

**REPORT OF THE AUDIT OF THE
KNOX COUNTY
SHERIFF**

**For The Year Ended
December 31, 2023**



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CONTENTS

PAGE

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR’S REPORT 1

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS, DISBURSEMENTS, AND EXCESS FEES - REGULATORY BASIS 4

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENT 7

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* 15

SCHEDULE OF FINDINGS AND RESPONSES 19

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ALLISON BALL
AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Independent Auditor's Report

The Honorable Mike Mitchell, Knox County Judge/Executive
The Honorable Mike Smith, Knox County Sheriff
Members of the Knox County Fiscal Court

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statement

Opinions

We have audited the accompanying Statement of Receipts, Disbursements, and Excess Fees - Regulatory Basis of the Sheriff of Knox County, Kentucky, for the year ended December 31, 2023, and the related notes to the financial statement.

Unmodified Opinion on Regulatory Basis of Accounting

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statement presents fairly, in all material respects, the receipts, disbursements, and excess fees of the Knox County Sheriff for the year ended December 31, 2023, in accordance with the basis of accounting practices prescribed or permitted by the Commonwealth of Kentucky to demonstrate compliance with the Commonwealth of Kentucky's regulatory basis of accounting and budget laws as described in Note 1.

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 section of our report, the financial statement does not present fairly, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, the financial position of the Knox County Sheriff, as of December 31, 2023, or changes in financial position or cash flows thereof for the year then ended.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS), the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* (GAS), issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, and the *Audit Program for County Fee Officials* issued by the Auditor of Public Accounts, Commonwealth of Kentucky. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statement section of our report. We are required to be independent of the Knox County Sheriff and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinions.



The Honorable Mike Mitchell, Knox County Judge/Executive
The Honorable Mike Smith, Knox County Sheriff
Members of the Knox County Fiscal Court

Basis for Opinion (Continued)

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 Knox County Sheriff 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 and budget laws, 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 and pervasive.

Responsibilities of Management 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.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Knox County Sheriff's ability to continue as a going concern for twelve months beyond the financial statement date, including any currently known information that may raise substantial doubt shortly thereafter.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statement

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statement as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinions. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS and GAS will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statement.

In performing an audit in accordance with GAAS and GAS, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statement, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statement.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit 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 Knox County Sheriff's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statement.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Knox County Sheriff's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

The Honorable Mike Mitchell, Knox County Judge/Executive
The Honorable Mike Smith, Knox County Sheriff
Members of the Knox County Fiscal Court

Auditor’s Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statement (Continued)

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we have identified during the audit.

Other Reporting Required by *Government Auditing Standards*

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we have also issued our report dated October 28, 2024, on our consideration of the Knox County Sheriff’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 solely 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 effectiveness of 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 Knox County Sheriff’s internal control over financial reporting and compliance.

Based on the results of our audit, we have presented the accompanying Schedule of Findings and Responses, included herein, which discusses the following report finding:

- 2023-001 The Knox County Sheriff Did Not Segregate Accounting Duties Or Document Compensating Controls
- 2023-002 The Knox County Sheriff Did Not Comply With Bidding Requirements Set Forth In KRS 424.260 Or The *Guide To Equitable Sharing For State, Local, And Tribal Law Enforcement Agencies*

Respectfully submitted,



Allison Ball
Auditor of Public Accounts
Frankfort, KY

October 28, 2024

KNOX COUNTY
MIKE SMITH, SHERIFF
STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS, DISBURSEMENTS, AND EXCESS FEES - REGULATORY BASIS

For The Year Ended December 31, 2023

Receipts

Federal Grants:

High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA)	\$	19,000
Unlawful Narcotics Investigation, Treatment & Education, Inc. (UNITE)		68,484

State - Kentucky Law Enforcement Foundation Program Fund (KLEFPF)		47,686
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State Fees For Services:

Finance and Administration Cabinet		169,282
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Circuit Court Clerk:

