



COUNTY OF ONONDAGA

*Office of the County Comptroller*

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*Comptroller*

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August 19, 2019

Janet Park, Executive Director  
Edward Kochian President of the Board of Trustees  
Onondaga County Public Library  
447 South Salina Street  
Syracuse, New York 13202-2494

Dear Ms. Park & Mr. Kochian:

We performed a limited scope audit of the Onondaga County Public Library's (OCPL) petty cash (low cost purchases and change funds) and other cash collections maintained in the safe at the Central Library and various branches on April 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> 2019. We counted cash on hand held in the cash drawer and/or safe(s) at the various OCPL locations on those dates, including fees and other cash collections received but not yet deposited. Our scope included a review of internal controls and any other issues which came to our attention related to cash on hand.

We counted petty cash and cash collections, interviewed appropriate OCPL management and staff, evaluated internal controls, and planned and performed procedures to obtain reasonable assurance that the recorded petty cash balances and the transactions on these dates were being managed using proper cash handling practices and complying with the County's Petty Cash & Cash Management Policies.

The recorded petty cash account balances and the cash transactions are the responsibility of the Library's management. Our responsibility was to obtain an understanding of the policies/procedures (including internal controls over cash on hand and reconciliations), test internal controls over the petty cash and other cash funds, and review the transactions on the dates noted above. Our audit procedures included evaluating internal controls and examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the balances and transactions on the dates noted above.

## **Background**

The Onondaga County Public Library's (OCPL) Central Library and its Syracuse Branches are overseen by the OCPL Board of Trustees. According to the 2019 County Budget, OCPL strives to empower all to learn, create and contribute to society. To accomplish these goals OCPL works to ensure that all county residents are assured equal access to library services and materials. OCPL also offers youth literacy initiatives and other educational programs to library patrons. In addition to regular library services, OCPL offers the use of free public computers, access to 3D printers, recording and audio studios, sewing machines and a variety of programming.

OCPL operates the Central Library, eight branches and two satellite locations. These locations collect fees from overdue materials and other income and each utilizes a change fund to facilitate this process. The total of all the change funds authorized per County Legislative resolution for all locations is \$990. In addition, the OCPL has a low cost purchase (petty cash) fund of \$350.00.

At one time the Central Library had a Business Office which had administrative oversight of the low cost purchases fund and change funds and would make the deposits for the Central Library. We were informed this office has not been staffed since 2015 and Financial Operations is now responsible for their oversight.

This audit was prompted by the submission of a claim by the OCPL to the Comptroller's Office (CL #315099/Voucher #03167314), along with a police report, requesting reimbursement of stolen change funds. The theft of change funds was reported to police by OCPL Central Library Management. According to the police report, the theft occurred when an unauthorized person entered the Central Library through an unlocked door after business hours on March 11, 2019.

## **Findings:**

We have the following findings:

- At all locations a number of library staff collected fees and other income and therefore had access to change funds during library hours. The access to cash collections and change funds by multiple staff members creates a lack of accountability for both the cash collected and the change funds. Branch Libraries and satellite locations change funds range from \$10 - \$80 and the Central Library has \$170.
- Each library that collects fees and has change funds has an assigned reviewer (usually the head librarian for the branch). The reviewers are responsible for matching the total cash to be deposited per the Cash Receipts Transmittal Form to the appropriate documentation before making the deposit. The reviewers are not currently recounting the actual cash handed to them and matching it to the amount total prior making the deposit.
- Detailed documentation from the POLARIS Library System to support fines, printer fees (EnvisionWare), and other cash collections at the time of our cash counts was not made available to us.

- Fees or other cash collected was being held to supplement the change funds. As a result, cash was at times being held for more than one week before it was deposited, contrary to the established County Cash Management Policy. This occurred at the Central Library, Betts Branch Library, Mundy Branch Library, White Branch Library, and both satellites.
- All petty cash funds (low cost purchases and change funds) were in the custody of individuals who did not have a Designation of Petty Cash Custodian and Alternate Form or Designation of Petty Cash Custodian/Transfer of Petty Cash Custodian Responsibilities Form on file with Library Administration.
- Change funds are not counted on a daily basis and compared to recorded balances by an employee who is independent of the custody and management of the funds.
- When cash was transferred between library employees, accountability was not properly established by counting and signing for the cash.
- Library employees are responsible for the collection of money from the sale of books and other items donated to the Board of Trustees. The collection of cash from these sales was handled in different ways by the various branches (purchase of items at the branch, transmittal of collections to the Board of Trustees, etc.).

