



**OFFICE OF AUDITOR OF STATE  
STATE OF IOWA**

Rob Sand  
Auditor of State

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Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0006

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**NEWS RELEASE**

FOR RELEASE

June 26, 2020

Contact: Ernest Ruben  
515/281-5834

Auditor of State Rob Sand today released an agreed-upon procedures report on the City of Mount Ayr, Iowa, for the period July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019. The agreed-upon procedures engagement was performed pursuant to Chapter 11.6 of the Code of Iowa.

Sand reported eight findings related to the receipt and disbursement of taxpayer funds. They are found on pages 7 through 9 of this report. The findings address a lack of segregation of duties, the lack of independent reviews of bank reconciliations, the lack of utility system reconciliations and business transactions which may represent a conflict of interest. Sand provided the City with recommendations to address each of the findings.

Four of the eight findings discussed above are repeated from the prior year. The City Council has a fiduciary responsibility to provide oversight of the City's operations and financial transactions. Oversight is typically defined as the "watchful and responsible care" a governing body exercises in its fiduciary capacity.

A copy of the agreed-upon procedures report is available for review on the Auditor of State's web site at <https://auditor.iowa.gov/audit-reports>.

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**CITY OF MOUNT AYR**  
**AUDITOR OF STATE'S INDEPENDENT REPORT**  
**ON APPLYING AGREED-UPON PROCEDURES**  
**FOR THE PERIOD**  
**JULY 1, 2018 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2019**

**City of Mount Ayr**



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June 17, 2020

Officials of the City of Mount Ayr  
Mount Ayr, Iowa

Dear Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council:

I am pleased to submit to you the agreed-upon procedures report for the City of Mount Ayr, Iowa, for the period July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019. The agreed-upon procedures engagement was performed pursuant to Chapter 11.6 of the Code of Iowa and in accordance with attestation standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the standards for attestation engagements contained in Government Auditing Standards.

I appreciate the cooperation and courtesy extended by the officials and employees of the City of Mount Ayr throughout the agreed-upon procedures engagement. If I or this office can be of any further assistance, please contact me or my staff at 515-281-5834.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Sand".

Rob Sand  
Auditor of State

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**City of Mount Ayr**

**Officials**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Term Expires</u>
Steven D. Fetty	Mayor	Jan 2020
Brad Elliott	Council Member	Jan 2020
Ken Robertson	Council Member	Jan 2020
Don Soliday	Council Member	Jan 2020
Mack Greene	Council Member	Jan 2022
Brent Ricker	Council Member	Jan 2022
Pamella Poore	City Clerk	Jan 2020
Amanda Cannon	Treasurer	Jan 2020
Richard Wilson	Attorney	Indefinite



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Auditor of State's Independent Report on Applying Agreed-Upon Procedures

To the Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council:

We performed the procedures below, which were established at Iowa Code Chapter 11.6, to provide oversight of Iowa cities. Accordingly, we have applied certain tests and procedures to selected accounting records and related information of the City of Mount Ayr for the period July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019 including procedures related to the City's compliance with certain Code of Iowa requirements identified below. The City of Mount Ayr's management, which agreed to the performance of the procedures performed, is responsible for compliance with these requirements and for the City's records.

This agreed-upon procedures engagement was conducted in accordance with attestation standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the standards for attestation engagements contained in Government Auditing Standards, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. The sufficiency of these procedures is solely the responsibility of those parties specified in the report. Consequently, we make no representation regarding the sufficiency of the procedures described below, either for the purpose for which this report has been requested or for any other purpose.

