



LOUISIANA LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR  
DARYL G. PURPERA, CPA, CFE

April 15, 2020

The Honorable Roger Corcoran, Chief of Police  
City of Central  
13505 Hooper Road  
Central, Louisiana 70818

Dear Chief Corcoran:

As you are aware, my Investigative Audit Services staff visited the City of Central's Police Department to examine certain agency records. This letter briefly summarizes the results of our work. We stress the importance of addressing these issues and encourage you to consider our recommendations as you work to resolve the issue identified below.

### **Failure to Maintain Records Showing Use of Donated Ammunition**

A United States Government agency donated 86,400 rounds of 5.56mm XM855 rifle ammunition to the Central Police Department (CPD). The previous police chief, who received the donation in June 2015, told us: (1) CPD officers used some of the ammunition for practice; (2) he exchanged some of the ammunition for pistol ammunition with a local firearms store; (3) 5,400 rounds of the ammunition were damaged during the August 2016 flood and discarded; (4) the remaining ammunition was at CPD when he left office in 2019; and (5) he obtained three quotes before trading the ammunition. He also told us that officers could get ammunition to practice whenever they wanted; however, CPD failed to maintain records of the receipt and use of the ammunition. Moreover, the former police chief told us the City Council did not approve an ordinance before he exchanged the property. Louisiana Revised Statute 33:4712<sup>1</sup> requires an ordinance before transactions involving property.

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<sup>1</sup> **Louisiana Revised Statute 33:4712** provides, in part: (A) A municipality may sell, lease for a term of up to ninety-nine years, exchange, or otherwise dispose of, to or with other political corporations of this state, or private persons, at public or private sale, any property, or portions thereof, including real property, which is, in the opinion of the governing authority, not needed for public purposes. (B) Except as otherwise provided in this Section, before disposition can be made of property under the provisions of this Subpart, an ordinance must be introduced, giving the reasons for the action on the part of the governing authority, and fixing the minimum price and terms of the sale, lease, exchange, or other contract to be made with reference to the property....”

The former police chief said CPD did not have enough room to store all 86,400 rounds at its facilities, and that some of the ammunition was stored in CPD's command center (a double-axle, enclosed trailer). He also told us that the command center was stored at a now former CPD officer's private business, and the ammunition was moved from the command center to the former officer's business when the command center was used at public events. The former officer told us that he moved the ammunition around as the CPD had space.

We confirmed that the previous police chief traded 10,800 rounds of the donated rifle ammunition for pistol ammunition, rifle parts, and several ammunition cans with a firearms store. We interviewed several current and former CPD officers who provided us with an estimate of the number of rounds they fired. Several of the current and former officers told us the CPD kept no records of the use of the ammunition. The total estimated number of rounds fired for training and practice by all of the officers was 35,300. However, the former police chief and two former CPD officers estimated they shot 30,000 rounds (85%) of the total estimate of 35,300 rounds.

The following table summarizes the use and inventory of the ammunition, according to available records and the explanations provided by the former police chief and CPD officers:

<b>Donated 5.56mm XM855 Ammunition</b>		
	<b>Number of Rounds</b>	<b>Value at March 2020 (\$0.31/round)</b>
Donation	86,400	\$26,784
Estimate of Rounds Fired by Nine CPD Officers	(5,300)	(1,643)
Estimate of Rounds Fired by Former Police Chief and Two CPD Officers	(30,000)	(9,300)
Exchanged with Firearms Store	(10,800)	(3,348)
Remaining Inventory at CPD as of October 13, 2019	(10,667)	(3,307)
Damaged/Discarded Due to August 2016 Flood	(5,400)	(1,674)
<b>No. of Rounds Unaccounted for</b>	<b>24,233</b>	<b>\$7,512</b>

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### **Recommendations**

We recommend management (1) maintain a log of the use of its ammunition, (2) store all CPD property at CPD-owned facilities, and (3) comply with state law when property is sold or exchanged.

This correspondence represents our findings and recommendations. This correspondence is intended primarily for the information and use of management. I trust this information will assist you in the efficient and effective operation of the CPD. If you have any questions, please contact Kevin Kelley or Lauren Whatley at (225) 339-3800.

Sincerely,



Daryl G. Purpera, CPA, CFE  
Legislative Auditor

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## APPENDIX A

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### Central Police Department's Response





# POLICE

CITY OF CENTRAL  
LOUISIANA



Roger L. Corcoran  
Chief of Police

Darren Sibley  
Asst. Chief of Police

March 30, 2020

To: Daryl G. Purpera  
Louisiana Legislative Auditor

Roger W. Harris  
Assistant Louisiana Legislative Auditor

From: Roger L. Corcoran  
Chief of Police  
Central Police Department

Ref: Legislative Audit of Central Police Department

Dear Sir,

I would like to thank you and your staff of auditors for conducting an audit of the Central Police Department, after a request was filed by myself as I was taking office as the newly elected Police Chief. This request was made to protect the department along with myself as the new Chief of Police.