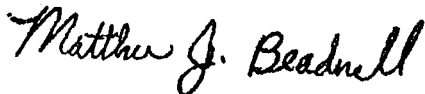
## **Recommendations**

We have the following recommendations for the OCPL Administration and Board of Trustees:

- For cash collections and change funds:
  - Within staffing constraints, limit the number of staff collecting fees and other income and using the change fund to one staff member per change fund. This will help establish accountability over both cash collections and the change fund.
  - Ensure that detailed documentation is available to support cash collections from fines, printer fees (EnvisionWare), and other cash collections.
  - Cash collected as fees or other revenue should not be held to supplement change funds. If additional change funds are necessary, they should be requested through Library Administration.
  - Reviewers should recount cash, match it to supporting documentation, and sign off on the form before transmitting cash for deposit.
  - Whenever cash is transferred from one library employee to another, proper accountability should be established by counting the cash with both present and documenting the exchange by both employees signing the documentation.
  - Deposit of fees and other cash collections should be done in conformance with the County's Cash Management & Revenue Practices policy.
  - OCPL Administration and/or County Financial Operations should monitor deposits for proper support; including detailed cash collection documentation, sign offs, and timeliness, etc.

- Complete and have on file updated Designation of Petty Cash Custodian and Alternate Forms, as well as, Designation of Petty Cash Custodian/Transfer of Petty Cash Custodian Responsibilities Form to support the actual current petty cash fund (low cost purchase and change funds) custodians.
- Designate an OCPL employee not connected with the petty cash (low cost purchase and change funds) to periodically count the funds and match the amount to the authorized amount. Any differences should be investigated and resolved by Library Administration.
- OCPL administration should consider a cash management training session with current employees and devise training protocols for new and newly promoted employees.
- The Board of Trustees should determine the proper use of the funds collected from donated items and establish a policy or directive on how library employees should collect, account for, and report these funds.
- Board of Trustees should consider developing, approving and implementing a cash management policy to supplement the County's Cash Management & Revenue Practices policy. The OCPL cash management policy could address many of our recommendations above and could provide more detailed guidance for OCPL management and employees.

Sincerely,



Matthew J. Beadnell  
Comptroller

Cc: Hon. J. Ryan McMahon, II, County Executive  
Steven P. Morgan, Chief Fiscal Officer  
Philip M. Britt, Deputy Director Financial Operations

Onondaga County Public  
**\* Libraries**

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Learn \* Explore \* Create

August 14, 2019

Matthew J. Beadnell  
Comptroller  
Office of the County Comptroller  
John H. Mulroy Civic Center  
421 Montgomery Street  
Syracuse, New York 13202

Dear Mr. Beadnell:

The Onondaga County Public Library (OCPL) Board of Trustees and OCPL Management wish to thank the Office of the County Comptroller for its thoughtful evaluation and recommendations. Though all monies were accounted for, OCPL Management recognizes the value of periodic review and strengthening of procedures. We are working to segregate duties and enhance oversight where possible, all while ensuring timely service for our library patrons. Formal cash handling policies and procedures are currently being drafted and will be reviewed in detail with the Central Library and each city branch library by a member of OCPL's management team. In addition, ongoing training will be provided to new employees. Management will investigate the availability of additional documentation through our Polaris and Envisionware systems. Management is in the process of collecting the required petty cash custodian designation forms and will be submitting them to the appropriate County personnel. Whenever appropriate, Management will work with county Financial Operations and the OCPL Board of Trustees in formalizing and implementing this response.

Respectfully submitted,



Janet F. Park  
Executive Director

Central Library located at 447 South Salina Street, Syracuse, NY 13202-2494  
Phone 315-435-1900 Fax 315-435-8533 [www.onlib.org](http://www.onlib.org) Janet Park, Executive Director

Beauchamp Branch \* Betts Branch \* Hazard Branch \* Mundy Branch  
Paine Branch \* Petit Branch \* Soule Branch \* White Branch