

**ATTESTATION REPORT  
OF  
BROWN COUNTY COURT**

**JULY 1, 2015, THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2017**

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**Issued on April 19, 2018**

# BROWN COUNTY COURT

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# BROWN COUNTY COURT

## COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATION

During our examination of the Brown County Court, we noted a certain deficiency and other operational matters that are presented here.

This comment and recommendation is intended to improve the internal control over financial reporting or result in operational efficiencies in the following area:

### **Segregation of Duties**

Good internal control includes a plan of organization, procedures, and documentation designed to safeguard assets and to provide reliable financial records. A system of internal control should include a proper segregation of duties, so no one individual is capable of handling all phases of a transaction from beginning to end.

We noted that the office of the County Court lacked a sufficient segregation of duties, as one person was capable of handling all aspects of processing transactions from beginning to end. A lack of segregation of duties increases the risk of possible errors or irregularities; however, due to a limited number of personnel, an adequate segregation of duties is not possible without additional cost. Further, personnel are under the direction of both the Nebraska State Court Administrator and the Presiding Judge. We have included this comment in previous examinations. We consider this to be a material weakness.

Additionally, during testing, it was noted that 1 of 14 case balances tested was not applied to case fines and costs in a timely manner. The County Court received \$174 on December 6, 2016, and the payment was originally applied to fines and fees on the case; however, it was reversed because the offense on the citation had to be adjusted. Once the citation was adjusted, the County Court did not reapply the payment to fines and costs until February 17, 2017, after a suspension request was sent to the Department of Motor Vehicles.

We recommend the County Court and the Nebraska State Court Administrator review this situation. As always, the cost of hiring additional personnel versus the benefit of a proper segregation of duties must be weighed. Furthermore, we recommend the County Court perform an ongoing, detailed, and timely review of all monthly financial reports, including the Monthly Case Balance Report, to identify and promptly resolve unusual balances or receipts.

*Clerk Magistrate's Response: Segregation of duties has and always will be an issue due to being a one person court. With the addition of the financial specialist under the direction of the Administrative office of the Courts, the court trusts that we will be able to further improve the financial control as recommended due to the checks and balances that are now being performed.*

*In addition, recommendation was made in regards to a case where fines and costs were not applied in a timely manner. This was a case where the county attorney amended the case in writing on the complaint and I did not see it until I had applied the fines and costs and closed the case out. The following day as I was going over case balances etc., I realized the amended speeding rate. I then*

# BROWN COUNTY COURT

## COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATION

(Concluded)

*began the process of updating and amending my error. However, when I put the fines and costs in holding to amend the citation, I did not attach the costs back to the case. My error wasn't corrected until the court received notification of the defendant's license status. The receipt was adjusted and the DMV was contacted to correct the error.*

It should be noted this report is critical in nature, as it contains only our comment and recommendation on the area noted for improvement and does not include our observations on any accounting strengths of the County Court.

Draft copies of this report were furnished to the County Court to provide management an opportunity to review the report and to respond to the comment and recommendation included in this report. The formal response received has been incorporated into this report. The response has been objectively evaluated and recognized, as appropriate, in the report. A response that indicates corrective action has been taken was not verified at this time, but it will be verified in the next examination.



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### BROWN COUNTY COURT

#### INDEPENDENT ACCOUNTANT'S REPORT

Brown County Court  
Ainsworth, Nebraska 69210

We have examined the accompanying Schedules of Changes in Assets and Liabilities Arising from Cash Transactions of the Brown County Court as of and for the period July 1, 2015, to December 31, 2016, and the calendar year ending December 31, 2017. The County Court's management is responsible for the Schedules based on the accounting system and procedures set forth in Note 1. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the Schedules 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. Those standards require that we perform the examination to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the Schedules are based on the accounting system and procedures set forth in Note 1, in all material respects. An examination involves performing procedures to obtain evidence about the Schedules of Changes in Assets and Liabilities Arising from Cash Transactions. The nature, timing, and extent of the procedures selected depend on our judgment, including an assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the Schedules, whether due to fraud or error. We believe that the evidence we obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the Schedules of Changes in Assets and Liabilities Arising from Cash Transactions for the period July 1, 2015, to December 31, 2016, and the calendar year ending December 31, 2017, is based on the accounting system and procedures prescribed by the Nebraska Supreme Court, as set forth in Note 1, in all material respects.

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we are required to report findings of deficiencies in internal control, violations of provisions of contracts or grant agreements, abuse that is material to the Schedules, 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 Schedules are presented in accordance with the criteria described above and not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the internal control over the Schedules or on compliance and other matters; accordingly, we express no such opinions. Our examination disclosed a certain finding that is required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*, and that finding, along with the views of management, is described in the Comment Section of the report.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of management, the Supreme Court, others within the County Court, and the appropriate Federal and regulatory agencies, and it is not intended to be, and should not be, used by anyone other than these specified parties. However, this report is a matter of public record, and its distribution is not limited.