Fines and Fees Collected		985
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Fiscal Court		455,233
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County Clerk - Delinquent Taxes		82,771
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Commission On Taxes Collected		473,788
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Fees Collected For Services:

Auto Inspections	\$	22,790	
Accident and Police Reports		600	
Serving Papers		65,870	
Carry Concealed Deadly Weapon Permits		10,420	99,680

Other:

Add-On Fees	30,853		
Miscellaneous	3,028		
School Resource Officers	287,412		
Mental Transports	3,960		325,253

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

KNOX COUNTY
MIKE SMITH, SHERIFF
STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS, DISBURSEMENTS, AND EXCESS FEES - REGULATORY BASIS
For The Year Ended December 31, 2023
(Continued)

Receipts (Continued)

Interest Earned	\$ 913
Borrowed Money:	
State Advancement	<u>100,000</u>
Total Receipts	1,843,075

Disbursements

Operating Disbursements and Capital Outlay:

Personnel Services-		
Deputies' Salaries	\$ 831,152	
Other Salaries	102,569	
Employee Benefits-		
Employer's Share Social Security	79,358	
Employer's Share Retirement	188,142	
Employer's Share Unemployment Insurance	930	
Employer Paid Health Insurance	113,817	
Materials and Supplies-		
Office Materials and Supplies	12,324	
Uniforms	23,843	
Auto Expense-		
Gasoline	72,134	
Maintenance and Repairs	31,171	
Other Charges-		
Conventions and Travel	1,289	
Court Security Officer Testing	839	
Postage	14,532	
Bond	1,922	
Sheriff's Settlement	1,800	
Utilities	19,162	
Miscellaneous	<u>8,826</u>	\$ 1,503,810
Debt Service:		
State Advancement		<u>100,000</u>
Total Disbursements		<u>1,603,810</u>

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

KNOX COUNTY
MIKE SMITH, SHERIFF
STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS, DISBURSEMENTS, AND EXCESS FEES - REGULATORY BASIS
For The Year Ended December 31, 2023
(Continued)

Net Receipts	\$ 239,265
Less: Statutory Maximum	<u>119,539</u>
Excess Fees	119,726
Less: Training Incentive Benefit	<u>4,983</u>
Excess Fees Due County for 2023	114,743
Payment to Fiscal Court - March 15, 2024	<u>114,734</u>
Balance Due Fiscal Court at Completion of Audit	<u>\$ 9</u>

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

KNOX COUNTY
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENT

December 31, 2023

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 due from the sheriff as determined by the audit. KRS 134.192 requires the sheriff to pay to the governing body of the county any fees, commissions, and other income of his or her office, including income from investments, which exceed the sum of his or her maximum salary as permitted by the Constitution and other reasonable expenses, including compensation of deputies and assistants by March 15 of each year. KRS 64.830 requires an outgoing sheriff to make a final settlement with the fiscal court of his county by March 15 immediately following the expiration of his term of office.

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) as of December 31 that may be included in the excess fees calculation:

- Interest receivable
- Collection on accounts due from others for 2023 services
- Reimbursements for 2023 activities
- Tax commissions due from December tax collections
- Payments due other governmental entities for payroll
- Payments due vendors for goods or services provided in 2023

The measurement focus of a fee official's financial statement is upon current financial resources. Per KRS 134.192(12), remittance of excess fees is due to the fiscal court when the sheriff makes their final settlement.

C. Cash and Investments

KRS 66.480 authorizes the sheriff'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).

KNOX COUNTY
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENT
December 31, 2023
(Continued)

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

The sheriff's office has elected to participate, pursuant to KRS 78.530, in the County Employees Retirement System (CERS), which is administered by the Kentucky Public Pensions Authority (KPPA). 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.

The sheriff's contribution for calendar year 2021 was \$159,429, calendar year 2022 was \$187,430, and calendar year 2023 was \$188,142.

