



Sherrill F. Norman, CPA
Auditor General

AUDITOR GENERAL STATE OF FLORIDA

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January 12, 2022

Honorable Jeff Bergosh, Chairman
Escambia County Board of County Commissioners
221 Palafox Place, Ste. 400
Pensacola, Florida 32502

Honorable Pam Childers
Clerk of the Circuit Court
190 West Government Street
Pensacola, Florida 32502

Dear Chairman Bergosh and Clerk Childers:

Pursuant to Section 11.45(2)(j), Florida Statutes, the Auditor General will perform an operational audit of selected areas of operation of the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) and the Clerk of the Circuit Court (Clerk). The purpose of this letter is to establish an understanding of BCC and Clerk managements' and our responsibilities, and other matters, related to our audit.

The objectives of our audit are, for selected operating units, programs, activities, functions, and classes of transactions, to obtain an understanding and evaluate management's performance in establishing and maintaining internal controls, including controls designed to prevent and detect fraud, waste, or abuse and in administering assigned responsibilities in accordance with applicable laws, rules, regulations, contracts, grant agreements, and other guidelines. Our audit will examine controls that are designed and placed in operation to promote and encourage the achievement of management's control objectives in the categories of compliance, economic and efficient operations, reliability of financial records and reports, and the safeguarding of assets, including identifying weaknesses in those controls.

BCC and Clerk management is responsible for administering their assigned responsibilities in accordance with applicable laws, rules, regulations, contracts, grant agreements, and other guidelines. BCC and Clerk management is also responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to help ensure that specific entity goals and objectives are met; resources are safeguarded and efficiently, economically, effectively, and equitably used; and management and financial information is reliable and properly reported. Further, pursuant to various provisions of Florida law, including but not limited to, Section 11.47(1), Florida Statutes, BCC and Clerk management is responsible for entering into BCC and Clerk records sufficient information for proper audit or examination and for making the same available to us on demand.

We are responsible for conducting the audit in accordance with Section 11.45, Florida Statutes, and generally accepted government auditing standards (i.e., *Government Auditing Standards*) issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. These standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable rather than absolute assurance about whether the BCC and Clerk complied with applicable laws, rules, regulations, contracts, grant agreements, and other guidelines. The reasonable and efficient conduct of the audit requires that our access

to BCC and Clerk records and personnel not be restricted. Under generally accepted government auditing standards, the absence of such access may result in a limitation in the scope of our examination, and any such limitation, together with its impact on the audit, must be disclosed in our audit report. We respectfully request that you communicate with all affected personnel that all records necessary to complete the audit should be timely furnished to our audit staff as requested.

Generally accepted government auditing standards also require that we be alert to situations or transactions that could be indicative of waste or abuse, which involves behavior that is deficient or improper when compared with behavior that a prudent person would consider reasonable and necessary business practice given the facts and circumstances. The determination of waste or abuse is subjective, and, under generally accepted government auditing standards, we are not expected to provide reasonable assurance of detecting waste or abuse. However, if we become aware of indications of waste or abuse, we will apply procedures to ascertain whether waste or abuse has occurred and its effect on the audit objectives and results of the audit.

During the course of our audit field work, it is necessary for our staff to be granted access to certain records or files containing information that is exempt from public disclosure (e.g., employee social security numbers on employment records and employee travel vouchers, bank account numbers, and debit, charge, and credit card account numbers on disbursement vouchers). Access to this information is requested pursuant to Sections 11.47 and 119.07(6), Florida Statutes. When the record or file is available electronically, we request that the information be made available in that format. To maintain your security over these records, please identify the contact person through whom we should address specific requests for access and the location(s) where the authorized auditors may review the records within your established security systems. Your suggestions for preserving the confidentiality of these records, and any other BCC and Clerk records that staff members may request access to, will be appreciated.

Additionally, we request Internet access for our laptop computers while on-site for the purpose of establishing a virtual private network (VPN) connection to the Auditor General network. To establish this connection, please e-mail James (Jim) Beaumont at jimbeaumont@aud.state.fl.us with the following information:

1. Physical location at which the VPN connection is to be made.
2. Name and phone number of your Information Resources technical contact.
3. Written permission from an appropriate manager or supervisor at your designated location for staff members to use your network in this manner (e-mail is sufficient).

At the conclusion of the audit, pursuant to Section 11.45(4), Florida Statutes, we will discuss with appropriate BCC and Clerk management and those charged with governance the results of our audit and submit an official list of our preliminary and tentative findings that may be included in an audit report. Following the Auditor General's receipt and review of the BCC and Clerk's written statement of explanation or rebuttal concerning all of the findings, including corrective action to be taken to preclude a recurrence of all findings, a final report will be prepared and issued. The audit report when final will be a public record.

Pursuant to Section 11.45(4)(c), Florida Statutes, our audit working papers and notes are not a public record. We will retain our supporting working papers for five years after the issuance of the audit report. We will make such working papers available to applicable Federal agencies or the Comptroller General of the United States as part of a quality review, to resolve audit findings, or to carry out oversight responsibilities.

An entrance conference is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. (Central Time Zone) on January 12, 2022, at which time we will discuss the needed working space for our staff members. The Audit Team Leader is Jim Beaumont, and the audit will be supervised by Shane Herman. As Audit Supervisor, Shane is responsible for the direction, supervision, and performance of the audit in compliance with professional standards, applicable legal and regulatory requirements, and Auditor General policies and procedures. Shane is also responsible for ensuring that the audit report is appropriate in the circumstances, including ensuring that the audit report meets the objectives of and standards applicable to the audit.

We look forward to working with you and your staff. Should you at any time have concerns relative to the conduct or progress of this audit, please contact me at (850) 412-2864, dereknoonan@aud.state.fl.us, or Shane at (850) 412-2897, shaneherman@aud.state.fl.us.

Please sign and date below to indicate your acknowledgement of, and agreement with, the arrangements for our audit, including our respective responsibilities as outlined in this engagement letter, and return the signed/dated copy to us. Thank you for your assistance.

Acknowledged and agreed on behalf of the BCC and Clerk.

Chairman, Escambia County Board of County Commissioners

Date

Escambia County Clerk of the Circuit Court

Date

Sincerely,



Derek H. Noonan, CPA
Audit Manager

c: County Commission
Mr. Wesley Moreno, Interim County Administrator