

OFFICE OF AUDITOR OF STATE
STATE OF IOWA

State Capitol Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0004
Telephone (515) 281-5834 Facsimile (515) 281-6518

Rob Sand
Auditor of State

NEWS RELEASE

FOR RELEASE

March 24, 2021

Contact: Ernest Ruben
515/281-5834

Auditor of State Rob Sand today released an agreed-upon procedures report on the City of Blue Grass, 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 seven findings related to the receipt and disbursement of taxpayer funds. They are found on pages 7 and 8 of this report. The findings address issues such as a lack of segregation of duties, Fire Department bank account held outside of the City's control, the lack of bank reconciliations for the Fire Department account and disbursements exceeding budgeted amounts. Sand provided the City with recommendations to address each of the findings.

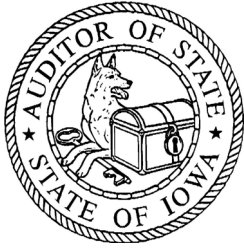
Six of the seven findings discussed above are repeated from the prior year. The City Council has a fiduciary responsibility to provide oversight of the City's operations and financial transactions. Oversight is typically defined as the "watchful and responsible care" a governing body exercises in its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

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CITY OF BLUE GRASS
AUDITOR OF STATE'S INDEPENDENT REPORT
ON APPLYING AGREED-UPON PROCEDURES
FOR THE PERIOD
JULY 1, 2019 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2020

City of Blue Grass



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Rob Sand
Auditor of State

March 15, 2021

Officials of the City of Blue Grass
Blue Grass, 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 Blue Grass, 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 Blue Grass 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, with the first letters of the first and last names being prominent.

Rob Sand
Auditor of State

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City of Blue Grass

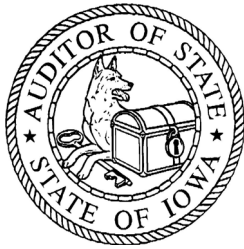
Officials

(Before January 2020)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Term Expires</u>
Larry D. Guy	Mayor	Jan 2020
Brad Schutte	Council Member/Mayor Pro Tem	Jan 2020
Lisa Smith	Council Member	Jan 2020
Bonnie Strong	Council Member	Jan 2020
Donna Kinzer	Council Member	Jan 2022
Emilyne Slagle	Council Member	Jan 2022
Ann Schmidt	City Clerk/Treasurer	Indefinite
William McCullough	Attorney	Indefinite

(After January 2020)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Term Expires</u>
Brad Schutte	Mayor	Jan 2022
Donna Kinzer	Council Member/Mayor Pro Tem	Jan 2022
Emilyne Slagle	Council Member	Jan 2022
Chad Brus	Council Member	Jan 2024
Chris Jepsen	Council Member	Jan 2024
Matt Sampson	Council Member	Jan 2024
Ann Schmidt	City Clerk/Treasurer	Indefinite
William McCullough	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 procedures to selected accounting records and related information of the City of Blue Grass 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 Blue Grass' 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 2020 Annual Financial Report to determine whether it was completed and accurately reflects the City's financial information.
7. The City had no investments.
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.

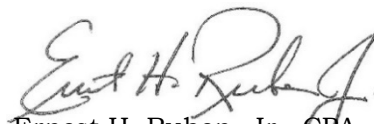
9. We scanned debt, including general obligation and revenue bonds/notes, and related transactions for proper authorization and compliance with Chapters 75, 384 and 403.9 of the Code of Iowa and to determine whether the debt and related proceeds and repayments were properly accounted for.
10. We scanned 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 no voter approved levies.
14. We traced selected disbursements for 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 determined whether transfers were proper.
16. We traced selected payroll and related transactions for 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 Blue Grass 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

March 15, 2021

Detailed Findings and Recommendations

City of Blue Grass

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) Receipts – opening mail, collecting, depositing, recording, reconciling and posting.
- (3) Disbursements – purchasing, invoice processing, check writing, mailing, reconciling and recording.
- (4) Debt – recordkeeping, compliance and debt payment processing.
- (5) Payroll – recordkeeping, preparing and distributing.
- (6) Utilities – billing, collecting, depositing and posting.

