



NEBRASKA AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

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May 8, 2024

Marty Hayes, Chairperson
Village of Brownville
PO Box 67
Brownville, NE 68321

Dear Mr. Hayes:

We have received and reviewed the audit waiver request for the Village of Brownville (Village) for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2023. **That request has been approved.**

As you may know, however, the Nebraska Auditor of Public Accounts (APA) has received concerns regarding, among other things, potentially questionable expenditures of Village funds, including reimbursements paid to Village Board members and other individuals. As a result, the APA began limited preliminary planning work to determine if a full financial audit or attestation of the Village would be warranted. Pursuant thereto, the APA obtained financial records and other relevant documentation from the Village. Based on the outcome of this preliminary planning work, including an analysis of the information obtained, the APA determined that a separate financial audit or attestation is unnecessary at this time.

Nevertheless, during the course of the preliminary planning work, the APA noted certain issues that merit corrective action.

Background Information

The Village is located in Nemaha County, Nebraska. The Board of Trustees (Board) is the governing body that exercises financial accountability and control over activities relevant to the operations of the Village. Board members are elected by the public and have broad decision-making authority, including the power to levy taxes and to designate management, the ability to exert significant influence over all Village operations, and the primary responsibility for related fiscal matters.

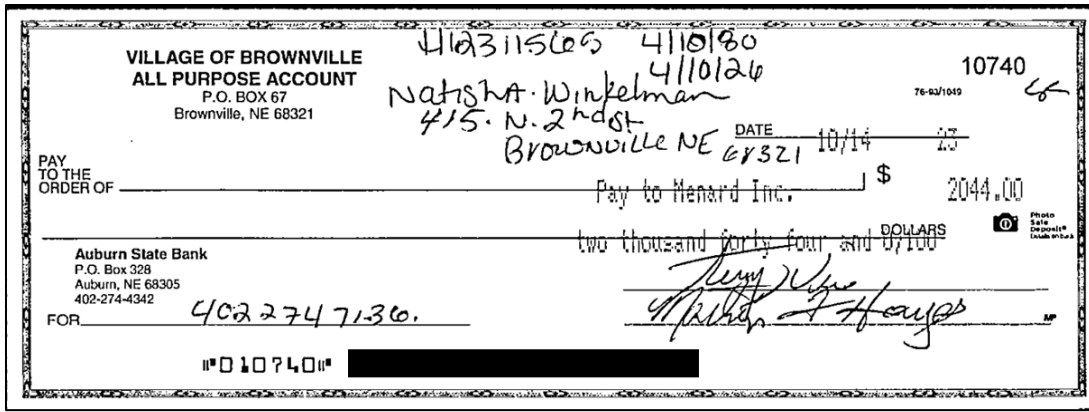
The following comments and recommendations, which have been discussed with the appropriate members of the Village and its management, are intended to improve internal control or result in other operating efficiencies.

Comments and Recommendations

1. Menards Rebate

Subsequent to the end of fiscal year 2023, the Village issued a check on October 14, 2023, in the amount of \$2,044 for a purchase made at the Menards store in St Joseph, Missouri. A rebate of \$204.96 was earned on this purchase. As will be explained in further detail below, however, this rebate was not used by the Village. Instead, it appears that the rebate was redeemed and used by Pamela Helmick, who is the mother of Natisha Helmick, former Board member and current Village Deputy Clerk/Utility Superintendent.

Below is an image of the cleared check # 10740 issued to Menards on October 14, 2023, from the Village's general fund bank account:



The APA obtained directly from Menards specific rebate and purchase records, including detailed transaction information, pertaining to Pamela Helmick. In addition, the APA observed from information available through the “Rebates International” website (<https://www.rebateinternational.com/RebateInternational/tracking.do#track-rebate>), that one Menards rebate of \$204.96 was issued and redeemed by Pamela Helmick – the same rebate that was earned from the purchase made using Village funds.

The table below lists the purchase made at Menards and the resulting rebate:

Purchase Made from Village's General Fund Bank Account					Menards Rebate			
Transaction Date	Transaction Number	Subtotal	Tax	Total Amount	Issue Date	Issued To	Amount	Redemption Date
10/14/2023	487	\$1,863.26	\$180.74	\$2,044.00	12/8/2023	Pamela Helmick	\$204.96	1/23/2024

Consequently, the Deputy Clerk/Utility Superintendent or her mother appear to have received the direct benefit of a rebate earned from the expenditure of public funds. In actuality, this rebate belonged to the Village, constituting municipal property, and should not have been issued to the Deputy Clerk/Utility Superintendent’s mother in the first place. The Village issued the check, and the purchase is assumed to have been made for strictly municipal purposes; therefore, neither the Deputy Clerk/Utility Superintendent, her mother, nor any municipal official or employee was entitled to claim the resulting rebate for his or her own personal gain.

