



# NEBRASKA AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

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State Auditor

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September 20, 2019

Chris Ibsen, Chairperson  
Village of Roca  
P.O. Box 69  
Roca, NE 68430

Dear Chairperson Ibsen:

As you know, the Nebraska Auditor of Public Accounts (APA) has approved the fiscal year 2018 audit waiver for the Village of Roca (Village).

However, the Village's amount of disbursements for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, did exceed our normal threshold (\$300,000) for granting a waiver of the audit requirement. Due to the Village's submission of supporting documentation for large one-time type expenditures, which accounted for a large percentage of the current year's expenditures, we were able to consider the Village's financial activity for this year to be low-risk enough to grant the audit waiver request. Therefore, if the fiscal year 2019 disbursements are similar to or greater than the fiscal year ended 2018's expenditures, an audit for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2019, may be required. This information is only for your consideration in planning for fiscal year 2019 and forward.

Additionally, 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: We process our invoices electronically or through Bill Pay with the bank. We will begin having dual signatures on any warrants printed and issued by the Village. The signatures will be the Chairman of the Board and the Clerk/Treasurer.*

## **2. Lack of Claims Listing**

During our comparison of the Village's bank account details to claims approved by the Board, the APA noted no listing of individual claims was recorded in the Board's official proceedings. The APA questions if the publication of the Board's official proceedings contained the statutorily required items for approved claims when such listing is not maintained, and the Board's meeting minutes do not contain the details of any approved claims.

Neb. Rev. Stat. § 19-1102 (Cum. Supp. 2018) requires publication of the Board's official proceedings, which must include, among other things, the purpose of each claim allowed, as follows:

*It shall be the duty of each village or city clerk in every village or city having a population of not more than one hundred thousand inhabitants as determined by the most recent federal decennial census or the most recent revised certified count by the United States Bureau of the Census to prepare and publish the official proceedings of the village or city board, council, or commission within thirty days after any meeting of the board, council, or commission. The publication shall be in a newspaper in or of general circulation in the village or city, shall set forth a statement of the proceedings of the meeting, and shall also include the amount of each claim allowed, the purpose of the claim, and the name of the claimant, except that the aggregate amount of all payroll claims may be included as one item. Between July 15 and August 15 of each year, the employee job titles and the current annual, monthly, or hourly salaries corresponding to such job titles shall be published. Each job title published shall be descriptive and indicative of the duties and functions of the position. The charge for the publication shall not exceed the rates provided for in section 23-122.*

(Emphasis added.) Good internal control and sound accounting practices require procedures to ensure that the Board's official proceedings describe the purpose of each claim allowed.

Without such procedures, there is an increased risk of not only failure to comply with statutory publication requirements but also a lack of transparency regarding the nature of public expenditures.

We recommend the Board implement procedures to ensure the purpose of each claim allowed is included in the Board's official proceedings and published in accordance with State statute.

*Village Response: The Clerk/Treasurer will continue to prepare and publish the official proceedings of the Village. This will include a list of claims showing the amount of each claim, the purpose of the claim and the name of the claimant.*

**3. 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 the Village approves financial reports from the month prior; thus, all claims have been paid before they are approved.

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 have immediately implemented procedures to ensure all claims are approved by the Board prior to payment. They will be adequately documented in the minutes.*

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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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Avery". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the left of the typed name.

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

cc: Diane Van Deun, Village Clerk