



Office of the Washington State Auditor
Pat McCarthy

Accountability Audit Report

Town of South Prairie

For the period January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2020

Published October 14, 2024

Report No. 1035762



Scan to see another great way
we're helping advance
#GoodGovernment



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

October 14, 2024

Mayor and Town Council
Town of South Prairie
South Prairie, Washington

Report on Accountability

Thank you for the opportunity to work with you to promote accountability, integrity and openness in government. The Office of the Washington State Auditor 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 Town operations. This information is valuable to management, the governing body and public stakeholders when assessing the government's stewardship of public resources.

Attached is our independent audit report on the Town'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 value your cooperation during the audit.

Sincerely,

Pat McCarthy, State Auditor
Olympia, WA

Americans with Disabilities

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, we will make this document available in alternative formats. For more information, please contact our Office at (564) 999-0950, TDD Relay at (800) 833-6388, or email our webmaster at webmaster@sao.wa.gov.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Audit Results..... 4

Information about the Town 5

About the State Auditor's Office..... 6

AUDIT RESULTS

Results in brief

This report describes the overall results and conclusions for the areas we examined. In those selected areas, Town operations complied, in all material respects, with applicable state laws, regulations, and its own policies, and provided adequate controls over the safeguarding of public resources.

However, we noted certain matters related to utility billings and adjustments that we communicated to Town management and the Mayor and Town Council in a letter dated October 2, 2024. We appreciate the Town's commitment to resolving those matters.

In keeping with general auditing practices, we do not examine every transaction, activity, policy, internal control, or area. As a result, no information is provided on the areas that were not examined.

About the audit

This report contains the results of our independent accountability audit of the Town of South Prairie from January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2020.

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 Washington State Auditor to examine the financial affairs of all local governments. Our audit involved obtaining evidence about the Town's use of public resources, compliance with state laws and regulations and its own policies and procedures, and internal controls over such matters. The procedures performed were based on our assessment of risks in the areas we examined.

Based on our risk assessment for the years ended December 31, 2020, 2019 and 2018, the areas examined were those representing the highest risk of fraud, loss, abuse, or noncompliance. We examined the following areas during this audit period:

- Accounts payable – electronic funds transfers
- Accounts receivable – utility billings and adjustments
- Payroll – gross wages and final pay to departing employees
- Financial condition – reviewing for indications of financial distress
- Open public meetings – compliance with minutes, meetings and executive session requirements

INFORMATION ABOUT THE TOWN

The Town of South Prairie is located in eastern Pierce County and has approximately 610 citizens.

The Town is governed by a mayor-council form of government with five elected Council Members and an independently elected Mayor. The Town has three part-time employees and two full-time employees providing a wide range of services including water and sewer utilities. The Town contracts with the East Pierce Fire & Rescue for fire protection and emergency services; with Pierce County for police protection and has contracts for legal, engineering, building official services and planning services. The annual budget for 2018, 2019 and 2020 was approximately \$1.9 million, \$2.3 million and \$2.4 million, respectively.

Contact information related to this report

Address:	Town of South Prairie P.O. Box 870 South Prairie, WA 98385
Contact:	Terri Berry, Clerk-Treasurer
Telephone:	(360) 897-8878
Website:	www.townofsp.com

Information current as of report publish date.

Audit history

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

ABOUT THE STATE AUDITOR'S OFFICE

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

We work with state agencies, local governments and the public to achieve our vision of increasing trust in government by helping governments work better and deliver higher value.

In fulfilling our mission to provide citizens with independent and transparent examinations of how state and local governments use public funds, we hold ourselves to those same standards by continually improving our audit quality and operational efficiency, and by developing highly engaged and committed employees.

As an agency, the State Auditor's Office has the independence necessary to objectively perform audits, attestation engagements and investigations. Our work is designed to comply with professional standards as well as to satisfy the requirements of federal, state and local laws. The Office also has an extensive quality control program and undergoes regular external peer review to ensure our work meets the highest possible standards of accuracy, objectivity and clarity.

Our audits look at financial information and compliance with federal, state and local laws for all local governments, including schools, and all state agencies, including institutions of higher education. In addition, we conduct performance audits and cybersecurity audits of state agencies and local governments, as well as state whistleblower, fraud and citizen hotline investigations.

The results of our work are available to everyone through the more than 2,000 reports we publish each year on our website, www.sao.wa.gov. Additionally, we share regular news and other information via an email subscription service and social media channels.

We take our role as partners in accountability seriously. The Office provides training and technical assistance to governments both directly and through partnerships with other governmental support organizations.

Stay connected at sao.wa.gov

- [Find your audit team](#)
- [Request public records](#)
- Search BARS Manuals ([GAAP](#) and [cash](#)), and find [reporting templates](#)
- Learn about our [training workshops](#) and [on-demand videos](#)
- Discover [which governments serve you](#) — enter an address on our map
- Explore public financial data with the [Financial Intelligence Tool](#)

Other ways to stay in touch

- Main telephone:
(564) 999-0950
- Toll-free Citizen Hotline:
(866) 902-3900
- Email:
webmaster@sao.wa.gov