Per the records obtained from Menards, the rebate was redeemed on January 23, 2024, and used to discount the purchase of several items, which are listed in the following table:

Item Number	Description	Quantity	Amount
4366468	81" Beige Vinyl-coated Foam Top and Sides Door Seal for Doors with Kerf/Channel	2	\$12.56
5680030	Polar Plastics 8' 4" x 100' 3-mil Clear Poly Plastic Sheeting	1	\$27.49
3674434	Square D Homeline 100-Amp 24-Space 48-Circuit Indoor Main Breaker Plug-On Neutral Load Center - Value Pack	1	\$119.00
5612105	Trimaco Easy Mask 35" x 140' Multi-Purpose Builder's Paper	1	\$13.98
1312645	SHEETROCK Premixed All-Purpose Joint Compound Pail - 4.5 Gallon	1	\$22.65
2405212	Shop-Vac 12 Gallon 5.5 Peak HP Wet/Dry Shop Vacuum	1	\$114.99
2303659	Grip Fast Premium #8 x 2-1/2" Phillips Drive Bugle Head Fine Thread Drywall Screw - 5 lb. Bucket	1	\$26.97
3642245	Gardner Bender 22-6 AWG WingGard Twist Wire Connectors - 50 Count	1	\$5.99
6851640	Watts 1/2" FIP Lead-Free Brass Gate Valve	2	\$17.98
5639310	GE Siliconized Acrylic Painters Pro Seal & Paint Sealant Caulk - 10.1 oz - White	8	\$23.92
2368135	Masterforce 3-2/3" x 9" 80-Grit Clamp-On 1/3 Sheet Sandpaper - 4 Pack	1	\$3.79
2368133	Masterforce 3-2/3" x 9" 220-Grit Clamp-On 1/3 Sheet Sandpaper - 4 Pack	1	\$3.79
3674653	Square D Homeline 20-Amp 1-Pole Standard Circuit Breaker	9	\$59.67
1311223	1/2 x 4 x 8 Lightweight Drywall	8	\$79.84
1021101	2 x 4 x 8' Construction/Framing Lumber	20	\$65.00
N/A	Sales Tax	N/A	\$26.36
Total			\$623.98

Item Number	Description	Quantity	Amount
31	Menards Rebate Barcode Number 6334143278	N/A	\$16.07
31	Menards Rebate Barcode Number 6332787966	N/A	\$204.96
N/A	Personal Check # 3765	N/A	\$402.95
Total			\$623.98

This purchase was made at the Menards store in Bellevue, Nebraska, which according to Google Maps is approximately 18 miles from a property that Pamela Helmick owns in Plattsmouth, Nebraska.

Neb. Rev. Stat. § 28-511(1) (Reissue 2016) states the following:

A person is guilty of theft if he or she takes, or exercises control over, movable property of another with the intent to deprive him or her thereof.

In addition, Neb. Rev. Stat. § 49-14,101.01(2) (Reissue 2021) of the Nebraska Political Accountability and Disclosure Act (Act), which is set out at Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 49-1401 to 49-14,142 (Reissue 2021, Cum. Supp. 2022), places the following restriction upon the use of property under the “official care and control” of a public official or public employee:

A public official or public employee shall not use or authorize the use of personnel, resources, property, or funds under his or her official care and control other than in accordance with prescribed constitutional, statutory, and regulatory procedures or use such items, other than compensation provided by law, for personal financial gain.

Good internal controls require procedures to ensure that rebates received from vendors through municipal purchases are tracked properly, treated as Village property, and used only for appropriate public purposes. Without such procedures, there is an increased risk of rebates belonging to the Village being used for improper personal gain.

We recommend the Board implement procedures – possibly through the adoption of a formal policy – to ensure that rebates received from vendors through municipal purchases are tracked properly, treated as Village property, and used only for appropriate public purposes. Because the issue addressed herein constitutes a possible violation of the Act, we are forwarding this information to the Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure Commission for further review.

Village Response: Prior to the findings of the APA it was not known that coupons or rebates that are generated as result of purchases by the Village need to be saved and used by the Village on future purchases. The Village has been reimbursed the amount of the redeemed rebate (\$204.96) The village will be working with their third-party CPA in the coming months on developing a fiscal policy and procedure manual and will include information relating to this matter.

