



Office of the Washington State Auditor
Pat McCarthy

Accountability Audit Report

City of Kelso

Cowlitz County

For the period January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017

Published July 19, 2018

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**Office of the Washington State Auditor
Pat McCarthy**

July 19, 2018

Mayor and City Council
City of Kelso
Kelso, Washington

Report on Accountability

Thank you for the opportunity to work with you to promote accountability, integrity and openness in government. The State Auditor's Office takes seriously our role of providing state and local governments with assurance and accountability as the independent auditor of public accounts. In this way, we strive to help government work better, cost less, deliver higher value and earn greater public trust.

Independent audits provide essential accountability and transparency for City operations. This information is valuable to management, the governing body and public stakeholders when assessing the government's stewardship of public resources.

The attached comprises our independent audit report on the City's compliance with applicable requirements and safeguarding of public resources for the areas we examined. We appreciate the opportunity to work with your staff and we value your cooperation during the audit.

Sincerely,

Pat McCarthy
State Auditor
Olympia, WA

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AUDIT RESULTS

This report describes the overall results and conclusions for the areas we examined. In most of the areas we examined, except as described below, City operations complied with applicable state laws, regulations, and its own policies, and provided adequate controls over safeguarding of public resources.

As referenced above, we noted certain matters that we communicated to City management and Council in a letter dated July 3, 2018, related to the use of a purchasing cooperative. We appreciate the City's commitment to resolving those matters.

About the audit

This report contains the results of our independent accountability audit of the City of Kelso from January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017.

Management is responsible for ensuring compliance and adequate safeguarding of public resources from fraud, loss or abuse. This includes the design, implementation and maintenance of internal controls relevant to these objectives.

This audit was conducted under the authority of RCW 43.09.260, which requires the Office of the State Auditor to examine the financial affairs of all local governments. Our audit involved performing procedures to obtain evidence about the City's uses of public resources, compliance with state laws and regulations and its own policies and procedures, and internal controls over such matters.

In keeping with general auditing practices, we do not examine every transaction, activity or area. Instead, based on our risk assessment for the year ended December 31, 2017, the areas examined were those representing the highest risk of fraud, loss, abuse, or noncompliance. The following areas were examined during this audit period:

- Police Department – evidence room, disposition of property, confidential funds, contract compliance for resource officer, citation reconciliations, and tracking of armory equipment and confidential funds
- Payroll with a focus on overtime for police and public works employees
- Use of restricted funds
- Procurement – public works, purchases, and architectural and engineering services
- Contract compliance for public works projects – retainage and prevailing wages
- Disbursements – credit cards, travel reimbursements and general vendor payments
- Third party cash receipting of the Retail Lockbox agreement

RELATED REPORTS

Financial

Our opinion on the City's financial statements and compliance with federal grant program requirements is provided in a separate report, which includes the City's financial statements. That report is available on our website, <http://portal.sao.wa.gov/ReportSearch>.

Federal grant programs

We evaluated internal controls and tested compliance with the federal program requirements, as applicable, for the City's major federal program, which is listed in the Schedule of Findings and Questioned Costs section of the separate financial statement and single audit report. That report is available on our website, <http://portal.sao.wa.gov/ReportSearch>.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE CITY

The City of Kelso serves approximately 11,980 citizens. The City provides services including police, streets, sanitation, recreation, library, public improvements, planning and zoning, water supply treatment and distribution, and sewage and storm-water collection and treatment.

An elected, seven-member Council governs the City. The Council selects a Mayor from among its members to serve a two-year term. The Council appoints a Manager to oversee the City's day-to-day operations as well as its 79 employees. For fiscal year 2017, the City operated on an annual budget of approximately \$41.7 million.

Contact information related to this report

Address:	City of Kelso P.O. Box 819 Kelso, WA 98626
Contact:	Brian Butterfield, Finance Director/City Clerk
Telephone:	(360) 577-3340
Website:	www.kelso.gov

Information current as of report publish date.

Audit history

You can find current and past audit reports for the City of Kelso at <http://portal.sao.wa.gov/ReportSearch>.

ABOUT THE STATE AUDITOR'S OFFICE

The State Auditor's Office is established in the state's Constitution and is part of the executive branch of state government. The State Auditor is elected by the citizens of Washington and serves four-year terms.

We work with our audit clients and citizens to achieve our vision of government that works for citizens, by helping governments work better, cost less, deliver higher value, and earn greater public trust.

In fulfilling our mission to hold state and local governments accountable for the use of public resources, we also hold ourselves accountable by continually improving our audit quality and operational efficiency and developing highly engaged and committed employees.

As an elected agency, the State Auditor's Office has the independence necessary to objectively perform audits and investigations. Our audits are designed to comply with professional standards as well as to satisfy the requirements of federal, state, and local laws.

Our audits look at financial information and compliance with state, federal and local laws on the part of all local governments, including schools, and all state agencies, including institutions of higher education. In addition, we conduct performance audits of state agencies and local governments as well as [fraud](#), state [whistleblower](#) and [citizen hotline](#) investigations.

The results of our work are widely distributed through a variety of reports, which are available on our [website](#) and through our free, electronic [subscription](#) service.

We take our role as partners in accountability seriously, and provide training and technical assistance to governments, and have an extensive quality assurance program.

Contact information for the State Auditor's Office	
Public Records requests	PublicRecords@sao.wa.gov
Main telephone	(360) 902-0370
Toll-free Citizen Hotline	(866) 902-3900
Website	www.sao.wa.gov