



Las Vegas

Agenda Item No.: 13.

**AGENDA SUMMARY PAGE**  
**AUDIT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING OF: APRIL 23, 2009**

DEPARTMENT: CITY AUDITOR'S OFFICE  
DIRECTOR: RADFORD SNEEDING

Consent  Discussion

SUBJECT: Discussion and possible action on the audit of Fire Prevention Division (1303-0809-06)

**Fiscal Impact:**

No Impact  Augmentation Required  
 Budget Funds Available

Amount:  
Funding Source:  
Dept./Division:

**PURPOSE/BACKGROUND:**

To review the audit report Audit of Fire Prevention Division (1303-0809-06). This audit was part of the authorized Audit Plan FY 2008-2009.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Approval

**BACKUP DOCUMENTATION:**

1. Audit of Fire Prevention Division (1303-0809-06)
2. Submitted after Final Agenda - PowerPoint Slides 15-20

Motion made by PAUL WORKMAN to Accept the report

Passed For: 4; Against: 0; Abstain: 0; Did Not Vote: 0; Excused: 1  
STEVE WOLFSON, PAUL WORKMAN, MICHAEL W. KERN, LOIS TARKANIAN;  
(Against-None); (Abstain-None); (Did Not Vote-None); (Excused-JOSE TRONCOSO)

**Minutes:**

Bryan Smith, the lead on this audit, reported on the background and findings using PowerPoint Slides 15-20. He expressed appreciation to Greg Gammon, Chief of Las Vegas Fire and Rescue, and Robert Bell, Fire Marshal, who were present, for their assistance and cooperation. He noted that Fire Prevention Management was supportive of the recommendations and well on its way to completing some of them.

Mr. Smith stated for Chairman Kern that no conflicts were identified. However, considering the potential for abuse of authority, he recommended that outside employment information be filtered down to Fire Prevention to avoid conflicts of interest in assignments.

Chairman Kern stated that a conflict of interest to him would be in the case of an inspector who accepts an invitation to an engagement being put on by the business that inspector is inspecting.

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Chief Gammon said that during the audit one employee was found to be working part-time with a sprinkler system company and another employee was teaching at the college, and he did not want any unfair influence during the hiring process. He noted that requests for inspectors to work part-time for sprinkler companies have been turned down.

Chairman Kern asked if the Hansen system is inefficient. Member Tarkanian stated that according to many of the staff members it is deficient. But many people must feel that it is efficient because they are still promoting it. Chief Gammon rejoined that he has been able to perform his job duties without the use of Hansen.

Mr. Smith stated that the mobile inspectors help provide a medium through which information can be gathered in the field and downloaded into Hansen. Chairman Kern observed that implementation of the use of Hansen is beginning to take place, but it may take up to two years to work as desired.

Fire Marshall Bell commented that the mobile highway system is designed to be used with the Hansen system. The information is entered into mobile tablets and then transferred to Hansen. Mr. Smith pointed out that this process will save the inspectors a lot of time because they will be able to input the information in the field, not have to come back to the office at the end of the day and input it.

Chairman Kern asked if a better software option has been identified for Las Vegas Fire and Rescue to use. Mr. Smith stated that there are departments struggling with the implementation of Hansen; however, Las Vegas Fire and Rescue has made great strides with it. But Hansen is not specific to the fire department; it is being used throughout the City.

Chairman Kern said that according to the report, Fire Prevention uses Hansen, but it feels that some of the deficiencies would go away if Hansen were not used. Chief Gammon stated that he learned about Hansen about four years ago and prefers not to use it. Fire Marshal Bell said that the fire department is learning to use it, although it has not been fully implemented.

Chairman Kern noted that the report states that according to the fire department, there might be better software packages that would aid in the efficiency of the fire department. Although Chairman Kern understands that a lot of money has been invested in Hansen, he suggested that supporting it might be an unwise ongoing expenditure if it does not meet the needs of the fire department. He felt that in this case, Las Vegas Fire and Rescue management is being crippled because it is being mandated to use software with inadequacies that do not permit the department to perform as expected and desired.

Member Tarkanian appreciated the candor of the employees in the fire department regarding Hansen, because every year thousands of dollars are spent to enable staff to help with the same recurring problems of Hansen. She commended Chief Gammon for voicing his opinion.

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Chairman Kern commented that he appreciates management's responses to the findings, but stressed that he was appointed to serve on this Committee to be bold and frank so that the auditors can accomplish their mission statement, and to be supportive of the departments from the internal auditors' perspective. It is up to the City to give staff what it needs to accomplish its tasks.

Deputy City Manager Sanchez stated that Hansen has been used by the City for many years. As a matter of example, he stated that the former director of Building and Safety was reluctant to use it, but the new director is very supportive of its use, which has proven to be very advantageous to the department because it is saving significant staff time. There was a lot of resistance when Hansen was first implemented because many of the departments utilized other preferred software, but often times the software did not communicate with Hansen. This hindered the ability to develop overall reports on true costs of projects.

Member Tarkanian noted that a lot of employees are having problems with Hansen, and it is more than just a lack of desire to use it, but they do not speak up. Chairman Kern stated that the concerns come through clearly in the report, but some jobs may need a solution, or the issues will continue.

Regarding Finding 6 (Post-Fire Inspections), Chairman Kern observed that Fire Prevention employees are not expected to participate until 2011. Chief Gammon indicated that recommendation was already implemented, however, he does not yet have a formal written policy for Fire Prevention to utilize, but the staff has been invited to sit in and offer input.

City Auditor Snelding commented that three different dates were identified for completion and Chief Gammon was informed that the first date would apply to the auditor's recommendation.

Mr. Smith noted that he has not started verifying completion of the recommendations. Typically, that would start following the report before the Committee.

City Auditor Snelding explained that recommendations on ICR's (Internal Control Reviews) are followed up quickly because they are considered critical. Dates on issues in performance audits are entered into a database and the auditors wait to be notified of their completion. Once completed, the auditors go out and verify in order to subsequently issue a release memorandum.

Regarding the potential for conflict, Member Workman stated there is an insidious side of conflict that was not included in the report. He cited an example in which an inspector waived a fee and gave an inspection more priority based on the owner of the establishment. This type of behavior is unacceptable. According to this report, however, staff members are moved around; Member Workman wondered if this is done in order to avoid unwanted behavior that has occurred in the past. Fire Marshall Bell stated that it is difficult to monitor such behavior, but fire inspectors are periodically rotated and reassigned to different locations throughout the City. However, if in monitoring the inspectors, management receives insight of such occurrences, immediate action would be taken.

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Chief Gammon noted that the inspectors often complain about Fire Marshal Bell holding them to the law and the code, so he takes that as a very good sign that Fire Marshal Bell has been doing an excellent job in his first eight months in the position.

