

OFFICE OF AUDITOR OF STATE
STATE OF IOWA

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR RELEASE

October 27, 2021

Contact: Ernest Ruben
515/281-5834

Auditor of State Rob Sand today released an agreed-upon procedures report on the City of Harris, Iowa, for the period January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020. The agreed-upon procedures engagement was performed pursuant to Chapter 11.6 of the Code of Iowa.

Sand reported thirteen findings related to the receipt and disbursement of taxpayer funds. They are found on pages 9 through 12 of this report. The findings address issues such as a lack of segregation of duties, the lack of a written investment policy and lack of a resolution naming official depositories, unclaimed property that was not sent to the Office of Treasurer of State, reconciliations not being reviewed by an independent person, disbursements exceeding budgeted amounts, and transfers not approved by resolution. Sand provided the City with recommendations to address each of the findings.

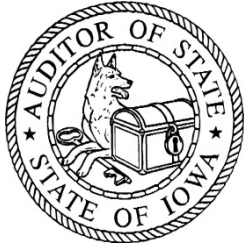
The City Council has a fiduciary responsibility to provide oversight of the City's operations and financial transactions. Oversight is typically defined as the "watchful and responsible care" a governing body exercises in its fiduciary capacity.

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 HARRIS
AUDITOR OF STATE'S INDEPENDENT REPORT
ON APPLYING AGREED-UPON PROCEDURES
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2020 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2020

City of Harris



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Rob Sand
Auditor of State

October 1, 2021

Officials of the City of Harris
Harris, 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 Harris, Iowa, for the period January 1, 2020 through December 31, 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 Harris 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". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "R" and a long, sweeping "S".

Rob Sand
Auditor of State

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City of Harris

Officials

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Term Began</u>	<u>Term Expires</u>
Dean Phillips	Mayor	Jan 2020	Jan 2022
Jeff Loring	Council Member	Jan 2018	Jan 2022
Russ Meier	Council Member	Jan 2018	Jan 2022
Wayne Boyer	Council Member	Jan 2020	Jan 2024
Donna McMillan	Council Member	Jan 2020	Jan 2024
Amy Muftah	Council Member	Jan 2020	Jan 2024
Holly Wilson	City Clerk		Indefinite
Daniel E. Dekoter	Attorney		Indefinite

City of Harris



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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 Harris for the period January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020, including procedures related to the City's compliance with certain Code of Iowa requirements identified below. The City of Harris' 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 City of Harris' management has agreed to and acknowledged that the procedures performed are appropriate to meet the intended purpose to report, in accordance with Chapter 11.6 of the Code of Iowa, 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 may not be suitable for any other purpose. The procedures performed may not address all the items of interest to a user of this report and may not meet the needs of all users of this report and, as such, users are responsible for determining whether the procedures performed are appropriate for their purposes.

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. 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. The City had no TIF.
11. We traced selected receipts to accurate accounting and consistency with the recommended COA.
12. We traced voter approved levies to proper authorization in accordance with Chapter 384.12 of the Code of Iowa.
13. 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.
14. We traced transfers between funds to proper authorization and accurate accounting and to determine whether transfers were proper.
15. We traced selected payroll and related transactions to proper authorization and accurate accounting and determined whether payroll was proper.
16. We observed the annual certified budget for proper authorization, certification and timely amendment.

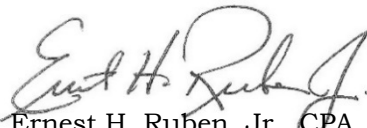
Based on the performance of the procedures described above, we identified various findings and recommendations for the City. Our findings and recommendations are described in the Detailed Findings and Recommendations section of this report. Unless reported in the Detailed Findings and Recommendations,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

We were engaged by the City of Harris' management to perform this agreed-upon procedures engagement and conducted our engagement in accordance with attestation standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. We were not engaged to and did not conduct an examination or review engagement, 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.

We are required to be independent of the City of Harris and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements related to our agreed-upon procedures engagement.

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 Harris 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 1, 2021

Detailed Findings and Recommendations

City of Harris

Detailed Findings and Recommendations

For the period January 1, 2020 through December 31, 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. Accounting system – performing all general accounting functions, including journal entries and having custody of assets.
2. Investments – recordkeeping, investing, custody of investments and reconciling earnings.
3. Cash – handling, reconciling, and recording.
4. Debt – recordkeeping, compliance and debt payment processing.
5. Receipts – opening mail, collecting, depositing, recording, reconciling and posting.
6. Utilities – billing, collecting, depositing, posting and maintaining accounts receivable and write-offs.
7. Disbursements – purchasing, invoice processing, check writing, mailing, reconciling and recording.
8. Payroll – entering rates into the system, recordkeeping, preparing, signing and distributing.
9. 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 and journal entries should be evidenced by the signature or initials of the reviewer and the date of the review.