2. Possible Conflict of Interest

The APA received the Village Board meeting minutes, along with the accompanying claims listing, for the period October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023. From that documentation, the APA identified a potential conflict of interest involving the actions of Board Chairperson Marty Hayes during Board meetings held in April, May, and August 2023.

According to the April 10, 2023; May 8, 2023; and August 14, 2023, Board meeting minutes, Chairperson Hayes appears to have failed to abstain from voting on the following reimbursement claims for his wife, Allison Hayes:

Fund	Claim Date	Name	Check #	Amount
General	4/10/2023	Allison Hayes	10549	\$36.16
General	4/10/2023	Allison Hayes	10552	\$42.52
General	4/10/2023	Allison Hayes	10545	\$350.00
General	5/8/2023	Allison Hayes	10574	\$76.13
General	5/8/2023	Allison Hayes	10578	\$47.84
General	8/14/2023	Allison Hayes	10661	\$97.54
Total				\$650.19

The APA inquired with the Village regarding its claim approval process. According to municipal representatives, the Village typically begins with the Board approving an overall claims listing as presented. Then, each Board member will present his or her individual claims to be approved while abstaining from voting thereon.

The following excerpt from the April 10, 2023, Board minutes illustrates how the claim approval process works, with all members voting on the overall claims listing presented but abstaining from voting on their own individual claims:

The claims were reviewed Helmick moved the claims to be paid as presented. Bindle seconded. All yes votes. Motion carried. Claims submitted by board member Hayes were reviewed. Natisha moved to approve Hayes claims. Bailey seconded. All yes votes with Hayes abstaining. Motion carried. Claims submitted by Helmick were reviewed. Bindle moved to approve Helmick's claims. Vice seconded. All yes votes with Helmick abstaining. Motion carried.

The overall claims listing, excluding the individually submitted claims, from the April 10, 2023, Board meeting minutes is shown below:

Claims to be printed with minutes of April mtg.
General:
Salaries \$275
Auburn Newspapers \$210.92
BOPW \$625.26
Windstream \$180.43
Kristy Mertes \$945.44
Region V Sends \$120
Heather Pemberton, CPA \$120
Kristy Mertes \$18.37
BVFD \$50
Allison Hayes \$36.16
Falls City Mercantile \$224.48
Allison Hayes \$42.52
JEO Consulting \$671.25
Grant Wessels \$105
Presto-X \$64.41
NMMKS Securities \$975
Allison Hayes \$350
Natisha Helmick \$75
Marty Hayes \$100
Natisha Helmick \$9.55
General (streets):
BOPW \$379.45
BOPW \$202.77
Fire Department
BOPW \$75.26
Farmers Coop \$80.77
Sewer Department:
BOPW \$169.51
Grant Wessels \$30
Nebraska Generator Service \$1,584.46
Marty Hayes \$25
Natisha Helmick \$200
Water Department:
BOPW \$261.34
Rural Water District #1 \$1,337.42
DHHS \$15
One Call Concepts, Inc. \$4.38
BOPW \$102.03
Marty Hayes \$50
Natisha Helmick \$518.75
Riverside Park:
BOPW \$43.65
Martin Marletta \$326.18
Grant Wessels \$15
Marty Hayes \$50
Culvert Project
SEND \$14,293.75
JEO Consulting \$6,041.25

The above overall listing contains three reimbursement claims (\$36.16, \$42.52, and \$350) for Mrs. Hayes, who had made various expenditures on the Village's behalf.

The listing of claims submitted individually by Chairperson Hayes during this same Board meeting is provided below:

April 10, 2023	check #	check amt.	salaries	taxes withheld	operating	supplies	capital outlay	total	description of transaction	year to date
HAYES CLAIMS - GENERAL										
Marty Hayes	10568	\$ 100.00			\$ 100.00			\$ 100.00	hauling brush	
STREETS										
WATER										
Marty Hayes	2777	\$ 50.00			\$ 50.00			\$ 50.00	water shut off, locates	\$ 225.00
SEWER										
Marty Hayes	1617	\$ 25.00			\$ 25.00			\$ 25.00	locates	
PARK										
Marty Hayes	291	\$ 50.00			\$ 50.00			\$ 50.00	50 park work	50

Per the meeting minutes excerpt shown on the proceeding page herein, the Board voted unanimously to approve the overall claims listing, including the three reimbursement payments, totaling \$428.68, to Mrs. Hayes. Because none of those three claims had been included instead in his individually submitted claims listing, however, Chairperson Hayes failed to abstain from voting on them. Similarly, Chairperson Hayes also failed to abstain from voting on the other three claims, totaling \$221.51, to Mrs. Hayes that were included in the overall claims listings approved during the Board meetings held on May 8, 2023, and August 14, 2023.

