



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

Rob Sand  
Auditor of State

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**NEWS RELEASE**

FOR RELEASE

November 17, 2020

Contact: Ernest Ruben  
515/281-5834

Auditor of State Rob Sand today released an agreed-upon procedures report on the City of Hills, Iowa for the period July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020. The agreed-upon procedures engagement was performed pursuant to Chapter 11.6 of the Code of Iowa.

Sand reported two findings related to the receipt and disbursement of taxpayer funds. They are found on page 7 of this report. The findings address a lack of segregation of duties and the lack of effective control of dual signatures on checks. Sand provided the City with recommendations to address each of the findings.

The two 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 HILLS**  
**AUDITOR OF STATE'S INDEPENDENT REPORT**  
**ON APPLYING AGREED-UPON PROCEDURES**  
**FOR THE PERIOD**  
**JULY 1, 2019 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2020**

**City of Hills**



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October 26, 2020

Officials of the City of Hills  
Hills, 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 Hills, Iowa, for the period July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020. 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 Hills 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 that reads "Rob Sand". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Rob Sand  
Auditor of State

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**City of Hills**

**Officials**

**(Before January 2020)**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Expires</u>
Tim Kemp	Mayor	Jan 2020
Steve Harris	Council Member	Jan 2020
Merle Hill	Council Member	Jan 2020
Cathy Knebel	Council Member	Jan 2020
Christine Peters	Council Member	Jan 2022
Teresa Volk	Council Member	Jan 2022
Cathy Fitzmaurice-Hill	City Administrator	Indefinite
Erek Sittig	Attorney	Jan 2020

**(After January 2020)**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Term Expires</u>
Tim Kemp	Mayor	Jan 2022
Christine Peters	Council Member	Jan 2022
Teresa Volk	Council Member	Jan 2022
Merle Hill	Council Member	Jan 2024
Cathy Knebel	Council Member	Jan 2024
Guy Sommers	Council Member	Jan 2024
Cathy Fitzmaurice-Hill	City Administrator	Indefinite
Erek Sittig	Attorney	Jan 2021



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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 procedures to selected accounting records and related information of the City of Hills for the period July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020, including procedures related to the City's compliance with certain Code of Iowa requirements identified below. The City of Hills' 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 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.

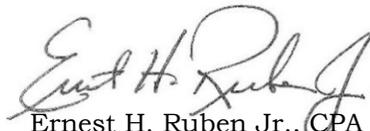
7. We scanned debt, including general obligation and revenue bonds/notes, and related transactions for proper authorization and compliance with Chapters 75, 384 and 403.9 of the Code of Iowa and to determine whether the debt and related proceeds and repayments were properly accounted for.
8. The City had no TIF.
9. We traced selected receipts to accurate accounting and consistency with the recommended COA.
10. The City had no voter approved levies.
11. 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.
12. We traced transfers between funds to proper authorization and accurate accounting and to determine whether transfers were proper.
13. We traced selected payroll and related transactions to proper authorization and accurate accounting and to determine whether payroll was proper.
14. 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 Hills 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

October 26, 2020

## **Detailed Findings and Recommendations**

City of Hills

Detailed Findings and Recommendations

For the period July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020

(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 – recordkeeping, investing, custody of investments and reconciling earnings.
- (3) Receipts – opening mail, collecting, depositing, recording, reconciling and posting.
- (4) Utilities – billing, collecting, depositing, reconciling, posting and maintaining detailed accounts receivable and write-off records.
- (5) Disbursements – purchasing, invoice processing, check writing, signing checks, mailing and recording.
- (6) Payroll – entering rates into the system, recordkeeping, preparing, approving, signing and distributing.
- (7) Debt – recordkeeping, compliance and debt payment processing.

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) Dual Signatures on Checks – City policy requires dual signatures on all checks. However, when checks are printed, the Mayor’s “dual” signature is automatically printed on the checks, negating the intended control of an independent countersignature.

Recommendation – The City should comply with City policy requiring dual signatures on all checks. Checks should be prepared and signed by one individual and then the supporting vouchers and invoices should be made available, along with the check, to the second or independent individual for review and countersignature.

City of Hills

Staff

This engagement was performed by:

Ernest H. Ruben, Jr., CPA, Director  
Deborah J. Moser, CPA, Manager  
Maria R. Collins, Staff Auditor  
Tristan J. Swiggum, Assistant Auditor