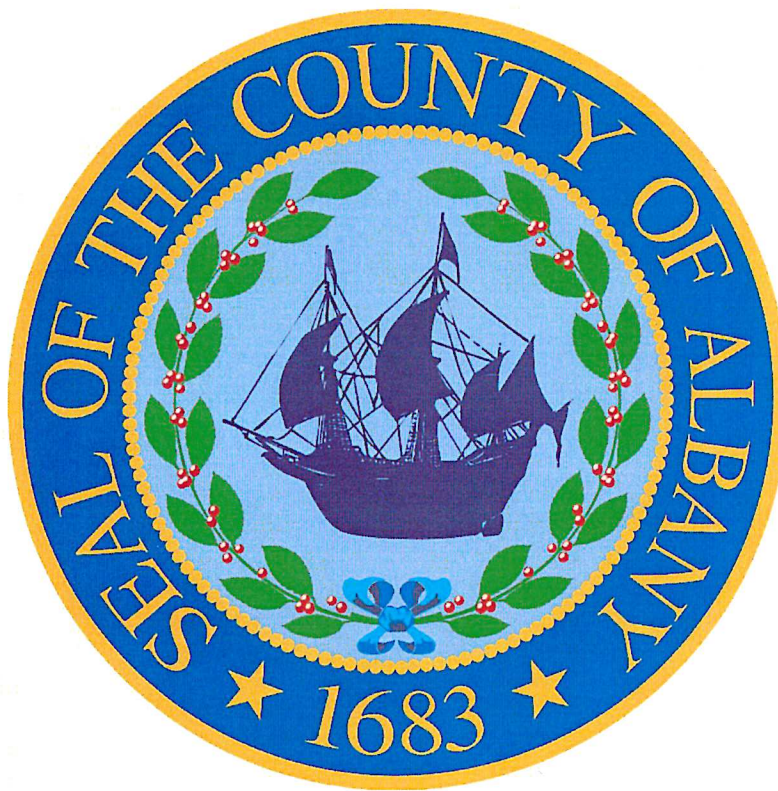


Final Report

Albany County Correctional Facility

Audit of Inmate and

Commissary Accounts



October 2024

Susan Rizzo, Comptroller

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
Background	3
Objectives	3
Scope	4
Approach	4
Conclusion	4

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Executive Summary

The Albany County Comptroller's Office, Department of Audit and Control (DAC), performed an audit of process and controls related to the Inmate and Commissary accounts of the Albany County Correctional Facility (ACCF). For the purpose of this audit, DAC is evaluating ACCF's accounting procedures for deposits and withdrawals only. The DAC examined financial data for the months of January, February, June, and July of 2024. The analysis of this data included verifying that all deposits and withdrawals were recorded accurately, and ensuring that reconciliations for all accounts were performed correctly and in a timely manner. No observations were noted during the course of this audit.

Background

The Albany County Correctional Facility has a maximum capacity of 943, and had an average daily population of approximately 450 inmates in the past year. Each inmate is assigned a personal account to which funds can be deposited, and is subsequently used to purchase goods and supplies from the Jail Commissary. The high volume of transactions creates the risk for error and potential losses for the County. To mitigate this risk, adequate process and controls must be in place.

The ACCF Business Office uses the Fusion Banker (FB) System to maintain inmate accounts. This system monitors all deposits and withdrawals for each inmate account. Funds in an inmate's account can be used for the purchases and may also be charged for sanctions or restitutions assessed by the facility. Upon arrival to the ACCF, an inmate is assigned a FB account. Any funds in the form of cash that were in the inmate's possession upon arrival are deposited into the inmate's account via a kiosk. There is an additional kiosk in the main lobby for use by visitors who wish to make a deposit in an inmates account. Checks in the possession of inmates transferred from other facilities are recorded, deposited, and the inmate is issued a receipt. Inmates may also receive deposits from outside of the facility through the US Mail in the form of a money order mailed to the facility which will be deposited into the inmate's account and a receipt sent to the inmate. Additionally, an inmate's relatives or acquaintances are able to deposit money into their account through an online service. Inmates will receive a receipt for all monies deposited through the lobby kiosk, online transactions, or phone service, on the business day following the deposit. Inmates can also receive funds in their accounts if they have a job within the facility. Worksheets are completed by the inmate, signed by the CO in charge and sent to the Business Office to generate a payment to the inmate account. Work wages are calculated on an hourly basis, recorded daily and paid weekly. When inmates are released, their FB account is deactivated by the ACCF Business Office. Remaining funds are refunded by check to the inmate in person (during business hours) or by mail. When an inmate is released from the ACCF and transferred to another facility, the inmate must request that their funds be transferred to the new facility. Funds collected from charges against an Inmate's account are sent via check to the Albany County Director of Finance monthly. Funds collected from commissary sales to the inmates are used to pay vendors for merchandise purchased. Any profit from sales is deposited to the Sheriff's Athletic Fund, established to facilitate purchases of inmate recreational equipment and supplies. Disbursements from this account can only be authorized by written approval of the Chief Deputy, Sheriff or Undersheriff.

Objectives

- Determine if effective controls exist over the collection of funds, transfers into bank accounts and the reconciliation of these accounts; and
- Provide management with further recommendations, where appropriate.

Scope

In accordance with the Comptroller's stated duty to "Be the chief fiscal and auditing officer of the County..." the DAC periodically performs audits and reviews to identify and evaluate the design and effectiveness of controls over financial transactions in all departments. Collections of funds and subsequent transfers into several different accounts can result in errors or possible loss. Controls over this function should adequately provide assurance that the events resulting in loss are prevented or detected. The scope of this audit included all transactions and reconciliations for the months of January, February, June, and July of 2024. Audit work was substantially completed on October 22, 2024.

Approach

To accomplish these objectives the DAC performed the following:

- Conducted an interview with ACCF Staff regarding daily operations and the accounting process related to recording transactions;
- Reviewed financial data for the ACCF Inmate, Commissary and Trinity Funds Accounts for the months of January, February, June, and July of 2024;
- Verified that deposits and withdrawals corresponded with bank statements; and
- Reviewed bank account reconciliations for accuracy.

Conclusion

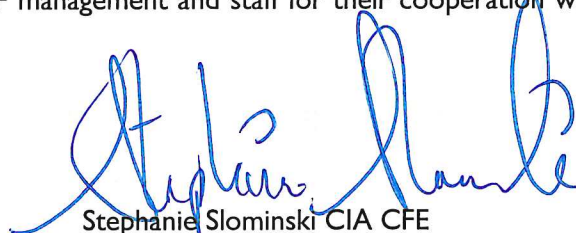
In reviewing the ACCF Inmate, Commissary and Trinity Funds Accounts, the auditors found that the sample of data they analyzed was accurate in reflecting deposits and withdrawals made to and from each Account. Deposits were made daily, with the ACCF staff updating the corresponding accounts on a daily basis. Additionally, a general reconciliation of the accounts for the sample examined was found to balance correctly. In evaluating the ACCF's daily accounting methods and reconciliations for the chosen sample period, the DAC found no errors; with all inmate and commissary accounts being properly maintained and recorded. There continues to be a concern related to the clearing of stale dated checks. The DAC is continuing to work in collaboration with the Sheriff's Office to accomplish this goal.

I would like to thank Sheriff Apple, and all ACCF management and staff for their cooperation with our audit team in performing this review.

Sincerely,



Susan Rizzo
Albany County Comptroller



Stephanie Slominski CIA CFE
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Stanley Muztafago, Clerk III, ACCF

Edward Dott, Executive Deputy Comptroller
Frank Commisso, Executive Deputy
Comptroller