Nonhazardous

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 CERS 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 CERS 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 26.79 percent for the first six months and 23.34 percent for the last six months.

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:

KNOX COUNTY
 NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENT
 December 31, 2023
 (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)

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

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 78.5536.

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

Once members reach a minimum vesting period of 15 years, they 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 78.5536. 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 Kentucky Retirement Systems 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.

KNOX COUNTY
 NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENT
 December 31, 2023
 (Continued)

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

Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) (Continued)

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.

Kentucky Retirement System Annual Financial Report and Proportionate Share Audit Report

Kentucky Retirement System 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.

Kentucky Retirement System 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 Knox County Sheriff 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 sheriff 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 sheriff's deposits may not be returned. The Knox County Sheriff 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, 2023, all deposits were covered by FDIC insurance or a properly executed collateral security agreement.

Note 4. Federal Grants

A. High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA)

The Knox County Sheriff's Office was awarded a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) grant from the United States Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) for the period of January 1, 2023, through December 31, 2023. During 2023, grant funds in the amount of \$19,000 were received for reimbursement of overtime for law enforcement officers.

KNOX COUNTY
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENT
December 31, 2023
(Continued)

Note 4. Federal Grants (Continued)

B. Unlawful Narcotics Investigation, Treatment, and Education, Inc. (UNITE)

The Knox County Sheriff's Office received a UNITE grant from the Unlawful Narcotics Investigation, Treatment, and Education, Inc. In 2023, the sheriff received \$68,484 as reimbursements for the amount paid to law enforcement officers to serve as UNITE intelligence analysts. The grant began on July 1, 2017, and will continue until terminated by either party.

Note 5. Cash Drawer

The Knox County Sheriff maintains \$800 for making change to customers. This money was supplied by the Knox County Fiscal Court at the beginning of this term in January 2015 and will be returned to the fiscal court at the end of the sheriff's term in office.

Note 6. Federal Forfeiture Account

The Knox County Sheriff's Office maintained an official bank account for monies awarded by federal forfeitures. The balance as of January 1, 2023, was \$195,094. During calendar year 2023, the sheriff received deposits totaling \$4,976, and the sheriff expended \$126,630. The balance as of December 31, 2023, was \$73,440.

Note 7. Drug Account

The Knox County Sheriff's Office maintained an official bank account for monies awarded by court orders. The balance as of January 1, 2023, was \$2,759. During calendar year 2023, the sheriff received deposits totaling \$7,010, and the sheriff expended \$8,872. The balance as of December 31, 2023, was \$897.

Note 8. Donation Account

During calendar year 2023, the sheriff opened an account for monies received as donations to be used to further the public purposes of the sheriff's office. During calendar year 2023, the sheriff's office received donations totaling \$825. The sheriff had \$825 in disbursements, leaving a balance of \$0 as of December 31, 2023.

Note 9. Short-term Debt

A. Direct Borrowings

1. State Advancement

During calendar year 2023, the sheriff's office borrowed \$100,000 under the state advancement program to defray necessary official expenses and to apply to the payment of the salaries of the sheriff or the sheriff's deputies and assistants from County Fees Systems Branch, Division of Local Government Services, Kentucky Finance and Administration Cabinet (Cabinet) under KRS 64.140(1). Principal was due on or before January 15, 2024, at zero percent interest. In the event of default, the cabinet may obtain payment from the sheriff, his sureties, and the sheriff in his official capacity. The balance of the state advancement was paid in full from the 2023 fee account as of December 13, 2023.

