Office of the Washington State Auditor

Pat McCarthy

Accountability Audit Report

Cowlitz County Fire Protection District No. 1

For the period January 1, 2015 through December 31, 2017

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Office of the Washington State Auditor
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October 15, 2018

Board of Commissioners
Cowlitz County Fire Protection District No. 1
Woodland, 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 District 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 District'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 those selected areas, District operations complied with applicable state laws, regulations, and its own policies, and provided adequate controls over the safeguarding of public resources.

About the audit

This report contains the results of our independent accountability audit of Cowlitz County Fire Protection District No. 1 from January 1, 2015 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 District'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 years ended December 31, 2017, 2016 and 2015, the areas examined were those representing the highest risk of fraud, loss, abuse, or noncompliance. The following areas were examined during this audit period:

- Payroll – gross pay recalculation, leave accruals and usage
- Procurement – purchases
- General disbursements – travel and credit cards

INFORMATION ABOUT THE DISTRICT

Cowlitz County Fire District No. 1 was formed in 1940 to provide fire protection and prevention services. The District encompasses the entire area known as the Woodland Bottoms, outside the city limits of Woodland and the Lewis River, from north to the Kalama boundary and east to Merwin Dam.

An elected, three-member Board of Commissioners governs the District. Commissioners serve six-year terms. The Board appoints the Fire Chief to oversee the District's daily operations as well as its approximately 30 volunteer firefighters. During fiscal years 2015, 2016, and 2017, the District operated on annual operating revenues of about $571,000, $769,000 and $733,000, respectively.

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Information current as of report publish date.

Audit history

You can find current and past audit reports for Cowlitz County Fire Protection District No. 1 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.

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