter 2009-61 and Chapter 2009-204, placing the Clerks' court-related budgets under the State appropriations process beginning July 1, 2009. The Florida Legislature appropriates the total amount for the Clerks' budgets in the General Appropriations Act (GAA).

The organization that governs the Clerks, the CCOC, is now administratively housed in the Justice Administrative Commission. The CCOC is responsible for developing the budgets and certifying a uniform system of performance measures for Clerks. Under the current model, all fines, fees, service charges, and court costs, except as otherwise provided in Sections 28.241 and 34.041, F.S., are collected by the Clerks' offices and remitted to the Department of Revenue for deposit into the Clerks of the Court Trust Fund, in accordance with Section 28.37, F.S. Beginning July 2009, Section 28.245, F.S., requires Clerks' collections of court-related fines, fees, service charges, and costs to be considered liabilities due to the State and are required to be remitted to the Clerks of Court Trust Fund by the 20th of the month immediately following the month in which the monies are collected. Beginning July 2010, Section 28.245, F.S., requires Clerks to remit liabilities to the Clerks of Court Trust Fund by the 10th of the month immediately following the month in which the monies are collected. The Clerks are now funded by the State appropriations process.

SCOPE

The Article V performance and compliance review of the Putnam County Clerk of the Circuit Court's Office covered CFY 07-08, CFY 08-09, SFY 09-10, SFY 10-11, and SFY 11-12 court-related budgets certified by the CCOC, pursuant to Section 28.35, F.S. The review was conducted July 30, 2012 through August 1, 2012 at the Putnam County Clerk of Circuit Court's Office.

OBJECTIVES & METHODOLOGY

The performance and compliance review was conducted to ensure Clerk budget methodologies, expenditures, revenues/liabilities due to the State, and performance measures were accurately implemented and recorded according to law.

BUDGETS

The review of the Clerk's budgets verified that the budgets were funded from fines, fees, service charges, and court costs, pursuant to Section 28.37(1), F.S., and were prepared according to the CCOC instructions.

The table below reflects the budgeted expenditures and revenues/liabilities for each fiscal year reviewed, and reflects the budgeted surplus/deficit amounts certified by the CCOC.

Fiscal Year	Expenditures	Revenues/ Liabilities	Surplus/ (Deficit)
CFY 07-08	\$ 2,385,763	\$ 1,900,500	\$ (485,263)
CFY 08-09	\$ 2,361,542	\$ 1,770,000	\$ (591,542)

The Clerk’s office was budgeted as a “deficit” county by the CCOC for CFY 07-08 and CFY 08-09. The Clerk’s office was scheduled to receive monthly payments from the Clerks of Court Trust Fund based on the “deficit” county designation. The Clerk’s budgeted deficit increased from CFY 07-08 to CFY 08-09 by approximately 21.90%.

The table below reflects the revised budgeted expenditures and revenues/liabilities following the budget reductions implemented in May 2009.

Fiscal Year	Expenditures	Revenues/ Liabilities	Surplus/ (Deficit)
CFY 08-09¹	\$ 1,606,119	\$ 1,084,403	\$ (521,716)
SFY 09-10	\$ 2,141,935	\$ 1,311,550	\$ (830,385)
SFY 10-11	\$ 2,109,858 ²	\$ 1,271,000	\$ (838,858)
SFY 11-12	\$ 2,119,729 ³	\$ 997,500	\$ (1,122,229)

Note 1: CFY 08-09 budgeted expenditures and revenues/liabilities are for the nine month period of October 2008 through June 2009.

Note 2: SFY 10-11 the budgeted expenditures total was changed 5/6/11 due to the 4th quarter true-up process conducted by the CCOC for all clerks as required by Section 28.36(b), F.S. The budgeted surplus decreased as a result of the reduction.

Note 3: SFY 11-12 the budgeted expenditures total was subject to the same 4th quarter true-up process as SFY 10-11.