Zachary Wells, CPA  
Audit Manager  
Lincoln, Nebraska

April 16, 2018

**BROWN COUNTY COURT**  
**AINSWORTH, NEBRASKA**  
**SCHEDULE OF CHANGES IN ASSETS AND LIABILITIES**  
**ARISING FROM CASH TRANSACTIONS**  
**AGENCY FUNDS**

For the Period Ending December 31, 2016

	Balance July 1, 2015	Additions	Deductions	Balance December 31, 2016
<b>ASSETS</b>				
Cash and Deposits	\$ 29,017	\$ 257,122	\$ 260,470	\$ 25,669
<b>LIABILITIES</b>				
Due to State Treasurer:				
Regular Fees	\$ 2,120	\$ 34,573	\$ 34,547	\$ 2,146
Law Enforcement Fees	142	1,883	1,913	112
State Judges Retirement Fund	444	8,106	7,991	559
Court Administrative Fees	1,113	14,510	14,377	1,246
Legal Services Fees	491	6,881	6,911	461
Due to County Treasurer:				
Regular Fines	4,043	56,199	56,724	3,518
Overload Fines	75	4,525	4,525	75
Regular Fees	973	8,178	9,051	100
Petty Cash Fund	50	-	-	50
Due to Municipalities:				
Regular Fines	10	335	345	-
Trust Fund Payable	19,556	121,932	124,086	17,402
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 29,017</b>	<b>\$ 257,122</b>	<b>\$ 260,470</b>	<b>\$ 25,669</b>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the schedule.

**BROWN COUNTY COURT**  
**AINSWORTH, NEBRASKA**  
**SCHEDULE OF CHANGES IN ASSETS AND LIABILITIES**  
**ARISING FROM CASH TRANSACTIONS**  
**AGENCY FUNDS**

For the Calendar Year Ended December 31, 2017

	<u>Balance</u>			<u>Balance</u>
	<u>January 1, 2017</u>	<u>Additions</u>	<u>Deductions</u>	<u>December 31, 2017</u>
<b>ASSETS</b>				
Cash and Deposits	\$ 25,669	\$ 191,855	\$ 191,242	\$ 26,282
<b>LIABILITIES</b>				
Due to State Treasurer:				
Regular Fees	\$ 2,146	\$ 20,730	\$ 21,220	\$ 1,656
Law Enforcement Fees	112	1,367	1,368	111
State Judges Retirement Fund	559	6,124	6,132	551
Court Administrative Fees	1,246	10,104	10,824	526
Legal Services Fees	461	5,374	5,421	414
Due to County Treasurer:				
Regular Fines	3,518	75,192	73,011	5,699
Overload Fines	75	175	250	-
Regular Fees	100	4,217	4,311	6
Petty Cash Fund	50	-	-	50
Due to Municipalities:				
Regular Fines	-	175	175	-
Trust Fund Payable	<u>17,402</u>	<u>68,397</u>	<u>68,530</u>	<u>17,269</u>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<u>\$ 25,669</u>	<u>\$ 191,855</u>	<u>\$ 191,242</u>	<u>\$ 26,282</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the schedule.

**BROWN COUNTY COURT**  
**NOTES TO FINANCIAL SCHEDULES**

For the Period Ended December 31, 2016, and Calendar Year Ended December 31, 2017

**1. Criteria**

**A. Reporting Entity**

The Brown County Court is established by State statute and is administratively operated through the Court Administrator's Office of the Nebraska Supreme Court, which is part of the State of Nebraska reporting entity. The Schedules of Changes in Assets and Liabilities Arising from Cash Transactions of the County Court reflect only the Agency Funds activity of the County Court, including the receipts and their subsequent disbursement to the appropriate entities for which they were collected. The Schedules do not reflect the personal services expenses of the County Court, which are paid by the Nebraska Supreme Court, or the operating expenses, which are paid by Brown County.

**B. Basis of Accounting**

The accounting records of the County Court Agency Funds are maintained, and the Schedules of Changes in Assets and Liabilities Arising from Cash Transactions have been prepared, based on the accounting system and procedures prescribed by the Nebraska Supreme Court. Under this system of accounting, fines, fees, and receipts relating to trust funds are shown as additions to assets and as an increase in the related liability when received. Likewise, disbursements are shown as deductions to assets and as a decrease in the related liability when a check is written.

**2. Deposits and Investments**

Funds held by the County Court are deposited and invested in accordance with rules issued by the Supreme Court, as directed by Neb. Rev. Stat. § 25-2713 (Reissue 2016). Funds are generally consolidated in an interest-bearing checking account; however, the County Court may order certain trust funds to be invested separately. Any deposits in excess of the amount insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation are required by Neb. Rev. Stat. § 77-2326.04 (Reissue 2009) to be secured either by a surety bond or as provided in the Public Funds Deposit Security Act.