It is important to note also that the Village was unable to provide adequate documentation to support any of the six reimbursement payments to Mrs. Hayes listed in the above table.

The apparent failure of Chairperson Hayes to abstain from voting to approve the overall claims listings, which contained the six payments to his wife, gives rise to concerns regarding possible violations of the Nebraska Political Accountability and Disclosure Act (Act), which as mentioned previously is set out at Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 49-1401 to 49-14,142 (Reissue 2021, Cum. Supp. 2022).

To start, Neb. Rev. Stat. § 49-14,101.01(1) (Reissue 2021) states the following:

A public official or public employee shall not use or authorize the use of his or her public office or any confidential information received through the holding of a public office to obtain financial gain, other than compensation provided by law, for himself or herself, a member of his or her immediate family, or a business with which the individual is associated.

The penalty for violating the above-cited conflict of interest statute is set out in subsection (7) thereof, as follows:

[A]ny person violating this section shall be guilty of a Class III misdemeanor, except that no vote by any member of the Legislature shall subject such member to any criminal sanction under this section.

Furthermore, Neb. Rev. Stat. § 49-1499.03(2) (Reissue 2021) provides the following:

(a) Any person holding an elective office of a city or village not designated in section 49-1493 and any person holding an elective office of a school district who would be required to take any action or make any decision in the discharge of his or her official duties that may cause financial benefit or detriment to him or her, a member of his or her immediate family, or a business with which he or she is associated, which is distinguishable from the effects of such action on the public generally or a broad segment of the public, shall take the following actions as soon as he or she is aware of such potential conflict or should reasonably be aware of such potential conflict, whichever is sooner:

(i) Prepare a written statement describing the matter requiring action or decision and the nature of the potential conflict;

(ii) Deliver a copy of the statement to the person in charge of keeping records for the city, village, or school district who shall enter the statement onto the public records of the city, village, or school district; and

(iii) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (3) of this section, abstain from participating or voting on the matter in which the person holding elective office has a conflict of interest.

(b) The person holding elective office may apply to the commission for an opinion as to whether the person has a conflict of interest.

(Emphasis added.) Good internal control requires procedures to ensure compliance with the applicable provisions of the Act. Without such procedures, there is an increased risk for both statutory violations and the loss of Village funds.

We recommend the Board implement procedures to ensure compliance with the applicable provisions of the Act. Because the issue addressed herein constitutes a possible violation of the Act, we are forwarding this information to the Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure Commission for further review.

Village Response: The listing of board member claims is something that is relatively new to the Village and its board. Prior to being instructed in the last year and a half that Board members could not be employees of the Village and could only perform services for compensation as contractors all claims, including reimbursements paid to board members were all part of the full claim listing. This was the practice for many years and it was not until the recent findings of the APA that family members of board members seeking reimbursement should also be segregated out of the claims.

Adding to this issuing being unknown, historically miscellaneous small purchases and purchases for various community holiday were done by the village clerk and submitted for reimbursement, rather than by board members or members of their family. The Village is looking into options for a credit card that can be used for such small items so that no individual needs to spend personal funds for purchases that are approved by the board.

In addition to the acquisition of a credit card for small purchases, it will be added into the fiscal policy and procedure manual, as well as the Village Clerk and Board Members being educated on how claims of family members for reimbursement must be handled.

3. Extra Compensation of Board Members for Services

In examining the Village’s bank statements, the APA noted that, contrary to State statute, three Board members were being paid extra compensation to perform additional duties.

Each of the following Board members listed in the table below held their official positions during the period examined, from October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023. The table lists the total amounts paid to the Board members for the additional work performed throughout that time:

Name	Position	Amount
Marty Hayes	Board Chairperson	\$3,369.68
Natisha Helmick	Board Member	\$6,767.98
Terry Vice	Board Member	\$462.50
Total		\$10,600.16

A detailed listing of each individual payment to the Board members during the period examined has been included herein as **Exhibit A**.

According to documentation provided by the Village, the payments made to these Board members were for such services as line locates, assisting with water leaks, meter readings, lagoon work, cutting/hauling limbs, and other labor. While some of these payments might have been for work that could be considered seasonal and/or for an emergency, the majority appear to have been for non-seasonal and non-emergency services and labor provided by the Board members throughout the year.