The procedures we performed are summarized as follows:

1. We observed selected City Council meeting minutes for compliance with Chapters 21, 372.13(6) and 380 of the Code of Iowa.
2. We obtained an understanding of the City's internal controls to determine if proper control procedures are in place and incompatible duties, from a control standpoint, are not performed by the same employee.
3. We observed surety bond coverage for compliance with Chapter 64 of the Code of Iowa.
4. We obtained and observed the City Clerk's financial reports and selected bank reconciliations to determine whether the bank balances properly reconciled to the general ledger account balances and monthly financial reports provided to the City Council.
5. We scanned City funds for consistency with the City Finance Committee's recommended Uniform Chart of Accounts (COA) and to determine required funds and fund balances are properly maintained and accurately accounted for.
6. We observed the City's fiscal year 2019 Annual Financial Report to determine whether it was completed and accurately reflects the City's financial information.
7. We scanned investments to determine compliance with Chapter 12B of the Code of Iowa.
8. We scanned depository resolutions, the City's investment policy and reporting of unclaimed property to the State of Iowa to determine compliance with Chapters 12C.2, 12B.10B and 556.1(12) of the Code of Iowa.

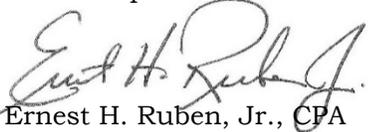
9. We scanned debt, including general obligation and revenue bonds/notes, and related transactions for proper authorization and compliance with Chapters 75, 384 and 403.9 of the Code of Iowa and to determine whether the debt and related proceeds and repayments were properly accounted for.
10. We scanned selected tax increment financing (TIF) transactions, including receipts, disbursements and transfers, for compliance and accurate accounting, including compliance with the TIF reporting requirements of Chapter 384.22 of the Code of Iowa.
11. We observed the City's TIF debt certification forms filed with the County Auditor, including requests for collection of reduced TIF amounts and to decertify certain TIF obligations, as applicable, for proper support and compliance with Chapter 403.19(6) of the Code of Iowa.
12. We traced selected receipts for accurate accounting and consistency with the recommended COA.
13. The City had not voter approved levies.
14. We traced selected disbursements to proper approval, adequate supporting documentation, accurate accounting and consistency with the recommended COA and compliance with the public purpose criteria established by Article III, Section 31 of the Constitution of the State of Iowa.
15. We traced transfers between funds to proper authorization and accurate accounting and to determine whether transfers were proper.
16. We traced selected payroll and related transactions to proper authorization and accurate accounting and determined whether payroll was proper.
17. We observed the annual certified budget for proper authorization, certification and timely amendment.

Based on the performance of the procedures described above, we identified various findings and recommendations for the City. Our findings and recommendations are described in the Detailed Findings and Recommendations section of this report. Unless reported in the Detailed Findings and Recommendations, items of non-compliance were not noted during the performance of the specific procedures listed above.

We were not engaged to and did not conduct an examination or review, the objective of which would be the expression of an opinion or conclusion, respectively, on specific accounting records and related information of the City, including compliance with specific Code of Iowa requirements. Accordingly, we do not express such an opinion or conclusion. Had we performed additional procedures, other matters might have come to our attention that would have been reported to you.

The purpose of this report is to report, in accordance with Chapter 11.6 of the Code of Iowa, certain agreed-upon procedures and the resulting findings and recommendations pertaining to selected accounting records and related information of the City, including the City's compliance with certain Code of Iowa requirements. This report is not suitable for any other purpose.

We would like to acknowledge the many courtesies and assistance extended to us by personnel of the City of Mount Ayr during the course of our agreed-upon procedures engagement. Should you have any questions concerning any of the above matters, we shall be pleased to discuss them with you at your convenience.

  
Ernest H. Ruben, Jr., CPA  
Director

June 17, 2020

**Detailed Findings and Recommendations**

City of Mount Ayr

Detailed Findings and Recommendations

For the period July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019

(A) Segregation of Duties – Management is responsible for establishing and maintaining internal control. A good system of internal control provides for adequate segregation of duties so no one individual handles a transaction from its inception to completion. In order to maintain proper internal control, duties should be segregated so the authorization, custody and recording of transactions are not under the control of the same employee. This segregation of duties helps prevent losses from employee error or dishonesty and maximizes the accuracy of the City's financial statements. Generally, one individual has control over each of the following areas for the City:

- (1) Cash – handling, reconciling and recording.
- (2) Investments – detailed recordkeeping, custody of investments and reconciling earnings.
- (3) Receipts – opening mail, collecting, depositing, recording, reconciling and posting.
- (4) Utilities – billing, collecting, depositing, posting and maintaining customer accounts.
- (5) Long-term debt – recordkeeping and reconciling.
- (6) Disbursements – purchasing, invoice processing, check writing, mailing, reconciling and recording.
- (7) Payroll – recordkeeping, preparing and distributing.
- (8) Financial reporting – preparing and reconciling.

