

**ATTESTATION REPORT  
OF  
PLATTE COUNTY COURT**

**JANUARY 1, 2024, THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2024**

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**Issued on March 31, 2025**

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PLATTE COUNTY COURT

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## PLATTE COUNTY COURT

### SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

During our examination of Platte County Court, we noted certain deficiencies and other operational matters that are presented here. The following comments are required to be reported in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*: Comment #2 (“Overdue Balances”), which is considered to be a significant deficiency, and Comment #1 (“Segregation of Duties”), which is considered to be a material weakness.

These comments and recommendations are intended to improve the internal control over financial reporting or result in operational efficiencies in the following areas:

1. ***Segregation of Duties:*** One individual was capable of handling all phases of a transaction from beginning to end.
2. ***Overdue Balances:*** The County Court did not review its overdue balances on an ongoing, timely basis to ensure collection and/or resolution of such balances.
3. ***Non-Monetary Receipt Issues:*** The County Court did not properly record or have adequate documentation on file to support non-monetary receipts issued.

More detailed information on the above items is provided hereinafter. It should be noted that this report is critical in nature, as it contains only our comments and recommendations on the areas noted for improvement and does not include our observations on any accounting strengths of the County Court.

Draft copies of this report were furnished to the County Court to provide management with an opportunity to review the report and to respond to the comments and recommendations included in this report. All formal responses received have been incorporated into this report. Responses have been objectively evaluated and recognized, as appropriate, in the report. Responses that indicate corrective action has been taken were not verified at this time, but they will be verified in the next examination.

## PLATTE COUNTY COURT

### COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 1. Segregation of Duties

Good internal control includes a plan of organization, procedures, and documentation designed to safeguard assets and provide reliable financial records. A system of internal control should include a proper segregation of duties, so no one individual is capable of handling all phases of a transaction from beginning to end.

We noted that the office of the County Court lacked a sufficient segregation of duties. Specifically, one person was capable of handling all aspects of processing transactions from beginning to end. Additionally, staff could create and issue orders affixed with the Judge's signature in the JUSTICE (Judicial User System to Improve Court Efficiency) application without formal documentation to support that the Judge approved the order. That same staff had access to court receipts and were able to record non-monetary transactions (e.g., waiving fines) in JUSTICE. The staff included the Clerk Magistrate, an Assistant Clerk, two Records Clerks/Cashiers, a Probate Clerk, and a County Courtroom Clerk. We noted further that Platte County Court access had been given also to an Assistant Clerk and Records Clerk/Cashier as well as three other State employees who were not employees of the Platte County Court.

A lack of segregation of duties increases the risk of possible errors or irregularities; however, due to a limited number of personnel, an adequate segregation of duties may not be possible without additional cost. Further, personnel are under the direction of both the Nebraska State Court Administrator and the Presiding Judge. We have noted this issue in previous examinations.

We recommend the County Court and the Nebraska State Court Administrator review this situation. As always, the cost of hiring additional personnel versus the benefit of a proper segregation of duties must be weighed. We also recommend the Supreme Court implement procedures to ensure that each Judge's approval of orders is formally documented.

*County Court Response: The Administrative Office of the Courts and Probation (AOC) accepts that there is a risk from one person having the authority to initiate and complete financial transactions. To reduce the risk of improper transactions, court financial specialists review court records and provide assistance to county courts if there are discrepancies. However, the Judicial Branch does not have the financial and human resources to mitigate all risks related to segregation of duties sufficient to meet current audit guidelines. As a result, in order to fulfill all statutory obligations, the AOC has determined that all clerk magistrates will have the authority to operate all financial functions of a court.*

#### 2. Overdue Balances

Good internal control and sound business practices require overdue balances of the County Court to be reviewed on an ongoing, timely basis to determine what action should be taken to collect and/or resolve those balances.

During testing of the Overdue Case Account reports, we noted that 6 of 10 balances tested, totaling \$454, did not have subsequent action taken by the County Court, such as the issuance of warrants and/or suspensions or declaration of certain overdue balances as uncollectible, to ensure collection and/or resolution of the balances.

- One case balance due, totaling \$199, was incorrect due to Court staff not properly recording jail time credit to the defendant. The court had received a return of commitment information filed in April 2024, stating the individual had served two days in jail for amounts due. The credit was not applied until March 2025, however, after it was brought to the Court's attention by the Auditor of Public Accounts (APA).
- One case balance due, totaling \$150, was incorrect because Court staff failed to record properly the waiver of monthly probation and drug testing fees as a result of the defendant receiving an early discharge from probation in March 2024. The waiver was recorded in March 2025 after it was brought to the Court's attention by the APA.

PLATTE COUNTY COURT

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

(Continued)

2. **Overdue Balances** (Concluded)

- We also noted that the court was not adequately following up on four overdue case balances tested, totaling \$105. The last activity noted on these cases ranged from May 2023 to August 2024.

