



REPRESENTING  
**ALEX SINK**  
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER  
STATE OF FLORIDA

**PALM BEACH COUNTY**  
**CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT**  
**BUDGET REVIEW**

REPORT DATE:  
November 5, 2007

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
SUMMARY	1
SCOPE, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY	2
Scope	2
Objectives and Methodology	2
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	4
REVIEW TEAM	5
APPENDIX	
Budget Review Engagement Letter	A
Clerk's Response	B



# ALEX SINK

## CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

### INTRODUCTION

The Department of Financial Services (DFS) has completed a review of the budget certifications made by the Palm Beach County Clerk of Circuit Court's Office to the Clerks of Court Operations Corporation (CCOC), pursuant to Section 28.35(3)(b), Florida Statutes (F.S.). The scope of our review focused on validating the processes and methodologies utilized in the development of the Clerk's budgets for fiscal years 2004-2005 (FY 04-05), 2005-2006 (FY 05-06) and 2006-2007 (FY 06-07).

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) has contracted with CCOC to establish a process for review and certification of court-related budgets submitted by the Clerks of Circuit Courts. The CCOC is responsible for calculating the maximum authorized annual budget, identifying budgets exceeding the maximum expenditure amounts for a standard list of court-related functions and identifying budgets that have insufficient revenues to cover court-related expenditures, pursuant to Section 28.36, F.S.

### SUMMARY

- The FY 04-05, FY 05-06 and FY 06-07 approved budgets were \$30,513,115, \$31,906,641 and \$33,891,782 respectively.
- Palm Beach County has a population of 1,292,742 and had 570.65, 557.76 and 569.21 Full Time Employees (FTEs) budgeted to support court-related activities for FY 04-05, FY 05-06 and FY 06-07 respectively.
- Budgeted revenues for FY 04-05 were \$28,332,237. Actual revenues and expenditures as reported by the Clerk were \$30,087,207 and \$26,737,575 respectively, resulting in a \$3,349,632 surplus for FY 04-05. The Clerk remitted the FY 04-05 surplus to the Department of Revenue (DOR) on January 30, 2006 for deposit in the General Revenue Fund, pursuant to the provisions of Section 28.37(4), F.S.
- Budgeted revenues and expenditures for FY 05-06 were \$27,692,505 and \$31,906,641 respectively, resulting in a budgeted deficit of \$4,214,136. Actual revenues and expenditures as reported by the Clerk for FY 05-06 detail a surplus of \$5,026,097. The Clerk remitted the FY 05-06 surplus to DOR on January 4, 2007 for deposit in the General Revenue Fund, pursuant to the provisions of Section 28.37(4), F.S.

- Projected revenues and expenditures for FY 06-07 are \$31,924,001 and \$33,891,782 respectively, resulting in a \$1,967,781 budgeted deficit. Monthly payments from the Clerks of the Court Trust Fund are scheduled to fund the Clerk’s projected deficit pursuant to CCOC directive.
- The Clerk has an internal system and reporting procedures for measuring and reporting on all required performance standards.

## **SCOPE, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY**

### **Scope**

The Scope of our review included an analysis of the development of the Clerk’s FY 04-05, FY 05-06 and FY 06-07 budgets. Our review was conducted on July 24 - 25, 2007 at the Palm Beach County Clerk of Circuit Court’s Office.

### **Objectives and Methodology**

The budget review was conducted with the following objectives:

- Each Clerk shall develop a budget funded from fees, services charges, court costs and fines, pursuant to Sections 28.35, 28.36 and 28.37, F.S. Clerks must provide detailed information on expenditures necessary for the performance of court-related functions using the court-related codes in the Uniform Accounting System Manual (UASM). The budget shall be submitted annually to CCOC for review and approval. The CCOC budget approval process focuses on the following key components:
  - Overhead Cost Allocation – The Palm Beach County Clerk’s Office applied a 73.29 and 71.91 percent cost allocation rate to the FY 04-05 and FY 05-06 certified annual budgets. A 71.30 percent cost allocation rate is being utilized for the FY 06-07 budget.
  - Our review of supporting documentation disclosed that the methodologies used to calculate and distribute overhead costs were reasonable.
  - Distribution of Court-Related FTEs – The Palm Beach County Clerk’s Office budgeted 570.65 of 778.63, 557.76 of 775.65 and 569.21 of 798.28 FTEs for FY 04-05, FY 05-06 and FY 06-07 respectively, to support court-related functions.
  - General Fund Expenditures – The final approved budget for FY 04-05 was \$30,513,115. Major expenditure categories were: Personal Services (\$27,529,825) and Operating Expenses (\$2,983,290). The final approved budget for FY 05-06 was \$31,906,641. Major expenditure categories were: Personal Services (\$28,958,310) and Operating Expenses (\$2,948,331).

The final approved budget for FY 06-07 is \$33,891,782. Major expenditure categories are: Personal Services (\$30,573,605) and Operating Expenses (\$3,318,177).

