



NEBRASKA AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

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February 23, 2023

Brian Rowse, Chairperson
Village of Chambers
P.O. Box 143
Chambers, NE 68725

Dear Chairperson Rowse,

The Nebraska Auditor of Public Accounts (APA) has reviewed the audit waiver request received from the Village of Chambers (Village) for the fiscal year ending 2022. **That request has been approved.**

While performing, pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 84-304 (Cum. Supp. 2022), the preliminary examination necessary to determine whether the audit waiver should be allowed or further audit work would be required, 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. Payment of Unapproved Claims

During our comparison of the Village's bank account details to claims approved by the Board, the APA identified the following payments, totaling \$656.70, which were paid but not included on the claims listing to be approved by the Board.

Details of the unapproved payments are included in the table below:

Name/Vendor	Check Date	Amount	Check #
Melissa Krysl	05/18/22	\$500.00	7023
Paypal	05/19/22	\$40.68	ACH
Amazon	05/25/22	\$116.02	ACH
Total		\$656.70	

Neb. Rev. Stat. § 17-614(1)(a) (Reissue 2022) 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.

A similar issue was identified by the APA in a prior review and was disclosed to the Village in the APA’s letter dated February 11, 2022, which can be found on the APA’s website. However, it does not appear this issue was corrected after the APA’s notification.

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.

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 the following checks, totaling \$35,808.37, were issued before the underlying claims were approved by the Board.

The table below provides a summary of the premature payments:

Name/Vendor	Amount	Approval Date	Check Date	Days Paid Before Approval
Schindler Electric	\$2,415.00	05/18/22	05/08/22	10
Love Signs	\$30,703.60	05/18/22	05/08/22	10
Tracy Construction	\$2,689.71	05/18/22	05/11/22	7
Total	\$35,808.31			

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(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.

A similar issue was identified by the APA in a prior review and was disclosed to the Village in the APA’s letter dated February 11, 2022, which can be found on the APA’s website. However, it does not appear this issue was corrected after the APA’s notification.

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.

3. Negative Fund Balance

On Exhibit A of the Village’s audit waiver request form, the APA noted that the General fund had a deficit balance of \$124,379, as of September 30, 2022.

Good internal control and sound accounting practices require procedures to ensure that Village fund balances are sufficient to cover fully all disbursements and transfers approved by the Board. Those same procedures should ensure also that the Board is apprised regularly of each Village fund balance and, therefore placed in a position to take any action needed to resolve deficits therein.

Without such procedures, there is an increased risk of not only insufficient Village fund balances, but also the resultant inability to cover fully all disbursements and transfers approved by the Board.

A similar issue was identified by the APA in a prior review and was disclosed to the Village in the APA’s letter dated February 11, 2022, which can be found on the APA’s website. However, it does not appear this issue was corrected after the APA’s notification.

We recommend the Village board implement procedures to ensure the Board is apprised regularly of each Village fund balance and, therefore, placed in a position to take any action needed to resolve the deficits therein.

4. Payment of Late Fees

During our review of the Village’s credit card statements, the APA noted that the Village paid late fees and interest penalties to its credit card company during the fiscal year. The following table details these charges.

Date	Vendor	Charge	Amount
8/1/2022	Visa	Late Fee	\$40.00
8/1/2022	Visa	Interest	\$24.22
Total			\$64.22

Good internal controls require procedures to ensure credit card billings are paid timely to avoid unnecessary late fees and interest penalties. Without such procedures, there is an increased risk for the loss of public funds.

We recommend the Village board implement procedures to ensure credit card billings are paid timely to avoid unnecessary late fees and interest penalties.

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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.

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, please contact **Dakota Christensen at 402-499-8702 or dakota.christensen@nebraska.gov.**

Sincerely,



Mark Avery, CPA
Assistant Deputy Auditor