



NEBRASKA AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

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April 21, 2025

Arlo Thayer, Chairperson
Village of Bladen
PO Box 37
Bladen, NE 68928

Dear Chairperson Thayer:

The Nebraska Auditor of Public Accounts (APA) has reviewed the audit waiver request received from the Village of Bladen (Village) for the fiscal year ending 2024. **That request has been approved.**

While performing, pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 84-304 (Reissue 2024), 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 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 \$1,063.07, 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
Intuit	\$ 80.00	4/15/24	4/1/24	14
USPS	30.65	4/15/24	4/3/24	12
USPS	136.00	4/15/24	4/3/24	12
Amazon	96.28	4/15/24	4/5/24	10
Amazon	8.22	4/15/24	4/8/24	7
Rocket Lawyer	39.99	4/15/24	4/8/24	7
BR Bumper	13.44	4/15/24	4/11/24	4
Payroll	658.49	4/15/24	4/12/24	3
Total	\$ 1,063.07			

Neb. Rev. Stat. § 17-614(1)(a) (Cum. Supp. 2024) 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.

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 March 14, 2024, which can be found on the APA's website. However, this issue does not appear to have been corrected after the APA's notification.

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.

2. **Lack of Adequate Documentation**

We noted that the Village lacked sufficient documentation for three debit card purchases, totaling \$144.75. These purchases are summarized in the table below:

Date	Vendor	Amount
12/27/2023	Menards	\$ 69.99
2/21/2024	Meridian Electric	34.77
5/8/2024	Rocket Law	39.99
Total		\$ 144.75

Neb. Rev. Stat. § 13-610(4) (Reissue 2022) provides, in relevant part, the following requirements for a political subdivision's purchasing card program:

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.

Good internal controls require procedures to ensure adequate documentation is obtained and maintained for subsequent review.

We recommend the Board implement procedures to ensure proper documentation is maintained for all disbursement transactions, including itemized receipts for purchases made with the Village's purchasing cards.

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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