As of January 31, 2025, overdue balances, excluding restitution judgments, totaled \$35,332.

Without a regular review of overdue case balances, there is an increased risk that such balances may either not have proper follow-up action taken or have been previously resolved and should no longer be reflected as overdue.

We recommend the County Court implement an ongoing, timely review of its Overdue Case Account reports to ensure the timely collection and/or resolution of overdue balances.

*County Court Response: I acknowledge that the overdue case account report has not been worked adequately. This has been a learning year as the new Clerk Magistrate for Platte County and having this information brought to my attention, provided additional knowledge to properly work this report every month. I have met with my clerks and these reports will be distributed to each clerk responsible for that caseload every month. As a team, we will collaborate to make sure these reports are completed timely and accurately.*

3. **Non-Monetary Receipt Issues**

During testing of non-monetary receipts issued, we noted the following errors:

- For one case tested, the County Court issued a non-monetary receipt for \$1,229 for a satisfaction of judgment that was filed in August 2024; however, the Court staff did not verify they had properly recorded the transaction for the full amount owed. This resulted in JUSTICE showing the defendant still owed \$3,400 in judgment costs in error. After inquiry, the County Court recorded a correcting entry in JUSTICE to remove the \$3,400 balance.
- For three cases tested, the County Court issued non-monetary receipts, totaling \$757, for the waiver of monthly probation costs, lab testing fees, substance abuse fees, and/or sheriff fees. However, there was not adequate documentation to support these costs were ordered by the Court to be waived.
- For two cases tested, the County Court improperly waived probation administrative enrollment fees, totaling \$60. However, such fees cannot be waived per Neb. Rev. Stat. § 29-2262.06 (Reissue 2016).

Per § 29-2262.06, when the County Court sentences an offender to probation, a one-time administrative enrollment fee for probation is required to be paid. There is no provision in the statute that allows for the waiver of such fee, and the Nebraska Supreme Court's County Court Procedures Manual and Checklists also state the one-time administrative enrollment fee of \$30 may not be waived.

Good internal control and sound business practices require financial activity, including non-monetary receipts, to be adequately supported and accurately recorded.

Without such procedures, there is an increased risk of the loss or misuse of funds.

We recommend the County Court implement procedures to ensure non-monetary receipts are issued only when adequate documentation is on file and for the correct amounts. Additionally, we recommend the County Court implement procedures to ensure that all required fees are properly collected.

PLATTE COUNTY COURT

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

(Concluded)

3. **Non-Monetary Receipt Issues** (Concluded)

*County Court Response: A step was missed in Justice after receiving the e-filed satisfaction. The clerk in this caseload clearly knows this process, and simply had a lapse in completion of this task and it is not a reflection of how this filing is typically handled. A receipt of satisfaction was issued, and the matter was remedied.*

*The Journal Entry and Order typically states that the fees have been waived. In this case it was missed on the journal entry and order. A nunc pro tunc was signed to address the waiver of fees. The fees are also addressed on the record by the Judge making verification of the waiver possible.*

*After discussion with Judge and the criminal clerks, there was a misunderstanding when these fees were waived. The State withdrew the Motion to Revoke, releasing the probationer from the fees. Criminal clerks are now aware that when the administration fee still shows on the case upon the withdraw of the MTRP, the administration fee cannot be waived per state statute.*



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### PLATTE COUNTY COURT

### INDEPENDENT ACCOUNTANT'S REPORT

Platte County Court  
Columbus, Nebraska 68602

We have examined the accompanying Schedule of Changes in Assets and Liabilities Arising from Cash Transactions of the Platte County Court as of and for the calendar year ending December 31, 2024. The County Court's management is responsible for the Schedule of Changes in Assets and Liabilities Arising from Cash Transactions based on the accounting system and procedures set forth in Note 1. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the Schedule of Changes in Assets and Liabilities Arising from Cash Transactions based on our examination.

Our examination was conducted in accordance with attestation standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the standards applicable to attestation engagements contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we perform the examination to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the Schedule of Changes in Assets and Liabilities Arising from Cash Transactions is based on the accounting system and procedures set forth in Note 1, in all material respects. An examination involves performing procedures to obtain evidence about the Schedule of Changes in Assets and Liabilities Arising from Cash Transactions. The nature, timing, and extent of the procedures selected depend on our judgment, including an assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the Schedule of Changes in Assets and Liabilities Arising from Cash Transactions, whether due to fraud or error. We believe that the evidence we obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a reasonable basis for our opinion.

We are required to be independent and to meet our ethical responsibilities in accordance with relevant ethical requirements relating to the engagement.

In our opinion, the Schedule of Changes in Assets and Liabilities Arising from Cash Transactions for the calendar year ending December 31, 2024, is based on the accounting system and procedures prescribed by the Nebraska Supreme Court, as set forth in Note 1, in all material respects.

