



NEBRASKA AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Charlie Janssen
State Auditor

Charlie.Janssen@nebraska.gov
PO Box 98917
State Capitol, Suite 2303
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509
402-471-2111, FAX 402-471-3301
www.auditors.nebraska.gov

September 23, 2019

Ann Hagan, Chairperson
Village of Smithfield
408 Commercial Ave.
Smithfield, NE 68976

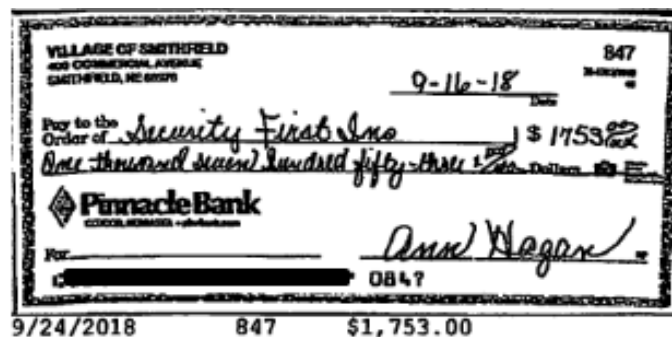
Dear Chairperson Hagan:

As you know, the Nebraska Auditor of Public Accounts (APA) has approved the fiscal year 2018 audit waiver for the Village of Smithfield (Village). However, while performing our review to determine whether to approve the audit waiver, the APA noted certain internal control or compliance matters, or other operational issues, within the Village. The following information is intended to improve internal controls or result in other operational efficiencies.

Comments and Recommendations

1. Dual Signatures Required on Checks

The APA obtained the bank statements for the Village's accounts from its fiscal year 2018 audit waiver request. From these statements, the APA noted that all Village checks written during the examination period contained only one signature. An example of such checks is shown below:



State statute requires Village checks to be signed by both the Village Board (Board) Chairperson and the Village Clerk. Specifically, Neb. Rev. Stat. § 17-711 (Cum. Supp. 2018) provides the following:

All warrants drawn upon the city treasurer of a city of the second class or village treasurer must be signed by the mayor or chairperson of the village board of trustees and countersigned by the city clerk or village clerk, stating the particular fund to which the same is chargeable, the person to whom payable, and for what particular object. No money shall be otherwise paid than upon such warrants so drawn. Each warrant shall specify the amount included in the adopted budget statement for such fund upon which it is drawn and the amount already expended of such fund.

Good internal control and sound accounting practices require procedures to ensure that Village checks contain the statutorily required endorsements.

Without such procedures, there is an increased risk of not only failure to comply with State statute but also the loss and/or misuse of Village funds.

We recommend the Board implement procedures to require dual signatures, from the Board Chairperson and the Village Clerk, on all Village checks, as required by law.

Village Response: Village checks will be signed by Ann Hagan, Chairperson and Verna Barnhouse, Clerk.

2. Payment of Claims Prior to Board Approval

During our comparison of the Village’s bank account details to claims approved by the Board, the APA noted that multiple Village checks, totaling \$354.45, were issued before the underlying claims were approved by the Board.

The table below provides a summary of those premature payments:

Claim Date	Name	Amount	Check #	Cleared Date	Days Paid Before Approval
1/19/2018	Dawson Public Power	\$ 136.18	448	1/17/2018	2
1/19/2018	Dawson Public Power	\$ 150.92	825	1/17/2018	2
1/19/2018	Dawson Public Power	\$ 67.35	756	1/17/2018	2
Total		\$ 354.45			

Neb. Rev. Stat. § 17-614(1) (Cum. Supp. 2018) sets out the proper method for the appropriation or payment of money by the Village, as follows:

All ordinances and resolutions or orders for the appropriation or payment of money shall require for their passage or adoption the concurrence of a majority of all members elected to the city council in a city of the second class or village board of trustees

(Emphasis added.) Good internal control requires procedures to ensure that all claims are approved by the Board prior to payment and are adequately documented in the meeting minutes of the month in which they are approved.

Without such procedures, there is an increased risk for the loss or misuse of Village funds.

We recommend the Board implement procedures to ensure all claims are approved by the Board prior to payment and are adequately documented in the meeting minutes of the month in which they are approved.

Village Response: We will contact utility companies and other businesses as needed so the payment of bills will correspond with approval at our Village Board meetings.

3. Payment Made in Excess of Approved Amount

During our comparison of the Village’s bank account details to claims approved by the Board, the APA identified one check paid in excess of the amount approved by the Board.

The following table summarizes this overpayment.

Name	Claim Date	Approved Amount	Amount Paid	Over Payment
Dawson Public Power	1/19/2018	\$ 136.18	\$ 185.58	\$ 49.40

Good internal control requires procedures to ensure that all claims are made in the amount approved by the Board.

Without such procedures, there is an increased risk for the loss or misuse of Village funds.

We recommend the Village implement procedures to ensure payments are made in the amount approved by the Board.

Village Response: Each month we will check our bill amounts against the amount to approve to ensure they are the same.

* * * * *

The preliminary planning work that resulted in this letter was designed primarily on a test basis and, therefore, may not bring to light all existing weaknesses in the Village's policies or procedures. Nevertheless, our objective is to use the knowledge gained during the performance of that preliminary planning work to make comments and suggestions that we hope will prove useful to the Village.

Draft copies of this letter were furnished to the Village to provide its management with an opportunity to review and to respond to the comments and recommendations contained herein. Any formal responses received have been incorporated into this letter. Such responses have been objectively evaluated and recognized, as appropriate, in the letter. Any response indicating that corrective action has been taken was not verified at this time.

This communication is intended solely for the information and use of the Village and its management. It is not intended to be, and should not be, used by anyone other than those specified parties. However, this letter is a matter of public record, and its distribution is not limited.

If you have any questions regarding the above information, please contact our office.

Sincerely,



Mary Avery
Special Audits and Finance Manager
Phone (402) 471-3686
mary.avery@nebraska.gov