Recommendation – We realize segregation of duties is difficult with a limited number of employees. However, the City should review its control procedures to obtain the maximum internal control possible under the circumstances utilizing currently available staff, including elected officials. Independent reviews of reconciliations should be documented by the signature or initials of the reviewer and the date of the review.

(B) Bank Reconciliations – The City's bank reconciliations were not reviewed by an independent person.

Recommendation – The City should establish procedures to ensure the bank reconciliations are reviewed by an independent person. The reviews should be documented by the signature or initials of the reviewer and the date of the review.

(C) Reconciliation of Utility Billings, Collections and Delinquent Accounts – Utility billings, collections and delinquent accounts were not properly reconciled throughout the year. Although the software generates a reconciliation report, all amounts in the report are not compared to the utility records to ensure accuracy. In addition, an independent person does not review and approve the reconciliation.

Recommendation – Procedures should be established to compare amounts on the software generated reconciliation report to utility records for accuracy. An independent person should review the reconciliations and adjustments and should monitor delinquent accounts. The review of the reconciliation should be documented by the signature or initials of the reviewer and the date of the review.

City of Mount Ayr

Detailed Findings and Recommendations

For the period July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019

(D) Journal Entries – Journal entries were not approved by an independent person for two of four transactions observed.

Recommendation – Journal entries should be approved by an independent person and evidence of the approval should be documented.

(E) Monthly City Clerk’s Report – The Monthly City Clerk’s reports do not include a comparison of total disbursements for all funds to the certified budget by function.

Recommendation – A comparison of budget to actual disbursements by function should be included in the monthly reports presented to the City Council for approval.

(F) Business Transactions – Business transactions between the City and City officials or employees which may represent conflicts of interest are detailed as follows:

Name, Title and Business Connection	Transaction Description	Amount
Brad Elliott, City Council Member, co-owner of Podium Ink	Decals, CDBG project sign, 5K event shirts and Little League t-shirts and jerseys	\$ 5,242

In accordance with Chapter 362.5(3)(k) of the Code of Iowa, the above transactions may represent a conflict of interest since total transactions were more than \$2,500 during the fiscal year and the transactions were not competitively bid.

Recommendation – The City should consult legal counsel to determine the disposition of this matter.

(G) Questionable Disbursements – In accordance with Article III, Section 31 of the Iowa Constitution and an Attorney General’s opinion dated April 25, 1979, public funds may only be spent for public benefit. Certain disbursements were noted which we believe may not meet the requirements of public purpose as defined in the Attorney General’s opinion since the public benefits to be derived have not been clearly documented. These disbursements are detailed as follows:

Paid to	Purpose	Amount
Mya Sackett	Cupcakes for council meeting as farewell gesture to council member	\$ 24

According to the opinion, it is possible for certain disbursements to meet the test of serving a public purpose under certain circumstances, although such items will certainly be subject to a deserved close scrutiny. The line to be drawn between a proper and an improper purpose is very thin.

Recommendation – The City Council should determine and document the public purpose served by these types of disbursements prior to authorizing any further payments. If this practice is continued, the City should establish written policies and procedures, including the requirements for proper public purpose documentation.

City of Mount Ayr

Staff

(H) Revenue Bonds – The provisions of the City’s water revenue bond resolution require sufficient monthly transfers be made to a separate water revenue bond sinking account to provide for the payment of the bond principal and interest payments when due. The City has not established the required sinking account.

Recommendation – The City should establish a water revenue sinking account and make required transfers to the account.

City of Mount Ayr

Staff

This engagement was performed by:

Ernest H. Ruben, Jr., CPA, Director  
Selina V. Johnson, CPA, Senior Auditor II  
Nichole D. Tucker, Staff Auditor  
Tristan M. Swiggum, Assistant Auditor