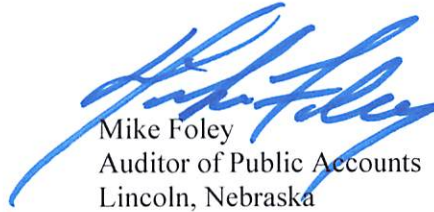
In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we are required to report all deficiencies that are considered to be significant deficiencies or material weaknesses in internal control; noncompliance with provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, or grant agreements that have a material effect on the Schedule of Changes in Assets and Liabilities Arising from Cash Transactions; fraud that is material, either quantitatively or qualitatively, to the Schedule of Changes in Assets and Liabilities Arising from Cash Transactions; and any other instances that warrant the attention of those charged with governance. We are also required to obtain and report the views of management concerning the findings, conclusions, and recommendations, as well as any planned corrective actions. We performed our examination to express an opinion on whether the Schedule of Changes in Assets and Liabilities Arising from Cash Transactions is presented in accordance with the criteria described above and not for the purpose



of expressing an opinion on the internal control over the Schedule of Changes in Assets and Liabilities Arising from Cash Transactions or on compliance and other matters; accordingly, we express no such opinions. Our examination disclosed certain findings that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*, and those findings, along with the views of management, are described in the Comments Section of the report.

The purpose of this report is to express an opinion on the Schedule of Changes in Assets and Liabilities Arising from Cash Transactions, as described in paragraph one above. Accordingly, this report is not suitable for any other purpose. This report is a matter of public record, and its distribution is not limited.

March 31, 2025



Mike Foley  
Auditor of Public Accounts  
Lincoln, Nebraska

**PLATTE COUNTY COURT**  
**COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA**  
**SCHEDULE OF CHANGES IN ASSETS AND LIABILITIES**  
**ARISING FROM CASH TRANSACTIONS**  
**CUSTODIAL FUNDS**

For the Fiscal Year Ended December 31, 2024

	Balance January 1, 2024	Additions	Deductions	Balance December 31, 2024
<b>ASSETS</b>				
Cash and Deposits	\$ 199,727	\$ 1,444,261	\$ 1,361,242	\$ 282,746
<b>LIABILITIES</b>				
Due to State Treasurer:				
Regular Fees	\$ 7,016	\$ 132,641	\$ 130,804	\$ 8,853
Law Enforcement Fees	868	9,995	9,992	871
State Judges Retirement Fund	6,031	76,814	75,458	7,387
Court Administrative Fees	7,720	91,897	93,189	6,428
Legal Services Fees	3,425	41,035	40,736	3,724
Due to County Treasurer:				
Regular Fines	23,184	254,449	258,580	19,053
Overload Fines	-	2,425	2,425	-
Regular Fees	2,339	23,567	24,733	1,173
Petty Cash Fund	200	-	-	200
Municipality Fines	560	8,022	7,607	975
Due to Municipalities:				
Regular Fees	-	4,513	4,513	-
Trust Fund Payable	148,384	798,903	713,205	234,082
Total Liabilities	\$ 199,727	\$ 1,444,261	\$ 1,361,242	\$ 282,746

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the Schedule.

PLATTE COUNTY COURT  
**NOTES TO FINANCIAL SCHEDULE**  
For the Calendar Year Ending December 31, 2024

**1. Criteria**

**A. Reporting Entity**

The Platte County Court is established by State statute and is administratively operated through the Court Administrator's Office of the Nebraska Supreme Court, which is part of the State of Nebraska reporting entity. The Schedule of Changes in Assets and Liabilities Arising from Cash Transactions of the County Court reflect only the Custodial Funds activity of the County Court, including the receipts and their subsequent disbursement to the appropriate entities for which they were collected. The Schedule does not reflect the personal services expenses of the County Court, which are paid by the Nebraska Supreme Court, or the operating expenses, which are paid by Platte County.

**B. Basis of Accounting**

The accounting records of the County Court Custodial Funds are maintained, and the Schedule of Changes in Assets and Liabilities Arising from Cash Transactions has been prepared, based on the accounting system and procedures prescribed by the Nebraska Supreme Court. Under this system of accounting, fines, fees, and receipts relating to trust funds are shown as additions to assets and as an increase in the related liability when received or collected. Likewise, disbursements are shown as deductions to assets and as a decrease in the related liability when a check is written.

**2. Deposits and Investments**

Funds held by the County Court are deposited and invested in accordance with rules issued by the Supreme Court, as directed by Neb. Rev. Stat. § 25-2713 (Reissue 2016). Funds are generally consolidated in an interest-bearing checking account; however, the County Court may order certain trust funds to be invested separately. Any deposits in excess of the amount insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation are required by Neb. Rev. Stat. § 77-2326.04 (Reissue 2018) to be secured either by a surety bond or as provided in the Public Funds Deposit Security Act.