

Report on the

# Office of Circuit and District Courts

Dallas County, Alabama

November 1, 2016 through June 30, 2021

Filed: November 18, 2022



## Department of Examiners of Public Accounts

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*Rachel Laurie Riddle, Chief Examiner*



Rachel Laurie Riddle  
*Chief Examiner*

State of Alabama  
Department of  
**Examiners of Public Accounts**

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Honorable Rachel Laurie Riddle  
Chief Examiner of Public Accounts  
Montgomery, Alabama 36130

Dear Madam:

An examination was conducted on the Office of Circuit and District Courts, Dallas County, Alabama, for the period November 1, 2016 through June 30, 2021, by Examiners Stephanie C. Cave, Queneshia Beal and Billy Jones. I, Stephanie C. Cave, served as the Examiner-in-Charge on the engagement, and under the authority of the *Code of Alabama 1975*, Section 41-5A-19, I hereby swear to and submit this report to you on the results of the examination.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Stephanie C. Cave'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stephanie C. Cave  
Examiner of Public Accounts

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Department of  
**Examiners of Public Accounts**

**SUMMARY**

**Office of Circuit and District Courts  
Dallas County, Alabama  
November 1, 2016 through June 30, 2021**

The Office of Circuit and District Courts, Dallas County, Alabama, (hereinafter referred to as the “Courts”) receipts, disburses and otherwise accounts for court costs, fines, forfeitures, fiduciary funds and other miscellaneous receipts for cases under the Courts’ jurisdiction. The amounts collected are then distributed to various state and local entities as ordered by the Courts and in accordance with state and local laws and regulations. The Circuit Clerk, an elected official, is responsible for overseeing the operations of the Circuit and District Courts. The duties of the Circuit Clerk and District Court Clerk are enumerated in the *Code of Alabama 1975*, Sections 12-17-93 and 12-17-94. The Circuit Clerk also serves as clerk for the District Court pursuant to the *Code of Alabama 1975*, Section 12-17-160.

Honorable Cheryl Strong Ratcliff served as Circuit and District Court Clerk until January 31, 2018. Honorable Christmas Green-Williams served as Circuit and District Court Clerk from February 1, 2018 through August 2, 2018. Honorable Lynnethia R. Bennett served as Circuit and District Court Clerk beginning August 3, 2018 through the remainder of the examination period.

The Circuit and District Court Clerk maintains a special fund known as the Circuit Clerk’s Fund that was created pursuant to the *Code of Alabama 1975*, Section 12-17-225.4. The Circuit and District Court Clerk receives twenty-five percent (25%) of a thirty percent (30%) collection fee for any delinquent court ordered payments that are 90 days old and have been collected by the District Attorney. This twenty-five percent of the collection fee is deposited in the Circuit Clerk’s Fund and is used for general office operations.

The Circuit and District Court Clerk maintains a special fund known as the Judicial Administration Fund that was created pursuant to the *Code of Alabama 1975*, Section 12-19-310 and 12-19-311. The Circuit and District Court Clerk receives portions of the docket fee and bail bond fee increase provided for by these statutes. This fund is to be used for the support of local court operations and to promote efficient administration of justice.

This report presents the results of an examination of the Courts and a review of the Court's compliance with applicable laws and regulations of the State of Alabama in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Examiners of Public Accounts under the authority of the *Code of Alabama 1975*, Section 41-5A-12.

Tests performed during the examination did not disclose any significant instances of noncompliance with applicable state or local laws and regulations.

**EXIT CONFERENCE**

The officials were invited to an exit conference to discuss the results of the examination. The current Circuit and District Court Clerk, Lynnethia R. Bennett, attended the exit conference. Representing the Department of Examiners of Public Accounts were: Sherry Owen, Audit Manager; and Stephanie C. Cave, Examiner.

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# *Financial Information*

***Summary of Receipts, Disbursements and Balances***  
***November 1, 2016 through June 30, 2021***

	<b>Civil Division</b>	<b>Criminal Division</b>	<b>Child Support Division</b>	<b>Total</b>
Beginning Cash Balances - November 1, 2016	\$ 65,771.26	\$ 125,706.47	\$	\$ 191,477.73
Receipts	6,798,092.98	2,345,651.81	52,929.86	9,196,674.65
Total Available for Disbursement	6,863,864.24	2,471,358.28	52,929.86	9,388,152.38
Disbursements	6,793,095.37	2,330,731.14	52,929.86	9,176,756.37
Ending Cash Balances - June 30, 2021	\$ 70,768.87	\$ 140,627.14	\$	\$ 211,396.01

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*Fiduciary Funds on Hand*  
*June 30, 2021*

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Civil Division	<u>\$ 525,555.90</u>
Total	<u><u>\$ 525,555.90</u></u>



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***Circuit Clerk's Fund***  
***Summary of Receipts, Disbursements and Balance***  
***November 1, 2016 through June 30, 2021***

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**Receipts**

Restitution Recovery Fees	\$ 23,754.87
Pretrial Diversion Fees	1,090.37
Municipal Court Solicitor's Fees	6,479.05
Copy Fees	18,402.58
Interest	977.18
Other	13,801.07
Total Receipts	<u>64,505.12</u>

**Disbursements**

Salaries	42,977.22
Travel and Conference Expenses	15,386.31
Office Supplies and Expenses	15,401.88
Contract Services	44,109.90
Other	2,302.64
Total Disbursements	<u>120,177.95</u>

Excess of Receipts Over/(Under) Disbursements (55,672.83)

Balance - November 1, 2016 108,106.46

Balance - June 30, 2021 \$ 52,433.63

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***Circuit Clerk's Judicial Administration Fund  
Summary of Receipts, Disbursements and Balance  
November 1, 2016 through June 30, 2021***

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**Receipts**

\$35 Bail Bond Fee	\$ 38,137.90
3.5% Bail Bond Fee	19,008.00
Criminal Docket Fees	27,324.25
Civil Docket Fees	33,327.37
Municipal Docket Fees	5,814.25
Other	856.53
Total Receipts	<u>124,468.30</u>

**Disbursements**

Salaries	64,109.43
Contract Services	29,777.12
Office Supplies and Expenses	3,737.37
Total Disbursements	<u>97,623.92</u>

Excess of Receipts Over/(Under) Disbursements 26,844.38

Balance - November 1, 2016 53,132.37

Balance - June 30, 2021 \$ 79,976.75