



## 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  
auditors.nebraska.gov

January 12, 2022

Terry Eriksen, Chairperson  
Emerson Rural Fire District  
PO Box 41  
Emerson, NE 68733

Dear Chairperson Eriksen:

The Nebraska Auditor of Public Accounts (APA) has reviewed the audit waiver request received from the Emerson Rural Fire District (District) for the fiscal year ending 2021. **That request has been approved.**

While performing, pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 84-304 (2021 Neb. Laws, LB 528, § 51), the preliminary examination necessary to determine whether further audit work would be required or the audit waiver should be allowed, the APA noted certain internal control or compliance matters, or other operational issues, within the District.

The following information is intended to improve internal controls or result in other operational efficiencies.

### Comment and Recommendation

#### Lack of Dual Signatures

The APA obtained the monthly statements for the District's bank accounts from its fiscal year 2021 audit waiver request. From those statements, the APA noted that three District checks written during the examination period contained only one signature. An example of such checks is shown below.

EMERSON RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT #6041  
GENERAL  
P.O. BOX 41  
EMERSON, NE 68733  
DATE 6-17-21  
PAY TO THE ORDER OF Heiman Fire Equipment \$885.00  
Eight hundred eighty five and 00/100 DOLLARS  
First Nebraska Bank  
MEMO REC. 0897458-14  
Gerald D. Albert  
#6041  
06/24/2021  
\$885.40

Nebraska law requires both the Secretary-Treasurer and the President of the District to sign all checks approved by the Board. In particular, Neb. Rev. Stat. § 35-511 (Reissue 2016) states that those checks “shall bear the signature of the secretary-treasurer and the countersignature of the president of such district.”

In addition, good internal controls and sound accounting practices require procedures to ensure that District checks contain the statutorily required endorsements.

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

We recommend the Board implement procedures to require dual signatures, from both the Secretary-Treasurer and the President, on all District checks, as required by law.

\* \* \* \* \*

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 District'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 District.

This communication is intended solely for the information and use of the District 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, please contact **Dakota Christensen** at **402-499-8702** or **dakota.christensen@nebraska.gov**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Avery", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mark Avery, CPA  
Assistant Deputy Auditor