



LOUISIANA LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR
DARYL G. PURPERA, CPA, CFE

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CITY OF HARAHAH

The mayor and chief of police of the Jefferson Parish city of Harahan should work more closely to develop stronger policies and procedures over purchasing, following the public bid laws, inventory of assets, confiscated evidence and monitoring traffic tickets, a report released Monday by Legislative Auditor Daryl Purpera said.

The recommendations come after members of the state auditor's Advisory Services staff met with Harahan officials on "operations of the Police Department." In his cover letter to Mayor Provino Mosca and Police Chief Tim Walker, Purpera said although the "matters were related to the operations of the Police Department and focused mainly on the prior Police Department administration, we are providing recommendations intended to help the current administration build a stronger system of internal controls."

The report said the state auditor's advisors "identified possible noncompliance" with the Louisiana Public Bid Law related to the purchase of four vehicles -- two by the police department and two by the city -- in 2011 and 2013. The report said Harahan officials should obtain at least three telephone quotes in writing for all purchases of materials and supplies that cost between \$10,000 and \$30,000. Sufficient documentation should be maintained to show that the Public Bid Law was followed, advisors said. "The Mayor and Chief of Police should consult with legal counsel and the Louisiana Attorney General's office regarding vehicle purchases which may have violated the Public Bid Law," the report said.

In addition, city auditors told Purpera's staff that, although Harahan has an inventory list of capital assets, "it does not include all equipment and property of the Police Department." The report said a complete inventory of the capital assets of the Police Department and all other city departments should be conducted annually to reflect new purchases and items disposed of since the last inventory.

The report said that internal controls over traffic tickets should also be strengthened. "Our assessment also revealed possible noncompliance with state laws" in the handling of the citations.

Advisors from the state auditor's office recommended that specific police personnel should be in charge of "managing and maintaining the documentation relating to traffic ticket books and citations," from the issuance of the ticket books to police officers to the final disposition of the tickets.



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The report recommended that the city issue the tickets in sequential number order and submit the issued citations to the mayor’s court for a hearing “on a timely, consistent basis for processing and collection.” If ticket charges are reduced or dismissed out of mayor’s court, “they may only be dismissed by the proper prosecutorial authority” and that action should be included in the court record.

“The Chief of Police should ensure that all tickets and citations are accounted for” as state law requires, the report said. It said that “The Mayor should work with his legal counsel to ensure that only the proper prosecutorial entity(s) is reducing/dismissing citations.” Specifically, the two should determine if the diversion program as it relates to traffic violators “is legal/allowable since a magistrate and prosecutor have been appointed” to run the court.

The report also recommended that the mayor and police chief develop and implement written purchasing procedures and make sure that budgeted funds are available before initiating purchases. Harahan officials should also craft policies and procedures regarding how long records must be maintained and how they can be destroyed.

The police chief should also ensure that all evidence rooms are properly secured by limiting access to authorized personnel only, maintaining sign-in logs identifying who enters and leaves the room, placing two locks on evidence room doors, using cameras to monitor the areas and designating two employees to enter the room when “any evidence is to be stored or retrieved.”

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On Twitter: Harahan officials urged to develop stronger policies and procedures.