Clerks are now required to budget according to State Fiscal Year (July 1 through June 30) and are provided funding through the State General Appropriations Act. The CCOC released appropriations in the amount of one-twelfth of each Clerk’s approved budget each month for SFY 09-10, SFY 10-11 and SFY 11-12.

The table below reflects the budgeted FTEs for each fiscal year reviewed and the court-related allocation percentages applied for shared overhead.

Fiscal Year	Direct Court-Related FTEs	Indirect Overhead FTEs	Total Court-Related FTEs	Total Court & Non-Court FTEs	Cost Allocation Percentage
CFY 07-08	44.94	2.73	47.67	78.50	60.73%
CFY 08-09	45.00	2.76	47.76	78.00	61.22%
SFY 09-10	40.17	3.18	43.35	68.25	63.51%
SFY 10-11	40.62	3.48	44.10	69.75	63.22%
SFY 11-12	40.27	3.16	43.43	68.75	63.17%

The cost allocation percentages are applied to overhead costs budgeted to support court-related activities for all fiscal years. The allocation is based on the percentage of time each overhead position’s duties are performed for court-related activities. The allocation methodologies applied by the Clerk’s office are within the approved budget guidelines set by the CCOC. The budgeted total court-related FTEs decreased from CFY 07-08 to SFY 11-12 by approximately 8.89%. The budgeted cost allocation increased from CFY 07-08 to SFY 11-12 by approximately 4.02%.

EXPENDITURES

The review sampled various court-related expenditure accounts and transactions to determine if the Clerk’s office was in compliance with Section 28.35, F.S. The expenditure review confirmed court-related expenditures that were not in compliance with Section 28.35, F.S., and court funds were expended for unallowable costs. The Putnam County Clerk’s Office reported \$302.35 for decorations and \$140.00 for a printer in FY 07-08. The Clerk reported \$307.23 for computer accessories in FY 10-11 for a total of \$749.58 in unallowable expenditures for the review period of FY 07-08 through FY 11-12.

The Clerk’s CCOC Technology Expense Monthly Tracking Report was in compliance with guidelines set by the CCOC. The Clerk’s salary was within the salary requirements developed by the Office of Economic and Demographic Research. The Clerk provided 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 review confirmed the accuracy of the expenditures listed on the Clerk’s General Ledger by reconciling with the expenditures reported on the CCOC Clerks’ Trust Fund Collections Tracking Report for each fiscal year.

The table below reflects the budgeted and actual expenditures for each fiscal year reviewed.

	Budgeted	Actual
CFY 07-08	\$ 2,385,763	\$ 1,943,398
CFY 08-09 ¹	\$ 1,606,119	\$ 1,448,864
SFY 09-10	\$ 2,141,935	\$ 2,062,574
SFY 10-11	\$ 2,109,858	\$ 2,074,822
SFY 11-12	\$ 2,119,729	\$ 1,937,591

Note 1: CFY 08-09 budgeted and actual expenditures are for the nine month period of October 2008 through June 2009.

The budgeted expenditures decreased from CFY 07-08 to SFY 11-12 by 11.15%. The Clerk’s actual expenditures were below budgeted expenditures from CFY 07-08 to SFY 11-12.

The table below reflects the budget categories that make up total budgeted expenditures for each fiscal year reviewed.

Fiscal Year	Personal Services	Operating Expenses	Debt Service	Budget Reserve	Total Expenditures
CFY 07-08	\$ 2,034,218	\$ 129,373	\$ 6,009	\$ 216,163	\$ 2,385,763
CFY 08-09	\$ 2,170,432	\$ 111,974	\$ -	\$ 79,136	\$ 2,361,542
CFY 08-09 ^{1,2}	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$ 1,606,119
SFY 09-10 ²	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$ 2,141,935
SFY 10-11 ²	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$ 2,109,858
SFY 11-12 ²	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$ 2,119,729

Note 1: CFY 08-09 represents revised CFY 08-09 budgeted figures for the nine month period of October 2008 through June 2009, based on the May 2009 budget reductions implemented by the CCOC.