- Revenue Forecasting – Budgeted revenues of \$28,332,237, \$27,692,505 and \$31,924,001 were calculated for FY 04-05, FY 05-06 and FY 06-07 respectively, based on prior period data and management’s assessment of future operational activities.
- Our review determined that the Clerk’s FY 04-05, FY 05-06 and FY 06-07 budgets were prepared pursuant to CCOC instructions and submitted in accordance with the provisions of Section 28.36, F.S.
- Expenditures during the review period were limited to court-related functions as specified in Section 28.35(4)(a), F.S.
- Revenues for fees, services charges, court costs and funding for court-related functions for FY 04-05 and FY 05-06 were assessed pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 28, F.S. The Clerk’s budget for FY 06-07 was based on projected revenues from the same sources, pursuant to Section 28.36, F.S.
- Clerks are required to maintain a partial fee payment system, pursuant to Section 28.246, F.S. The Palm Beach County Clerk’s Office is currently utilizing an internal database system to account for partial fee payments. The Clerk is contracting with an external collection agency to assist with collecting delinquent accounts more than 90 days past due.
- The Palm Beach County Clerk of Court was designated a “recipient” office for FY 04-05 by CCOC based upon a budgeted deficit of \$2,180,878. Monthly remittances from the Clerks of the Court Trust Fund were scheduled to fund the Clerk’s projected deficit, pursuant to CCOC directive. The Clerk reported a surplus of \$3,349,632 during FY 04-05 based on actual revenues and expenditures of \$30,087,207 and \$26,737,575 respectively. The Clerk remitted the FY 04-05 surplus to DOR on January 30, 2006 for deposit in the General Revenue Fund, pursuant to the provisions of Section 28.37(4), F.S.
- The Palm Beach County Clerk of Court was designated a “recipient” office for FY 05-06 by CCOC based upon a budgeted deficit of \$4,214,136. Monthly remittances from the Clerks of the Court Trust Fund were scheduled to fund the Clerk’s projected deficit pursuant to CCOC directive. The Clerk reported a FY 05-06 surplus of \$5,026,097 based on actual revenues and expenditures of \$34,258,415 and \$29,232,318 respectively. The Clerk remitted the FY 05-06 surplus to DOR on January 4, 2007 for deposit in the General Revenue Fund, pursuant to the provisions of Section 28.37(4), F.S.
- The Palm Beach County Clerk of Court is designated a “recipient” office for FY 06-07 by CCOC based upon a budgeted deficit of \$1,967,781. Projected revenues and expenditures for FY 06-07 are \$31,924,001 and \$33,891,782 respectively.

Through the time of our review (May 2007), the Clerk's Office reported an actual FY 06-07 surplus of \$1,415,378 based on revenues and expenditures of \$21,685,742 and \$20,270,364 respectively.

- The following performance measures were adopted by CCOC, pursuant to Section 28.35, F.S., for FY 04-05, FY 05-06 and FY 06-07:
  - Outputs – The outputs consist of the number of civil cases filed and the number of criminal defendants handled, by Court Divisions, as identified by the Clerk's Office. The Clerk reported 368,057 new cases filed and 91,689 defendants for FY 04-05. The Clerk reported 369,291 new cases filed and 91,341 defendants during FY 05-06. The Clerk reported 203,732 new cases filed and 55,342 defendants through the second quarter of FY 06-07.
  - Outcome Measures – Timeliness and Collection Rate:
    - Timeliness – New cases opened within a designated number of business days after the initial filing. The Clerk has the ability to collect data and report timeliness measures on new cases. The Clerk reported meeting or exceeding 19 of 20 timeliness performance standards to CCOC for FY 04-05. The Clerk reported meeting or exceeding 20 of 20 performance standards to CCOC for FY 05-06. The Clerk reported meeting or exceeding 13 of 20 performance standards to CCOC for the second quarter of FY 06-07.
    - Collection Rate – The collection rate is calculated by dividing collections by the adjusted assessments. The Clerk reported meeting or exceeding 4 of 9 collections performance standards to CCOC for FY 04-05. The Clerk reported meeting or exceeding 4 of 9 collections performance standards to CCOC for FY 05-06. The Clerk reported meeting or exceeding 5 of 9 collections performance standards to CCOC for the second quarter of FY 06-07.

## **FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Finding:**

Based upon our review, we found the Clerk's budgeting practices and expenditure and revenue methodologies for State funds to be efficient and accurate. We concluded the Palm Beach County Clerk's Office is currently able to report on all required performance standards.