Subsequent to the fiscal year end, Board members Natisha Helmick and Terry Vice were recalled from the Board. Ms. Helmick and Mr. Vice were later hired as the Deputy Clerk/Utility Superintendent and Maintenance and Park Commissioner, respectively, in November 2023. The Village entered into employment agreements with both former Board members on November 13, 2023. In addition, on December 11, 2023, the Village entered into an employment agreement with Chairperson Hayes, who continues to retain his position on the Board, to perform municipal handyman/service worker duties.

However, none of these contracts existed during the time the payments listed in the above table were made.

Regardless of when the Village entered into the employment agreements, Village Board members can receive compensation for performing additional work for the Village only if such work is seasonal and/or an emergency.

Neb. Rev. Stat. § 17-209.02(2)(a) (Reissue 2022) provides the following:

The office of village trustee shall not be combined or merged with any other village office or village employment, except that a member of the village board of trustees may receive compensation to perform seasonal or emergency work upon approval by the village board of trustees.

(Emphasis added.) Chapter 17, Article 2, of the Nebraska Revised Statutes provides no definition of “emergency” for purposes of § 17-209.02. Without such guidance, it is necessary to rely upon a long-standing rule of statutory interpretation that requires statutory language to be given its “plain and ordinary” meaning. The Nebraska Supreme Court has utilized this rule numerous times, as follows:

In the absence of anything to the contrary, statutory language is to be given its plain and ordinary meaning; an appellate court will not resort to interpretation to ascertain the meaning of statutory words which are plain, direct, and unambiguous.

Nelson v. City of Omaha, 256 Neb. 303, 311, 589 N.W.2d 522, 527 (1999). Typical of the many virtually synonymous meanings accorded to the word is that provided by Webster’s New World Dictionary and Thesaurus (1996), which defines an “emergency” as “a sudden, generally unexpected occurrence demanding immediate action.” When applied to § 17-209.02, that standard definition appears to entail a necessary and immediate short-term response to a particular exigency.

The documentation provided in response to the APA’s inquiries to support the work performed by these Board members did not indicate that such work was “seasonal” or “emergency” in nature, as required by § 17-209.02. Consequently, such activity appears legally suspect.

Good internal controls require procedures to ensure compliance with applicable statutory restrictions placed upon payment of extra compensation to Board members. Without such procedures, there is an increased risk for both statutory violations and the loss of Village funds.

We recommend the implementation of procedures to ensure extra compensation paid to Board members is for seasonal or emergency work only, as required by statute.

Village Response: The Village has had sporadic repair and maintenance type of work that has needed to be completed for a number of years. Due to the sporadic nature and the limited amount of hours in a given month it is not conducive or cost efficient to create a maintenance employee position. Mr. Hayes performed those duties as an employee of the Village for many years while on the Board, however when concerns of Board Members as employees of the Village were raised it changed to contract work. When the switch was made to paying board members as contractors rather than as employees for work that would fall outside of the typical scope of responsibilities as a Board Member it was not known that contract would need to be in place and as such there were not agreements in place for the earlier invoices for work performed.

The Village will work with their third-party CPA to continue improvement in this aspect.

4. Other Issues

The APA noted the following issues related to the Village’s operations.

Overpayments

During our examination of municipal bank account details and supporting documentation, the APA noted that three individuals received overpayments, totaling \$87.00, from the Village.

The three overpayments are detailed in the following table:

Name	Amount Paid	APA Calculation	Overpayment	Notes
Marty Hayes	\$61.14	\$59.14	\$2.00	Received one overpayment for a reimbursement that did not deduct the amount of a discount received.
Natisha Helmick	\$272.32	\$247.32	\$25.00	Received one overpayment for an additional hour of time not recorded on her timesheet.
Grant Wessels	\$307.50	\$247.50	\$60.00	Received two overpayments; one was a duplicate payment of \$15, and the other was a payment for an additional \$45 in unsupported hours worked.
Totals	\$640.96	\$553.96	\$87.00	

Good internal control requires procedures to ensure that no disbursement of Village funds is made for an amount greater than what is owed.

Signature Issues

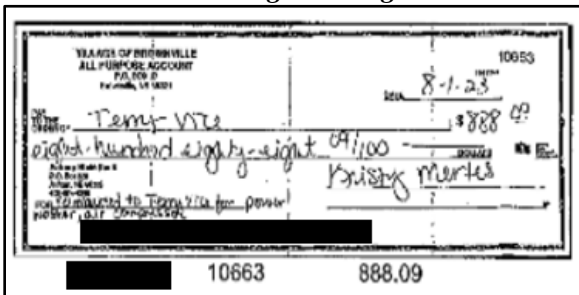
The APA obtained the Village’s bank statements for the period October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023. While examining those documents, the APA noted several issues with the signatures on the Village checks written during that time.