Note 2: The categories of Personal Services, Operating Expenses, Capital Outlay, and Budget Reserve are listed as N/A in CFY 08-09, SFY 09-10, SFY 10-11, and SFY 11-12 due to the implementation of budget reductions in May 2009.

The Clerk’s office budgets personnel related costs (employee salaries and benefits) in the budget category of personal services. The total budgeted expenditures in each fiscal year reviewed were approximately 89% personnel related.

REVENUES/LIABILITIES DUE TO THE STATE

The review confirmed that fines, fees, service charges, and court costs collected by the Clerk’s office were remitted to the Department of Revenue for deposit into the Clerks of Court Trust Fund in a timely manner. Pursuant to Section 28.245, F.S., funds are required to be remitted to the Clerks of Court Trust Fund by the 20th of the month immediately following the month in which the monies were collected.

Beginning July 2010, Section 28.245, F.S., requires Clerks to remit liabilities to the Clerks of Court Trust Fund by the 10th of the month immediately following the month in which the monies are collected. The review confirmed the accuracy of the revenues/liabilities listed on the Clerk’s General Ledger by reconciling with the revenues/liabilities reported on the CCOC Clerks’ Trust Fund Collections Tracking Report for each fiscal year. The Clerk’s office is in compliance with Florida Laws Chapter 2008-111, and is timely and accurate in remitting and recording the collections provided to the State General Revenue Fund.

The table below reflects the budgeted and actual revenues/liabilities for each fiscal year reviewed.

	Budgeted	Actual
CFY 07-08	\$ 1,900,500	\$ 1,614,483
CFY 08-09'	\$ 1,084,403	\$ 1,042,464
SFY 09-10	\$ 1,311,550	\$ 1,118,045
SFY 10-11	\$ 1,271,000	\$ 957,087
SFY 11-12	\$ 997,500	\$ 907,865

Note 1: CFY 08-09 budgeted and actual revenues/liabilities are for the nine month period of October 2008 through June 2009.

The budgeted revenues/liabilities decreased from CFY 07-08 to SFY 11-12 by 47.51%. The Clerk’s actual revenues/liabilities were below budgeted revenues/liabilities for CFY 07-08 through SFY 11-12.

The table below reflects the budgeted and actual remittances made to the Clerks of Court Trust Fund for each fiscal year reviewed.

Fiscal Year	Budgeted Surplus/(Deficit) Remittances	Actual Payments from the Trust Fund	Actual Remittances to the Trust Fund	Settle Up Remittance to Trust Fund	Total Remittances to/ (from)Trust
CFY 07-08	\$ (477,293)	\$ 477,288		\$ 148,373	\$ (328,915)
CFY 08-09 ¹	\$ (521,716)	\$ 459,596		\$ 53,195	\$ (406,401)
SFY 09-10 ^{2,3}	\$ (830,385)	\$ 2,141,935	\$ 1,118,045	\$ 79,361	\$ (944,529)
SFY 10-11	\$ (838,858)	\$ 2,109,858	\$ 957,087	\$ 35,036	\$ (1,117,735)
SFY 11-12	\$ (1,122,229)	\$ 2,119,729	\$ 907,865	\$ 182,138	\$ (1,029,726)

Note 1: CFY 08-09 budgeted surplus remittances were based on the nine month period of October 2008 through June 2009.

Note 2: Beginning SFY 09-10, the Actual Payments from the Trust Fund total was the monthly amount received as appropriated by the state, in accordance with 28.36, F.S.

Note 3: Beginning SFY 09-10, the Actual Remittances to the Trust Fund total was the monthly collections remitted by the clerks' offices to the state, in accordance with 28.245 F.S.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The CCOC has the responsibility of developing and certifying a uniform system of performance measures and applicable performance standards for the court-related functions, pursuant to Section 28.35(3)(a), F.S. The review confirmed the Clerk's office to be in compliance with the performance measure guidelines and standards defined by the CCOC. The Clerk's independent audit report confirmed the Clerk's office to be in compliance with Section 28.35, F.S., for CFY 07-08, CFY 08-09 and CFY 09-10. The review verified the Clerk maintains a partial fee payment system, pursuant to Section 28.246, F.S.

