

MINUTES OF ROANOKE CITY COUNCIL AUDIT COMMITTEE

October 1, 2007

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting of the Audit Committee of Roanoke City Council was called to order in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC Room) of the Noel C. Taylor Municipal Building at 11:13 a.m. with Chairman, Sherman P. Lea, presiding.

- **The roll was called by Mrs. England**

Audit Committee

Members Present: Sherman P. Lea, Chair
David B. Trinkle, Vice-Chair
Alfred T. Dowe, Jr.
Beverly T. Fitzpatrick, Jr.
Gwendolyn W. Mason

Audit Committee

Members Absent: Mayor C. Nelson Harris
Brian J. Wishneff

Others Present:

Drew Harmon, Municipal Auditor
William M. Hackworth, City Attorney
Jesse A. Hall, Director of Finance
Darlene Burcham, City Manager
James Grigsby, Asst. City Manager/Operations
Brian Townsend, Asst. City Mgr./Community Development
Roger Manuel, Fire/EMS Battalion Chief
Mike Guzo, Emergency Services Coordinator
Dana Long, Manager of Billings & Collections
Melinda Mayo, Public Information Officer
Dawn Hope, Assistant Municipal Auditor
Cheryl Ramsey, Senior Auditor
Doris England, Administrative Assistant
(4) Citizens

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JUNE 4, 2007, MEETING

Chairman Lea asked if there were any corrections or amendments to the minutes of the June 4, 2007, Audit Committee meeting. There were none. Ms. Mason moved and Mr. Trinkle seconded that the minutes be approved as

distributed. A vote was taken and the motion carried. The minutes will be placed on the Consent Agenda for the next City Council meeting.

3. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

A. Alarm Registration Program

Chairman Lea ordered that item A be received and filed. There were no objections to the order. Chairman Lea recognized Mr. Harmon for comments on the audit report. Mr. Harmon explained that the alarm registration program became effective in the City of Roanoke on January 1, 2004, for alarm company operators and commercial alarm system users to register their alarms. The goal of the ordinance was to provide current contact information for the city's response to alarms and to reduce false alarms. Mr. Harmon stated this audit examined the processes in place for the registration and billing of the alarm program for both Fire and Police Departments. It did not examine the effectiveness of the program in reducing false alarms.

Mr. Harmon stated there were three findings in the report and other, less significant, items were discussed with management. It was found that the Fire and Police Departments were not assessing registrations, renewals, and fines in the same manner. Applicable City Code did not provide the clarity necessary to determine the proper procedures for administering the alarm programs.

During the course of the audit, the Fire and Police Departments, along with Billings & Collections (which administers the city's centralized billing service), formed a committee to evaluate the process. The City Attorney's office and the Department of Technology are assisting in this endeavor. The committee was formed to collaboratively revise the ordinance and make it clearer. Mr. Harmon stated he thought the committee had a revision almost ready to present to City Council.

Ms. Burcham stated that having the two ordinances, one for Police and one for Fire/EMS, had resulted in a significant reduction in false alarms responded to by the Police, thus freeing up law enforcement to respond to other calls. She emphasized the ordinances were not created to make money for the city through the fines, but to reduce the number of false alarms. She could not speak to a reduction in false alarms in the Fire Department, but stated that Mr. Grigsby possibly could. Mr. Grigsby stated there was a reduction in false alarms from some of the chronic abusers. Ms. Burcham said the ordinance changes would soon be brought before City Council, probably in about 30 days.

Chairman Lea commented on the large number of false alarms occurring within the city. Ms. Burcham responded that there have been very few appeals from people cited for violations. She further stated that the city's goal is to reduce the number of false alarms as much as possible in order to conserve city resources and enable appropriate responses to valid emergencies.

4. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Roanoke City Council Audit Committee Annual Report – June 30, 2007

Chairman Lea ordered item A to be received and filed. There were no objections to the order.

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

A. Letter from Auditor of Public Accounts

Chairman Lea ordered that item A be received and filed. There were no objections to the order. Chairman Lea recognized Mr. Harmon for comments. Mr. Harmon stated this was in conjunction with the audit of the Clerk of the Circuit Court. Municipal Auditing does a portion of this audit, and the Auditor of Public Accounts (APA) does the remainder. This letter from the APA states there were no reportable conditions or instances of noncompliance that were required to be reported.

6. OTHER BUSINESS:

A. Audit Activity Report

Chairman Lea ordered item A to be received and filed. There were no objections to the order. Chairman Lea recognized Mr. Harmon for comments. Mr. Harmon explained that revisions to government auditing standards require adequate communication with the governing body related to activities of the auditing function. The audit activity report is intended to meet this standard and will be developed to include additional information in the future.

Chairman Lea thanked Mr. Harmon for the report and commended the department on its work. He acknowledged the committee's support of development activities, such as participating on peer reviews of other

localities, that contribute to improving auditing processes at the city. The report was received and filed.

7. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Sherman P. Lea, Chair