(B) City Fire Department – All accounting functions are handled by one individual without adequate compensating controls.

Recommendation – The City Fire Department should segregate accounting duties to the extent possible utilizing currently available staff, including elected officials.

(C) Deposits and Investments – The City has not adopted a written investment policy as required by Chapter 12B.10B of the Code of Iowa. In addition, a resolution naming official depositories has not been adopted by the City Council as required by Chapter 12C.2 of the Code of Iowa.

Recommendation – The City should adopt a written investment policy which complies with the provisions of Chapter 12B.10B of the Code of Iowa. The City Council, by resolution, should adopt a depository resolution which establishes maximum deposit amounts as required by Chapter 12C.2 of the Code of Iowa.

City of Harris

Detailed Findings and Recommendations

For the period January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020

- (D) Unclaimed Property – Chapter 556.11 of the Code of Iowa requires all cities to report and remit outstanding obligations, including checks, trusts and bonds held for more than two years, to the Office of Treasurer of State annually. The City did not remit all outstanding obligations held for more than two years to the Office of Treasurer of State.

Recommendation – Outstanding obligations should be reviewed annually and items over two years old should be remitted to the Office of the Treasurer of State, as required.

- (E) Payment of General Obligation Bonds – Chapter 384.4 of the Code of Iowa states, in part, “Moneys pledged or available to service general obligation bonds, and received from sources other than property taxes, must be deposited in the debt service fund.” During the period observed, the general obligation debt payments were paid from the Enterprise, Sewer Fund.

Recommendation – In the future, the City should establish a Debt Service Fund and transfer from the Enterprise, Sewer Fund to the Debt Service Fund to pay the general obligation bond debt.

- (F) Reconciliation of Utility Billings, Collections, and Delinquent Accounts – Although a reconciliation of utility billings, collections, and delinquent accounts is generated within the accounting software the City does not verify the billings, collections and other reconciling items and the reconciliation is not reviewed by an independent person.

Recommendation – The City should establish procedures to ensure the system generated reconciliation of utility billings, collections and delinquent accounts is accurate. The City Council or other independent person designated by the City Council should review the reconciliations and monitor delinquent accounts. The review should be documented by the signature or initials of the reviewer and the date of the review.

- (G) Electronic Check Retention – Chapter 554D.114 of the Code of Iowa allows the City to retain cancelled checks in an electronic format and requires retention in this manner to include images of both front and back of each cancelled check. The City does not receive an image of the back of each cancelled check.

Recommendation – The City should obtain and retain images of both the front and back of cancelled checks for each City bank account as required.

- (H) Transfers – Rule 545-2.5 of the Iowa Administrative Code requires transfers between funds be passed by resolution and include a clear statement of the reason or purpose for the transfer, the name of the affected funds and the dollar amount to be transferred. We noted one transfer not approved by resolution, as required.

Recommendation – The City should comply with Rule 545-2.5 of the Iowa Administrative Code.

City of Harris

Detailed Findings and Recommendations

For the period January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020

- (I) Certified Budget – Disbursement during the year ended June 30, 2020 exceeded the budgeted amounts in the public safety, public works, and community and economic development functions by \$8,649, \$25,539 and \$56, respectively. Chapter 384.20 of the Code of Iowa states, in part, “public money 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.

- (J) Accounting Policies and Procedures Manual – The City does not have a written accounting policies and procedures manual.

Recommendation – An accounting policies and procedures manual should be developed to provide the following benefits:

- (1) Aid in training additional or replacement staff.
- (2) Help achieve uniformity in accounting and in the application of policies and procedures.
- (3) Save supervisory time by recording decisions so they will not have to be made each time the same, or similar, situation arises.

- (K) Surety Bond Coverage – Surety Bond coverage for City officials and employees was not maintained as required by Chapter 64 of the Code of Iowa.

Recommendation – The City should obtain surety bond coverage in compliance with Chapter 64 of the Code of Iowa and periodically review the coverage for adequacy.

- (L) Prenumbered Receipts – Prenumbered receipts were not issued by the City.

Recommendation – Prenumbered receipts should be issued for all collections to provide additional control over the proper collection and recording of all receipts.

- (M) 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 of Harris Fire Department maintains a bank account for activity separate from the City Clerk’s accounting records. While the 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 the account were not reviewed and approved by the City Council. Also, a summary of the account receipts, total disbursement and the listing of claims allowed each month were not published in accordance with Chapter 372.13(6) of the Code of Iowa.

City of Harris

Detailed Findings and Recommendations

For the period January 1, 2020 through December 31, 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’s 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 this account should be subject to City Council review and approval and should be included in the City’s budget process. Also, a summary of the account’s receipts, total disbursements and listings of claims allowed each month should be published, as required.

City of Harris

Staff

This engagement was performed by:

Ernest H. Ruben, Jr., CPA, Director
Ryan J. Pithan, CPA, Manager
Maria R. Collins, Staff Auditor