The table below reflects the standards of timeliness, collections, fiscal management, and juror payments achieved by the Clerk's office for each fiscal year reviewed.

TIMELINESS	CFY 07-08	CFY 08-09	SFY 09-10	SFY 10-11	SFY 11-12
Standard	12 of 20	12 of 20	12 of 20	12 of 20	12 of 20
Clerk Reported	17 of 20	20 of 20	19 of 20	18 of 20	12 of 20
COLLECTIONS	CFY 07-08	CFY 08-09	CFY 09-10	SFY 10-11	SFY 11-12
Standard	5 of 9	5 of 9	5 of 9	5 of 9	5 of 9
Clerk Reported	9 of 9	6 of 9	8 of 9	7 of 9	7 of 9
FISCAL MANAGEMENT	CFY 07-08	CFY 08-09	SFY 09-10	SFY 10-11	SFY 11-12
Standard	6 of 9	6 of 9	6 of 8	6 of 9	6 of 9
Clerk Reported	9 of 9	9 of 9	8 of 8	9 of 9	9 of 9
JUROR PAYMENTS	CFY 07-08	CFY 08-09	SFY 09-10	SFY 10-11	SFY 11-12
Standard	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Clerk Reported	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The table below reflects the Clerk's cases, defendants and financial receipts for each fiscal year reviewed.

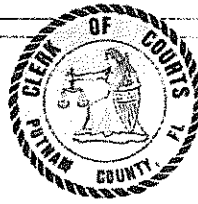
TOTAL REPORTED	CFY 07-08	CFY 08-09	SFY 09-10	SFY 10-11	SFY 11-12
Cases	16,920	14,849	15,118	12,715	13,115
Defendants	10,662	10,033	10,211	9,730	9,523
Financial Receipts	23,459	25,585	25,485	23,402	22,190

OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS**Observation Number One:**

Based upon our review, we found the Clerk's budgeting practices and expenditures and revenue methodologies for State funds to be efficient and accurate. However, expenditures during the review period were not limited to court-related functions as specified in Sections 28.35 (3) and 29.008, F.S. The Putnam County Clerk's Office reported unallowable expenditures of \$749.58 that were outside the scope of State funding authority for the review period of FY 07-08 through FY 11-12.

Recommendation Number One:

The Putnam County Clerk's Office should closely adhere to and follow all expenditures requirements prescribed in Florida Statutes. The Clerk should reimburse the Clerks of the Court Trust Fund for unallowable expenditures totaling \$749.58 for the review period of FY 07-08 through FY 11-12. Documentation of any outstanding reimbursements or transfers should be completed and remitted to DFS within 30 days of receiving this report, pursuant to Section 28.36, F.S.



Office of
Clerk of Court
Tim Smith

November 5, 2012

The Honorable Jeff Atwater
Chief Financial Officer
Florida Department of Financial Services
200 East Gaines St
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0300

SUBJECT: Response to Draft Observations & Recommendations for the Putnam
County Clerk of Circuit Court Performance and Compliance Review

Dear Mr. Atwater:

The following statement is submitted in response to the single draft observation and recommendation in conjunction with your office's recent audit

It is our intention, at all times, to adhere to and follow expenditure requirements as prescribed in Florida Statutes. Over the nearly 5 year period covered by this audit, we were found to have mistakenly charged approximately \$700 of expenses to the State for items which should have been charged to our county budget. We have returned this amount to the Clerk of Courts Trust Fund, and have taken steps internally to further reduce the potential for inaccurate charges to the State

I would like to take this opportunity to commend your staff on their efficient and professional approach to this audit. They were well prepared to review this long audit period, covering a broad range of issues, with little disruption to my staff.

Sincerely,

Tim Smith
Clerk of Circuit Court

Putnam County • P.O. Box 758 • Palatka, FL 32178-0758