As this investigation started your investigative auditors met with me and I informed them of allegations of a large amount of missing ammo, missing property, the Chief of Police James Salsbury using his own company to install emergency equipment in departmental units with no paper trail back to his business. The company listed above is Central Safety Incorporated, owned by former chief, James Salsbury and former Central Police reserve officer, Lt. Jeffery Behrnes.

When initially speaking to your investigators, I informed them that it was alleged that 84,000 rounds of armor piercing rifle ammo had been donated to the Central Police Department by the United States Marshals Office, signed for by Chief Salsbury. Chief Salsbury was also supposed to have traded approx. 10,000 rounds of this ammo to Jim's Firearms for practice and duty ammo for departmental use.

After taking office, I had located only approx. 10,000 rounds of the ammo in the evidence room with no documentation of the donating agency, who signed for ammo, and no date of donation. There was absolutely no documentation of the Police Department receiving the ammo, yet there was proof the ammo had excited, due to the located ammo in the evidence room.

I had further attempted to locate documentation of this donation within departmental files, computer files and further contacting IBTS Services who advised there was no record of any transaction of donated ammo.

After several months of attempting to locate a receipt of the ammo transaction, Chief Corcoran was able to obtain a hand receipt of the transaction from U.S. Department of Justice, United States Marshals Service. This transaction occurred on June 9, 2015, for 86,400 rounds valued at \$26,784.00, of unlinked 5.56 ammunition equaling "one pallet". This ammunition was donated to James Salsbury, Central Police Department, being signed for by James Salsbury personally. A copy of said transaction was supplied to your investigators.

At the conclusion of the investigation conducted by your investigators, it was brought to my attention that in June 2015 Chief Salsbury did in fact receive from a United States Government Agency 86,400 rounds of 5.56 mm XM855 rifle ammunition. In statements made by Chief Salsbury, he admitted to failing to make the Central City Council aware of the donation of said ammo nor did he house all ammo at the Central Police Department. Chief Salsbury stated that a majority of the ammo was housed at his place of business, Central Safety, Inc. Chief Salsbury stated that his department kept no records of ammunition used by said officers.

During your investigation Chief Salsbury advised your investigators that since June of 2015 nine of his officers shot a combined total of 5300 rounds. Chief Salsbury stated that he himself along with two Central P.D. officers (Non-essential Reserve officers) fired 30,000 rounds at undisclosed locations using their personal weapons. Ten thousand eight hundred rounds, (10,800) rounds were exchanged to Jim's Firearms for practice ammo, gift cards, ammo boxes etc. Five Thousand four hundred (5,400) rounds were damaged during the August 2016 flood at his residence, (discarded by Chief Salsbury but no records for verification). Salsbury stated there was as of October 13, 2019, 10,667 rounds left in inventory. From the explanation given by Chief Salsbury it is observed that an additional 24,233 rounds of ammo are still unaccounted for as of this date.

I, myself, find it troubling as the Chief of Police of the City of Central, to know that the former Chief of Police had hidden the fact that the listed ammo had been donated to the City of Central Police Department. I am also troubled with former Chief Salsbury's explanation given to your investigators. I find it hard to believe that in four years nine of his officers had fired 5300 rounds of ammo combined in their service weapons during training but, during the same time period the Chief and two non-essential, logistics reserve officers fired 30,000 rounds (85%) of the total estimate of 35,300 rounds of ammo in their personal weapons. This is quite troubling to me that the Federal Government donated this ammunition to the department but as the Chief, James Salsbury failed to use the ammo as it was intended.

It is also troubling to know that after taking office an inventory of the department was conducted and items listed on said inventory are to this date still unaccounted for.

As I called for this audit to be conducted it was not my intentions to cast a doubt on Salsbury's accountability as Chief. Those of us as elected officials have to be accountable for actions and inactions during our tenure. It is my belief that there are inconsistencies that occurred during Chief Salsbury's tenure as Chief of Police. There are many more questions left unanswered with the possibility of questionable activity by former Chief Salsbury that warrants further investigation.



Once again, I would like to thank you, and your investigators for the investigation they conducted for the Central Police Department.

Roger L. Corcoran  
Chief of Police  
City of Central



## APPENDIX B

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Councilman/Mayor Pro Tempore's Response



**WADE EVANS**  
MAYOR PRO TEMPORE  
CITY OF CENTRAL  
[WADE.EVANS@CENTRAL-LA.GOV](mailto:WADE.EVANS@CENTRAL-LA.GOV)  
225-413-6473

04/06/2020

**Lauren Whatley**  
Investigative Auditor  
**Louisiana Legislative Auditor**  
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Baton Rouge, La 70804-9397  
Phone: 225-339-3879 | Fax: 225-388-4192

Dear Lauren,

First, I want to thank you and your team at the Legislative Auditors office for the thorough and professional audit of the Central Police Department. I have reviewed the findings with our Police Chief, and I am confident that procedures have been put in place to alleviate any inventory issues moving forward.

Respectfully,

*Wade Evans*