



LOUISIANA LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR
DARYL G. PURPERA, CPA, CFE

February 10, 2014

TOWN OF COLFAX

The Grant Parish Town of Colfax may have violated the state Constitution by using public money to purchase \$60 gift cards for its employees, according to an audit report released Monday by Legislative Auditor Daryl Purpera's office.

The report, prepared by the Alexandria certified public accounting firm of Rozier, Harrington and McKay, did not mention how many cards were purchased or what was spent on them. The finding was one of seven cited by auditors during their review of town finances for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013.

The state Constitution generally prohibits public money from being used to buy gifts, personal items or other non-public purposes.

Colfax officials said in their response to the finding that they "will implement procedures to prevent this occurrence in the future."

The report, done for the state auditor's office, also pointed out that before the end of 2013, the town's chief of police was arrested by the Grant Parish Sheriff's Office on charges of theft and malfeasance in office.

"These charges resulted from an investigation into the complaint of unauthorized purchases being made," the report said. It said the police chief has been fired, but no amount of the unauthorized purchases or other details of the investigation was given.

The report pointed out that some issues the Legislative Auditor brought to the attention of town officials in 2008 are still not addressed, including the loss of natural gas the town buys for resale to customers.

Auditors said that between 2007 and 2013 gas losses have ranged from 15.3 percent to 43.5 percent. "Possible explanations for the loss of gas are leakage and/or worn out meters that do not accurately measure the amount of gas delivered to customers," the report said. "Such losses are costly and may be dangerous to the public." The loss in the 2013 fiscal year amounted to 28.7 percent of the 26,079 cubic feet of natural gas purchased.

The report said that "past-due utility bills are still at a high level. We are concerned that these increases may be attributable to a lack of enforcing a uniform cutoff policy." Auditors said their



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tests showed that some town employees are slow to pay their bills and Colfax officials should “strictly enforce a uniform cutoff policy.”

The report also pointed out that the town’s insurance policy relating to damages and destruction of the town hall and contents has not been renewed. Colfax officials said they have contacted insurers about obtaining the needed coverage.

For more information, contact:

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On Twitter: Town of Colfax may have violated the state Constitution by using public money to purchase gift cards.