The table below lists each of the signature issues noted:

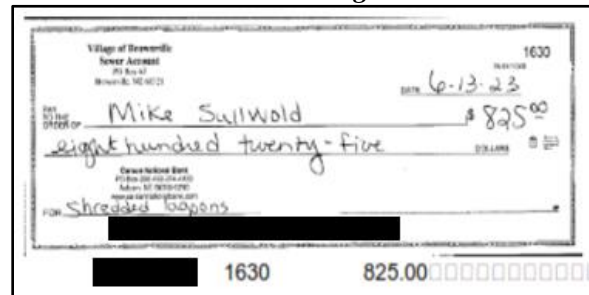
Issues	Number of Checks	Amount
Lack of Dual Signatures	15	\$3,894.54
No Signature	1	\$825.00
Signed by Board Members Only	403	\$193,177.54
Signed by Clerk and Board Member	49	\$12,712.66
Single Signer is also Payee	1	\$25.00
Totals	469	\$210,634.74

The following check images offer examples of the various signature issues:

Check Lacking Dual Signatures



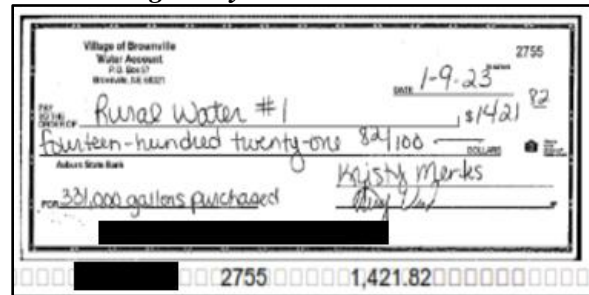
Check with No Signatures



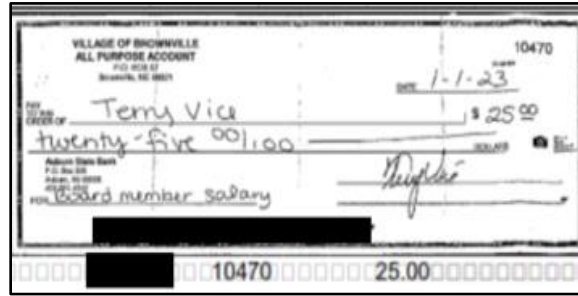
Check Signed by Board Members Only



Check Signed by Clerk and Board Member



Check with Single Signer who is also Payee



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.

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 \$9,877.50, 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:

Check Date	Name/Vendor	Check #	Cleared Date	Amount
4/14/2023	Lamp Rynearson	10573	4/19/2023	\$9,450.00
4/25/2023	Grant Wessels	10577	4/25/2023	\$105.00
4/25/2023	Grant Wessels	1621	4/25/2023	\$112.50
4/25/2023	Grant Wessels	295	4/25/2023	\$210.00
Total				\$9,877.50

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 elected members of 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.

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 five Village checks, totaling \$21,406.25, were issued before the underlying claims were approved by the Board.

The table below provides a summary of the five premature payments:

Name/Vendor	Approval Date	Check Date	Days Paid Before Approval	Amount
Allison Hayes	4/10/2023	3/14/2023	27	\$350.00
BVFD	4/10/2023	3/16/2023	25	\$50.00
SEND	4/10/2023	3/29/2023	12	\$14,293.75
JEO Consulting Group	4/10/2023	3/29/2023	12	\$6,041.25
JEO Consulting Group	4/10/2023	3/29/2023	12	\$671.25
Total				\$21,406.25

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 elected members of 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.

Lack of Adequate Documentation

The Village lacked sufficient documentation, including invoices and itemized receipts, for the following purchases:

Account	Date	Name/Vendor	Check #	Amount
All Purpose	9/7/2023	Natisha Helmick	10711	\$139.25
All Purpose	9/21/2023	Sacred Heart Class of 2024	10722	\$36.00
Total				\$175.25

Good internal controls require procedures to ensure that proper documentation is maintained for all disbursement transactions.

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 ensure the following:

- No disbursement of Village funds is made for an amount greater than what is owed.
- Dual signatures, from the Board Chairperson and the Village Clerk, are included on all Village checks, as required by law.
- 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.
- Proper documentation is maintained for all disbursement transactions.