## REVIEW TEAM

Burton Marshall, *Chief, Bureau of Local Government*  
Priscilla Bailey-Brown, *Financial Administrator*  
Mark Gressel, *Professional Accountant Specialist*  
Bob Johnson, *Professional Accountant Specialist*  
Angie Lawson, *Professional Accountant Specialist*  
Krystal Glover, *Professional Accountant Specialist*  
Jessica Robinson, *Professional Accountant Specialist*

# APPENDIX



## Appendix A



ALEX SINK  
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER  
STATE OF FLORIDA

May 15, 2007

The Honorable Sharon R. Bock  
Clerk of Circuit Court  
Palm Beach County  
Governmental Center  
301 North Olive Avenue  
West Palm Beach, Florida 33401

Dear Ms. Bock:

The Department of Financial Services (DFS) has scheduled a review of your budget processes in accordance with Section 28.35, Florida Statutes. The dates mutually selected for this review are July 24 – 26, 2007. Our review will encompass the following objectives: Analyze the methodologies used to develop both the current and prior fiscal years Clerks of Court Operations Corporation (CCOC) certified budget; review expenditures to ensure compliance with Florida Statutes; analyze projected and year-to-date revenues; and review methods used to collect and report data regarding performance measures.

To minimize disruptions to your daily operations, we request you have the following available upon our arrival:

1. Current organization chart.
2. Internal documentation of methodologies used to allocate FTEs to court-related activities.
3. Payroll subsidiary ledger for the most recent pay date and current annual salary listing by employee.
4. Listing of GL codes (500-700 range) used in conjunction with the chart of accounts.
5. General ledger report of court-related revenues and expenditures for FY 04-05, FY 05-06 and FY 06-07 (through May 2007).
6. Revenue and Expenditure Tracking Reports submitted to CCOC for FY 04-05, FY 05-06 and FY 06-07 (through May 2007).
7. Copies of monthly transmittals to the Department of Revenue for revenues remitted pursuant to Sections 28.241(1)(a), 28.37(2) and 28.37(4), Florida Statutes.
8. Report detailing outstanding balance for each partial payment account.
9. Contract, outstanding balance of accounts assigned, and supporting records for remittances by collection agency for FY 04-05, FY 05-06 and FY 06-07, if applicable.

DOUGLAS A. DARLING • DIRECTOR  
DIVISION OF ACCOUNTING AND AUDITING  
200 EAST GAINES STREET • TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32399-0353 • TEL. 850-413-5510 • FAX 850-413-5547 • SC 293-5510  
EMAIL • DOUG.DARLING@FLDFS.COM

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION • EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

## Appendix A (continued)

The Honorable Sharon R. Bock

May 15, 2007

Page 2

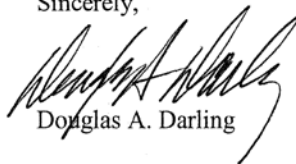
10. Submissions of timeliness and collections performance measure data and any related supporting documentation to CCOC for FY 04-05, FY 05-06 and FY 06-07.
11. Any internal documentation used to complete a Budget Amendment Request(s) approved by CCOC if applicable.
12. Annual Financial Report and Audit Report for FY 04-05 and FY 05-06.

Please have the requested information available for fiscal years 2004-2005, 2005-2006 and 2006-2007, as our review will cover all three periods. Mr. Bob Johnson, Mr. Mark Gressel and Ms. Angela Lawson will represent DFS during this review.

We ask that you provide workspace for DFS and a lead from your staff to assist in the review. It is not our intent to disrupt your operations. You may contact us to reschedule if, for any reason, the dates selected cannot be accommodated. Please use Mr. Charles Culp as our primary point of contact at (850) 413-5592 or [charles.culp@fldfs.com](mailto:charles.culp@fldfs.com).

Thank you for your advanced preparation. We look forward to working with you and your staff.

Sincerely,



Douglas A. Darling

DAD:cc

Appendix B



**SHARON R. BOCK**  
Clerk & Comptroller  
Palm Beach County

October 19, 2007

Douglas A. Darling  
Director, Division of Accounting and Auditing  
Florida Department of Financial Services  
200 East Gaines Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0353

Dear Mr. Darling:

The Clerk & Comptroller's Office of Palm Beach County is in receipt of the "Palm Beach County Clerk of Circuit Court Budget Review" report prepared by the Department of Financial Services (DFS). We have reviewed the report and agree that it accurately reflects the Clerk's financial position and scope of operations.

We are reassured that DFS found our budgeting practices, expenditure and revenue methodologies, and performance standard reporting to be efficient and accurate. Our staff continuously reviews and improves internal processes and procedures to ensure compliance with Florida Statutes and CCOC policies. In addition, we are committed to achieving the highest standards of fiscal accountability and responsibility as evidenced by our ability to meet additional collection performance measures in FY 2007.

We appreciate the opportunity to work with your office and look forward to working with you again in the future.

Sincerely,

Sharon R. Bock

301 North Olive Avenue  
West Palm Beach, Florida 33401

P.O. Box 229  
West Palm Beach, Florida 33402

Telephone 561-355-2996  
Facsimile 561-355-6727

[www.pbcountyclerk.com](http://www.pbcountyclerk.com)

cc: Carter Hammer, CFO  
Roger Trca, Audit Director