



NEBRASKA AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

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January 31, 2024

Nicole Campbell, Chairperson
Village of Inman
PO Box 116
Inman, NE 68742

Dear Chairperson Campbell:

The Nebraska Auditor of Public Accounts (APA) has reviewed the audit waiver request received from the Village of Inman (Village) for the fiscal year ending 2023. **That request has been approved.**

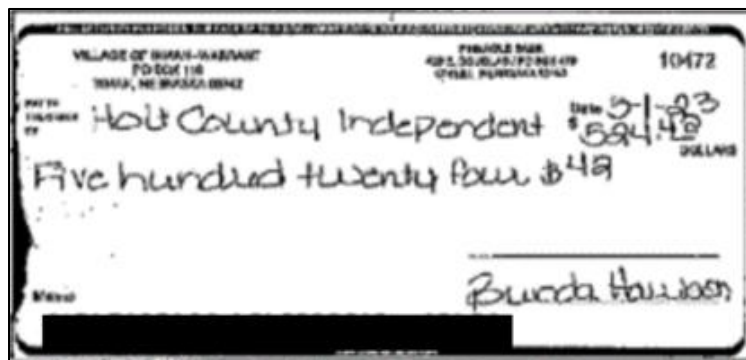
While performing, pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 84-304 (Supp. 2023), the preliminary examination necessary to determine whether the audit waiver should be allowed or further audit work would be required, the APA noted certain internal control or compliance matters, or other operational issues, within the Village.

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

Comments and Recommendations

1. Lack of Dual Signatures

The APA obtained the bank statements for the Village's accounts from its fiscal year 2023 audit waiver request. From these statements, the APA noted that two of the 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 Chairperson of the Board of Trustees (Board) and the Village Clerk. Specifically, Neb. Rev. Stat. § 17-711 (Reissue 2022) 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.

(Emphasis added.) 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 for not only failure to comply with State statute but also 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.

2. Lack of Claim Purpose

During our comparison of the Village’s bank account details to claims approved by the Board, the APA observed meeting minutes dated April 4, 2023, and noted that the claims listed therein lacked descriptions of their respective purposes.

The following is an example of the approved claims listing provided by the Village for April 4, 2023:

March 2023 Bills	
Bomgaars	\$382.46
Dana Cole.....	\$1,775.00
Holt County Independent.....	\$7.12
Vicki Doty.....	\$27.00
K & M Telephone	\$85.53
Farmer’s Pride.....	\$38.22
Nicole Campbell.....	\$55.41
Kyle Campbell.....	\$55.41
Sherryl Sawyer.....	\$55.41
Bruce Bowman.....	\$161.61
Brenda Harrison.....	\$313.99
Dave Morsbach.....	\$190.47
Total.....	\$3,147.63
Published April 27, 2023 17	

Neb. Rev. Stat. § 84-1413(1) (Cum. Supp. 2022) of the Open Meetings Act, which is set out at Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 84-1407 to 84-1414 (Reissue 2014, Cum. Supp. 2022), requires political subdivisions and other public entities to “keep minutes of all meetings showing the time, place, members present and absent, and the substance of all matters discussed.” (Emphasis added.)

Additionally, Neb. Rev. Stat. § 19-1102 (Reissue 2022) 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 city clerk or village clerk in every city or village 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 city council or village board of trustees within thirty days after any meeting of the city council or village board of trustees. The publication shall be in a legal newspaper in or of general circulation in the city or village, 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 meeting minutes describe the purpose of each claim allowed.

Without such procedures, there is an increased risk of not only failure to comply with statutory requirements pertaining to the keeping of proper meeting minutes and the publication of the municipality’s “official proceedings” 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 both the Board’s meeting minutes and the “official proceedings” required to be published afterwards.

3. 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 checks, totaling \$2,350.50, 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 #
Nicole Campbell	1/5/2023	\$ 468.42	10394
Brenda Harrison	1/12/2023	340.00	10399
Waste Connection	1/17/2023	997.34	ACH
Bus Sys	1/17/2023	79.74	ACH
Intuit	1/26/2023	465.00	ACH
Total		\$ 2,350.50	

Neb. Rev. Stat. § 17-614(1)(a) (Supp. 2023) 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 authorized 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 authorized by the Board prior to payment and are adequately documented in the meeting minutes of the month in which they are approved.

4. Lack of Purchasing Card Policy

During review of the bank statements obtained from the Village’s audit waiver request, it was noted that there were multiple debit card transactions throughout fiscal year 2023, totaling \$2,572.98. After further inquiry with the Village, the APA was informed that the Village utilizes a debit card for small general Village expenses.

With the use of a debit card, the Village increases its risk of unrecoverable loss of funds due to fraud because debit cards do not provide as much fraud protection as a credit card or other purchasing cards. The Village also increases its risk of payments being made without Board approval because the debit card does not require dual signatures. It was noted during the review that the Village did not have a formal purchasing card policy outlining procedures for safeguarding Village assets when using the Village care, including such allowable purchases and authorized individuals.

Neb. Rev. Stat. § 13-610 (Reissue 2022) provides, in relevant part, the following requirements regarding a purchasing card program:

(1) A political subdivision, through its governing body, may create its own purchasing card program. The governing body shall determine the type of purchasing card or cards utilized in the purchasing card program and shall approve or disapprove those persons who will be assigned a purchasing card. Under the direction of its governing body, any political subdivision may contract with one or more financial institutions, card-issuing banks, credit card companies, charge card companies, debit card companies, or third-party merchant banks capable of operating the purchasing card program on behalf of the political subdivision. Expenses associated with the political subdivision's purchasing card program shall be considered, for purposes of this section, as an administrative or operational expense.

* * * *

(4) An itemized receipt for purposes of tracking expenditures shall accompany all purchasing card purchases. In the event that a receipt does not accompany such a purchase, purchasing card privileges shall be temporarily or permanently suspended in accordance with rules and regulations adopted and promulgated by the political subdivision.

* * * *

(6) No officer or employee of a political subdivision shall use a political subdivision purchasing card for any unauthorized use as determined by the governing body.

Good internal control procedures require adequate controls over the Village's purchasing card, including an approved card policy that outlines procedures for the allowable use of the Village card and authorized users. Without such procedures, there is an increased risk of loss, theft, or misuse of Village funds.

We recommend the Village implement adequate controls over the Village's purchasing card, including an approved card policy that outlines procedures for the allowable use of the Village card and authorized users.

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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