Village Response:

a. Overpayments

The Village has become aware of errors in payments as result of either typos in claim sheets or mathematical calculations. Work has begun with the third-party CPA to improve accuracy on these items.

b. Signature Issues

Historically checks have been signed by the Village Clerk and Chairperson. There were times where the Clerk was unavailable for signature so checks were signed by the Chairperson and second Board Member listed on the signature card. It was not known by the Village that Statue specifies that it should always be the Clerk and Chairperson so policy and procedure will be written to reflect such.

c. *Payment of Claims Prior to Board Approval*

The Village's third-party CPA brought it to the attention of the Village Clerk and members of the board that there were issues with the timeline of the dates on checks and when claims are approved. Work is in process with the CPA to address this issue and ensure that all checks are included in the listing of claims and not paid prior to approval.

d. *Lack of Adequate Documentation*

The Village's third-party CPA has been working with the Village Office to develop a better system for claims, supporting documentation and the filing of such documents.

* * * * *

Our audit procedures are designed primarily on a test basis and, therefore, may not bring to light all weaknesses in policies or procedures that may exist. Our objective is, however, to use the knowledge gained during our work to make comments and recommendations that we hope will be 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 response received has been incorporated into this letter. Such response has been objectively evaluated and recognized, as appropriate, in the letter. A response that indicates 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 these specified parties. However, this communication 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.

Audit Staff Working on this Examination:

Craig Kubicek, CPA, CFE – Deputy Auditor

Mason Culver – Auditor-In-Charge

Kelsey Lutz – Examiner

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Sincerely,



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Deputy Auditor

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cc. Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure Commission

VILLAGE OF BROWNVILLE
Extra Compensation Board Members Received for Services Performed
 October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023

