

2012 Audit Shows Longevity Pay Error

As reported originally by Newsday, 3/26/14

A dozen employees in various Suffolk County departments owe a total of \$34,790 because of payroll mistakes in calculating longevity pay, according to an audit by county Comptroller Joseph Sawicki.

The audit reviewed 2012 longevity payments for the 7,191 employees, who receive supplements to their salary for cumulative years of service. The longevity pay kicks in at varying intervals.

For police, longevity amounts to \$375 for every year of service from the sixth year on, including past service with other police agencies. For white- and blue-collar workers, longevity payments start at \$1,100 at year 10 and increase every five years to a maximum of \$2,450 at 30 years.

"If you consider 7,200 people, having just 12 mistakes is quite low," Sawicki said. "The mistakes are attributed to human mistake input error."

Sawicki said the audit was done as part of an ongoing review of the county payroll system. "It's good to let people know someone is watching and verifying the payroll records," he said.

The audit found the largest mistake involved a police officer who owes \$9,675 for the period 2008 to 2013 because of a typographical error. The officer's longevity date was incorrectly recorded as Sept. 15, 2002, instead of Sept. 12, 2005.

One part-time civilian police employee was overpaid \$7,325 from 2008 to 2012. The part-timer worked less than half-time and was not eligible for longevity payments.

A finance and tax department worker was overpaid \$4,300 from 2005 to 2008 because tax and finance did not properly account for a break in service between 1998 and 2001. A health department employee owed \$2,700 for payments made from 2003 to 2012 because an adjustment for a break in service from 1991 to 1997 was not made.

One police officer who was found to owe \$2,165 has voluntarily agreed to make repayment; and repayment letters were sent to the other employees on Friday, Sawicki said. — **RICK BRAND**