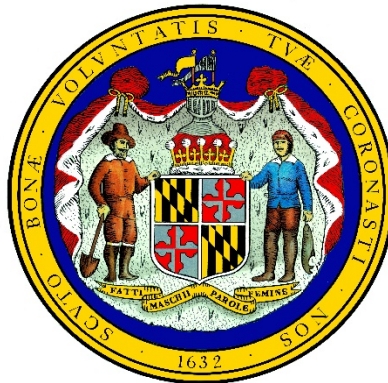


Audit Report

**Office of the Clerk of Circuit Court
Garrett County, Maryland**

February 2025



OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE AUDITS
DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES
MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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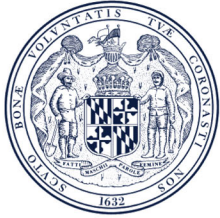
Office of Legislative Audits
The Warehouse at Camden Yards
351 West Camden Street, Suite 400
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
Phone: 410-946-5900
Maryland Relay: 711
TTY: 410-946-5401 · 301-970-5401
E-mail: webmaster@ola.state.md.us
Website: www.ola.state.md.us

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DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES
OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE AUDITS
MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Victoria L. Gruber
Executive Director

Brian S. Tanen, CPA, CFE
Legislative Auditor

February 18, 2025

Senator Shelly L. Hettleman, Senate Chair, Joint Audit and Evaluation Committee
Delegate Jared Solomon, House Chair, Joint Audit and Evaluation Committee
Members of Joint Audit and Evaluation Committee
Annapolis, Maryland

Ladies and Gentlemen:

We have conducted a fiscal compliance audit of the Office of the Clerk of Circuit Court for Garrett County, Maryland for the period beginning August 19, 2020 and ending November 17, 2024. The Office performs various functions for the public, including maintaining various legal records, recording certain real estate documents, collecting related fees and taxes, and issuing certain licenses.

Our audit did not disclose any findings that warrant mention in this report.

We wish to acknowledge the cooperation extended to us during the audit by the Office.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian S. Tanen

Brian S. Tanen, CPA, CFE
Legislative Auditor

Background Information

Agency Responsibilities

The Office performs a variety of functions for the public such as filing, docketing, and maintaining various legal records; recording documents involving title to real estate; collecting the related fees, commissions, and taxes; and issuing certain licenses. In performing these functions, the Office collects funds on behalf of the State, Garrett County and its incorporated municipalities, and subsequently distributes the funds collected to the applicable entities.

Financial Information

According to the State's accounting records, the Office's fiscal year 2024 revenues totaled \$14,569,552. These revenues were distributed in the following manner:

- \$7,416,823 was distributed to Garrett County and its incorporated municipalities, and
- \$7,152,729 (the remaining amount) represented revenues available to the State for purposes specified in various provisions of State law.

The majority of the Office's fiscal year 2024 expenditures, which totaled \$1,312,797 (see Figure 1 on the following page), were salaries and wages that were paid primarily from a general fund appropriation.

The Office also maintained custody of certain trust funds that, according to its records, had balances totaling \$6,751 as of October 31, 2024.

Figure 1
Office of the Clerk of Circuit Court for Garrett County
Positions, Expenditures, and Funding Sources

Full-Time Equivalent Positions as of June 30, 2024		
	Positions	Percent
Filled	10	100.0%
Vacant	0	0.0%
Total	10	
Fiscal Year 2024 Expenditures		
	Expenditures	Percent
Salaries, Wages, and Fringe Benefits	\$1,278,612	97.4%
Operating Expenses	34,185	2.6%
Total	\$1,312,797	
Fiscal Year 2024 Funding Sources		
	Funding	Percent
General Fund	\$1,191,545	90.8%
Special Fund	111,251	8.5%
Reimbursable Fund	10,001	0.7%
Total	\$1,312,797	

Source: State financial and personnel records

Findings and Recommendations

Our audit did not disclose any significant deficiencies in the design or operation of the Office’s internal control. Our audit also did not disclose any significant instances of noncompliance with applicable laws, rules, or regulations. Findings that did not warrant inclusion in this report were separately communicated to the Office.

A draft copy of this report was provided to the Office. Since there are no recommendations in this report, a written response was not necessary.

Audit Scope, Objectives, and Methodology

We have conducted a fiscal compliance audit of the Office of the Clerk of Circuit Court for Garrett, Maryland for the period beginning August 19, 2020 and ending November 17, 2024. The audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

As prescribed by the State Government Article, Section 2-1221 of the Annotated Code of Maryland, the objectives of this audit were to examine the Office's financial transactions, records, and internal control, and to evaluate its compliance with applicable State laws, rules, and regulations.

In planning and conducting our audit, we focused on the major financial-related areas of operations based on assessments of significance and risk. The areas addressed by the audit included cash receipts (including taxes and fees collected for real estate transactions) and bank accounts.

Our audit did not include a review of certain support services provided to the Office by the Administrative Office of the Courts. These support services (such as human resources and payroll activities, invoice processing, and maintenance of budgetary accounting records) are included within the scope of our audits of the Judiciary.

Our assessment of internal controls was based on agency procedures and controls in place at the time of our fieldwork. Our tests of transactions and other auditing procedures were generally focused on the transactions occurring during our audit period of August 19, 2020 to November 17, 2024, but may include transactions before or after this period as we considered necessary to achieve our audit objectives.

To accomplish our audit objectives, our audit procedures included inquiries of appropriate personnel, inspections of documents and records, tests of transactions, and to the extent practicable, observations of the Office's operations. Generally, transactions were selected for testing based on auditor judgment, which primarily considers risk, the timing or dollar amount of the transaction, or the significance of the transaction to the area of operation reviewed. As a matter of course, we do not normally use sampling in our tests, so unless otherwise specifically indicated, neither statistical nor non-statistical audit sampling was used to select the

transactions tested. Therefore, unless sampling is specifically indicated in a finding, the results from any tests conducted or disclosed by us cannot be used to project those results to the entire population from which the test items were selected.

We also performed various data extracts of pertinent information from the State's Central Payroll Bureau (payroll data), as well as from the contractor administering the State's Corporate Purchasing Card Program (credit card activity). The extracts are performed as part of ongoing internal processes established by the Office of Legislative Audits and were subject to various tests to determine data reliability. We determined that the data extracted from these sources were sufficiently reliable for the purposes the data were used during this audit. Finally, we performed other auditing procedures that we considered necessary to achieve our audit objectives. The reliability of data used in this report for background or informational purposes was not assessed.

The Office's management is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal control. Internal control is a process designed to provide reasonable assurance that objectives pertaining to the reliability of financial records; effectiveness and efficiency of operations, including safeguarding of assets; and compliance with applicable laws, rules, and regulations are achieved. As provided in *Government Auditing Standards*, there are five components of internal control: control environment, risk assessment, control activities, information and communication, and monitoring. Each of the five components, when significant to the audit objectives, and as applicable to the Office, were considered by us during the course of this audit.

Because of inherent limitations in internal control, errors or fraud may nevertheless occur and not be detected. Also, projections of any evaluation of internal control to future periods are subject to the risk that conditions may change or compliance with policies and procedures may deteriorate.

Our reports are designed to assist the Maryland General Assembly in exercising its legislative oversight function and to provide constructive recommendations for improving State operations. As a result, our reports generally do not address activities we reviewed that are functioning properly.

AUDIT TEAM

Robert J. Smith, CPA
Audit Manager

Jordan Duke, CFE
Senior Auditor