KNOX COUNTY
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENT
December 31, 2023
(Continued)

Note 9. Short-term Debt (Continued)

B. Changes in Short-term Debt

	<u>Beginning Balance</u>	<u>Additions</u>	<u>Reductions</u>	<u>Ending Balance</u>
State Advancement	\$	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$
Total Short-term Debt	<u>\$ 0</u>	<u>\$ 100,000</u>	<u>\$ 100,000</u>	<u>\$ 0</u>

Note 10. Lease Agreements

The Knox County Sheriff's Office was committed to the following lease agreements as of December 31, 2023:

- A. The Knox County Sheriff's Office was committed to a 24-month lease agreement for the acquisition and use of a 2022 vehicle. The lease agreement requires a monthly payment of \$1,124 for 24 months to be completed on December 25, 2024. The total lease liability balance of the agreement was \$13,483 as of December 31, 2023.
- B. The Knox County Sheriff's Office was committed to a 24-month lease agreement for the acquisition and use of a 2022 truck. The lease agreement requires a monthly payment of \$993 for 24 months to be completed on December 27, 2024. The total lease liability balance of the agreement was \$11,916 as of December 31, 2023.

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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ALLISON BALL
AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

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

The Honorable Mike Mitchell, Knox County Judge/Executive
The Honorable Mike Smith, Knox County Sheriff
Members of the Knox County Fiscal Court

We have audited, 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 Program for County Fee Officials* issued by the Auditor of Public Accounts, Commonwealth of Kentucky, the Statement of Receipts, Disbursements, and Excess Fees - Regulatory Basis of the Knox County Sheriff for the year ended December 31, 2023, and the related notes to the financial statement and have issued our report thereon dated October 28, 2024. The Knox County Sheriff'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.

Report on Internal Control over Financial Reporting

In planning and performing our audit of the financial statement, we considered the Knox County Sheriff'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 Knox County Sheriff's internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of the Knox County Sheriff's internal control.

Our consideration of internal control over financial reporting was for the limited purpose described in the preceding paragraph and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control over financial reporting that might be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies and therefore, material weaknesses or significant deficiencies may exist that were not identified. However, as described in the accompanying Schedule of Findings and Responses, we identified a certain deficiency in internal control that we consider to be a material weakness.

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 a 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. We consider the deficiency described in the accompanying Schedule of Findings and Responses as item 2023-001 to be a material weakness.



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)

Report on Compliance and Other Matters

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the Knox County Sheriff'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 an instance of noncompliance or other matter that is required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards* and which is described in the accompanying Schedule of Findings and Responses as item 2023-002.

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,



Allison Ball
Auditor of Public Accounts
Frankfort, KY

October 28, 2024

SCHEDULE OF FINDINGS AND RESPONSES

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KNOX COUNTY
MIKE SMITH, SHERIFF
SCHEDULE OF FINDINGS AND RESPONSES

For The Year Ended December 31, 2023

INTERNAL CONTROL - MATERIAL WEAKNESS:

2023-001 The Knox County Sheriff Did Not Segregate Accounting Duties Or Document Compensating Controls

This is a repeat finding and was included in the prior year audit report as finding 2022-001. The Knox County Sheriff's Office did not segregate accounting duties. In addition, no documentation was provided as evidence that compensating controls were implemented. The sheriff's office manager collects payments from customers, prepares bank deposits, issues checks, and posts to the receipts and disbursements ledgers. The sheriff's part-time bookkeeper prepares bank reconciliations, prepares payroll, and occasionally collects payments from customers. Front-line office personnel prepare their own deposits, but the office manager takes them to the bank. Neither the office manager nor the part-time bookkeeper is an authorized check signer, but both are responsible for preparing monthly and quarterly reports. No evidence was found that the sheriff or an employee who did not prepare the report provided oversight over any of these activities. Additionally, the sheriff hired an outside Certified Public Accountant to review the quarterly reports for accuracy, but no evidence of the review was found.

The sheriff stated this condition is the result of a limited budget, which restricts the number of employees the sheriff can hire or delegate duties to. The lack of oversight could result in undetected misappropriation of assets and inaccurate financial reporting to external agencies, such as the Department for Local Government.