Exhibit A

Bank Account	Date	Check #	Payee	Memo	Amount
Sewer	10/19/2022	1593	Marty Hayes	sewer line locates	\$25.00
Riverside Park	10/19/2022	274	Natisha Helmick	assisting county; provide directions on work in park	\$37.50
Water	10/19/2022	2727	Marty Hayes	locates, assist w/ water leaks, assist w/ meter readings	\$100.00
Water	10/19/2022	2728	Natisha Helmick	addressing water leaks, readings, meter errors, locates, assist plumber	\$300.00
All Purpose	11/14/2022	10428	Natisha Helmick	broken pedestrian light on highway 136	\$12.50
Sewer	11/14/2022	1596	Natisha Helmick	contract review, sewer alarm	\$31.25
All Purpose	11/14/2022	10431	Marty Hayes	village work	\$325.00
Water	11/14/2022	2738	Natisha Helmick	curb stops, water turn off, meter contracts	\$406.25
Sewer	12/9/2022	1598	Marty Hayes		\$25.00
Water	12/9/2022	2740	Marty Hayes	pipe locates, turn off water	\$50.00
All Purpose	12/9/2022	10444	Natisha Helmick	fix light bulbs	\$56.25
Sewer	12/9/2022	1599	Natisha Helmick	flush lagoons, correspondence with Hunter & lawyer	\$75.00
All Purpose	12/9/2022	10440	Marty Hayes	christmas set-up	\$137.50
Riverside Park	12/9/2022	279	Terry Vice	picnic table assembly	\$150.00
All Purpose	12/9/2022	10445	Natisha Helmick	coordinate w/ county for rock work on utility building, purchase ice melt	\$162.50
Water	12/9/2022	2741	Natisha Helmick	meter reads, meeting w/ state of NE, correspondence w/ Hunter & lawyer	\$250.00
All Purpose	12/28/2022	10465	Marty Hayes	christmas tree town hall	\$213.43
Water	1/9/2023	2753	Marty Hayes	water leak	\$25.00
All Purpose	1/9/2023	10482	Marty Hayes	snow plowing, take shredder off, get blade on	\$212.50
Water	1/9/2023	2752	Natisha Helmick	water pit check, met w/ Aaron frozen meters, BPW meetings, review meters	\$212.50
Sewer	1/9/2023	1604	Natisha Helmick	sewer checks, emails, calls, BPW meeting	\$225.00
All Purpose	2/13/2023	10512	Marty Hayes		\$25.00
All Purpose	2/13/2023	10513	Marty Hayes	tractor work	\$25.00
Sewer	2/13/2023	1608	Marty Hayes	locates	\$25.00
All Purpose	2/13/2023	10511	Natisha Helmick	change locks	\$50.00
All Purpose	2/13/2023	10516	Terry Vice	change locks at town hall	\$50.00
Water	2/13/2023	2763	Natisha Helmick	meter check, DHHS, revise rural water contract	\$75.00
Sewer	2/13/2023	1609	Natisha Helmick	state paper work, lagoon checks, meter readings	\$281.25
Water	2/13/2023	2765	Natisha Helmick	state paperwork, meter readings, equip. check, water pit/lift house checks	\$300.00
Sewer	3/13/2023	1612	Marty Hayes	locates	\$50.00
Water	3/13/2023	2772	Natisha Helmick	water checks	\$150.00
Sewer	3/13/2023	1613	Natisha Helmick	sewer checks	\$156.25
All Purpose	3/13/2023	10539	Marty Hayes	snow removal, getting fuel	\$175.00
Sewer	4/10/2023	1617	Marty Hayes	locates	\$25.00
Riverside Park	4/10/2023	291	Marty Hayes	park work	\$50.00
Water	4/10/2023	2777	Marty Hayes	water shut off, locates	\$50.00
All Purpose	4/10/2023	10572	Natisha Helmick	haul, spread rock	\$75.00
All Purpose	4/10/2023	10568	Marty Hayes	hauling brush	\$100.00
Sewer	4/10/2023	1620	Natisha Helmick	lift stations, lagoons, state classes	\$200.00
Water	4/10/2023	2779	Natisha Helmick	call system, suspect leaks, water survey	\$518.75
Sewer	5/8/2023	1624	Natisha Helmick	meters, labor, water sample, outage	\$100.00
Water	5/8/2023	2786	Natisha Helmick	meters, labor, water sample, outage	\$106.25
Sewer	5/8/2023	1623	Marty Hayes	plunge sewer, find manhole	\$200.00
Water	5/8/2023	2787	Marty Hayes	turn on/off water, Lincoln trip	\$200.00
All Purpose	5/8/2023	10598	Marty Hayes	cut/haul brush, park	\$262.50
All Purpose	5/8/2023	10595	Natisha Helmick	labor, organizing shelves main bldg	\$325.00
Water	5/10/2023	2790	Natisha Helmick	curb stops - WD-40	\$32.09
All Purpose	6/12/2023	10623	Terry Vice	labor	\$25.00
Riverside Park	6/12/2023	303	Terry Vice	labor	\$100.00
Water	6/12/2023	2798	Marty Hayes	water sample to Lincoln, water turn on Richard St.	\$125.00
Sewer	6/12/2023	1628	Natisha Helmick	labor	\$131.25
Water	6/12/2023	2799	Natisha Helmick	labor, mileage for classes	\$272.32
All Purpose	6/12/2023	10621	Marty Hayes	get tractor ready, shredding	\$287.50
Water	7/10/2023	2810	Natisha Helmick	labor, mileage	\$88.10
Sewer	7/10/2023	1633	Natisha Helmick	labor, mileage	\$93.75
All Purpose	7/10/2023	10651	Marty Hayes	get fuel, shredding, hauling	\$131.25
Water	7/10/2023	2806	Marty Hayes	locates, Lincoln water sample, water turn on	\$212.50
Water	7/10/2023	2809	Natisha Helmick	mileage, labor	\$751.17

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Exhibit A

Bank Account	Date	Check #	Payee	Memo	Amount
Water	8/10/2023	2818	Terry Vice	help with water line	\$25.00
Riverside Park	8/10/2023	313	Terry Vice	cut/haul limbs, put in grills	\$112.50
All Purpose	8/11/2023	10682	Marty Hayes	shredding	\$37.50
Water	8/11/2023	2821	Natisha Helmick	labor	\$56.25
Sewer	8/11/2023	1637	Marty Hayes	locate, sewer work	\$100.00
Sewer	8/11/2023	1636	Natisha Helmick	labor	\$168.75
Riverside Park	8/11/2023	315	Natisha Helmick	waterline, gravel & dirt moving	\$306.25
Sewer	9/6/2023	1641	Marty Hayes	locates	\$25.00
All Purpose	9/6/2023	10703	Marty Hayes	shredding, getting fuel	\$150.00
All Purpose	9/6/2023	10702	Natisha Helmick	CPA budget, contracts, 3rd st bridge, BPW electricals	\$157.50
Sewer	9/6/2023	1640	Natisha Helmick	NDEE reports, reg water checks, August reports, output checks	\$205.75
Water	9/6/2023	2832	Natisha Helmick	water checks, water sample, NDEE reports, water shut off	\$398.55
Total					\$10,600.16