For the Blue Grass Fire Department, one person has control over each of the following areas:

- (1) Receipts – collecting, depositing, posting and reconciling.
- (2) Disbursements – posting, reconciling and check writing.
- (3) Cash – handling and recording cash.

Recommendation – We realize segregation of duties is difficult with a limited number of employees. However, the City and the Fire Department should review their control procedures to obtain the maximum internal control possible under the circumstances utilizing currently available staff, including elected officials.

- (B) Separately Maintained Records – Chapter 384.20 of the Code of Iowa states, in part, “A city shall keep accounts which show an accurate and detailed statement of all public funds collected, received, or expended for any city purpose, by any city officer, employee, or other person, and which show the receipt, use, and disposition of all city property.”

The City Fire Department maintains a bank account for activity separate from the City Clerk's accounting records. While this Department is part of the City, the transactions and the resulting balances were not included in the City's accounting records and were not included in the City's annual budget, monthly financial reports or Annual Financial Reports.

In addition, the transactions and resulting balances of this account were not reported to the City Council and disbursements from this account were not reviewed and approved by the City Council. Also, a summary of the account's receipts, total disbursements and the listings of claims allowed each month were not published in accordance with Chapter 372.13(6) of the Code of Iowa.

City of Blue Grass

Detailed Findings and Recommendations

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

Recommendation – In accordance with Chapter 384.20 of the Code of Iowa, and to strengthen internal control and increase operating efficiencies, the financial transactions of the Fire Department separate account should be integrated with the City’s accounting records in the City Clerk’s office. The financial activity should be included in the City Clerk’s accounting records, monthly financial reports and the Annual Financial Reports. The activity in these accounts should be subject to City Council review and approval and should be included in the City’s budget process. A summary of each account’s receipts, total disbursements and listings of claims allowed each month should be published, as required.

- (C) Fire Department Bank Reconciliations – The cash balance for the Fire Department was not reconciled to the bank account balance throughout the year. For the two months observed, the book balance agreed to the bank balance.

Recommendation – The Fire Department should establish procedures to ensure all bank account balances are reconciled to the general ledger monthly and variances, if any, are reviewed and resolved timely. An independent person should review the reconciliations and document the review by signing or initialing and dating the monthly reconciliations.

- (D) Disbursements – For four of ten Fire Department disbursements observed, a total of \$91 in sales tax was improperly paid.

Recommendation – Procedures should be established to ensure the City does not pay sales tax.

- (E) Disaster Recovery Plan – The City does not have a written disaster recovery plan.

Recommendation – A written disaster recovery plan should be developed and tested periodically.

- (F) Journal Entry Approval – The City has established procedures for the review and approval of journal entries by an independent person. However, for the three months observed, the journal entries report did not contain the signature or initials of an independent reviewer.

Recommendation – The City should follow established procedures and ensure journal entries are reviewed and approved timely by an independent person and evidence of the approval should be documented by the signature or initials of the reviewer and the date of the review.

- (G) Certified Budget – Disbursements during the year ended June 30, 2020 exceeded the amount budgeted by \$56,025 in the public safety function prior to the budget amendment. Chapter 384.20 of the Code of Iowa states, in part, “public monies may not be expended or encumbered except under an annual or continuing appropriation.”

Recommendation – The budget should have been amended in accordance with Chapter 384.18 of the Code of Iowa before disbursements were allowed to exceed the budget.

City of Blue Grass

Staff

This engagement was performed by:

Ernest H. Ruben, Jr., CPA, Director
Michelle B. Meyer, CPA, Manager
David A Slocum, CPA, Staff Auditor
Matthew R. Baumhover, Assistant Auditor