KRS 46.010(2) requires, "each county treasurer, and each county officer who receives or disburses state funds, to keep an accurate account of receipts and disbursements, showing a daily balance of receipts and disbursements." KRS 46.010(3) requires, "all county officers handling state funds, other than taxes, to make an annual report to the Department for Local Government showing receipts and disbursements, and to make other financial statements as the Department for Local Government requires." The failure to separate the duties of collections, preparing deposits, issuing checks, and posting to the receipt and disbursement ledger is a basic internal control necessary to ensure the accuracy and reliability of financial reports.

We recommend the sheriff separate the duties involved in receiving cash, posting to ledgers, and preparing reports. If this is not feasible due to a limited budget, cross checking procedures could be implemented and documented by the individual performing the procedure. For example, the sheriff could instruct a person independent of receipts posting and bank reconciliation to compare bank deposit tickets to daily checkouts and show evidence of this review by initialing the deposit ticket and the daily checkout. Additionally, the sheriff or someone independent of report preparation could compare the monthly/quarterly reports to the supporting documentation.

Sheriff's Response: The sheriff did not provide a response.

STATE LAWS AND REGULATIONS:

2023-002 The Knox County Sheriff Did Not Comply With Bidding Requirements Set Forth In KRS 424.260 Or The Guide To Equitable Sharing For State, Local, And Tribal Law Enforcement Agencies

The Knox County Sheriff's Office remitted \$99,080 of federal forfeiture funds for Operation UNITE's purchase of two vehicles totaling \$99,080. These vehicles are not in the possession of the Knox County Sheriff's Office and were obtained without obtaining bids. The sheriff serves as a member and/or fiduciary agency of with the Operation UNITE task force and was unaware of the bidding requirement. The sheriff was unaware the vehicles were to be in the sheriff's office's possession.

KNOX COUNTY
MIKE SMITH, SHERIFF
SCHEDULE OF FINDINGS AND RESPONSES
For The Year Ended December 31, 2023
(Continued)

STATE LAWS AND REGULATIONS: (Continued)

2023-002 The Knox County Sheriff Did Not Comply With Bidding Requirements Set Forth In KRS 424.260 Or The *Guide To Equitable Sharing For State, Local, And Tribal Law Enforcement Agencies* (Continued)

The sheriff cannot ensure that he has purchased these items at the best price available without obtaining bids. The sheriff is also not in compliance with the *Guide To Equitable Sharing For State, Local, And Tribal Law Enforcement Agencies*.

KRS 424.260 (1) states, “[e]xcept where a statute specifically fixes a larger sum as the minimum for a requirement of advertisement for bids, no city, county, or district, or board or commission of a city or county, or sheriff or county clerk, may make a contract, lease, or other agreement for: (a) Materials; (b) Supplies, except perishable foods such as meat, poultry, fish, egg products, fresh vegetables, and fresh fruits; (c) Equipment; or (d) Contractual services other than professional; involving an expenditure of more than forty thousand dollars (\$40,000) without first making newspaper advertisement for bids.”

Section V.B.2.i. of the *Guide To Equitable Sharing For State, Local, And Tribal Law Enforcement Agencies* states, “[t]he purchasing agency must retain title to and maintain in its inventory any equipment purchased for use by officers assigned to a task force.” Section II.B.1 also states that task forces are not eligible to participate directly in the federal asset forfeiture program because they are not separate law enforcement agencies. But the task force may equitably share forfeiture funds through an eligible fiduciary agency or law enforcement agency member of the task force. Under such arrangements, the fiduciary or task force member may purchase or lease equipment for the benefit of the task force. However, the fiduciary or task force member must maintain ownership and control of the equipment.

We recommend the sheriff comply with KRS 424.260 by obtaining bids for all purchases involving expenditures of more than \$40,000 except for those items exempted in the statute. We also recommend the sheriff comply with the *Guide To Equitable Sharing For State, Local, And Tribal Law Enforcement Agencies* by titling these vehicles to the sheriff’s office or fiscal court.

Sheriff’s Response: The sheriff did not provide a response.