



LOUISIANA LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR
DARYL G. PURPERA, CPA, CFE

June 24, 2013

CITY OF PORT ALLEN

BATON ROUGE – According to an investigative audit conducted by Legislative Auditor Daryl Purpera, the Port Allen City Council may not have properly set the mayor’s salary and recommends that the City seek a ruling from the 18th Judicial District Court to resolve the salary question. Furthermore, the auditor’s position is that because the budget is the legal authority to spend the City should comply with it.

The report notes that although the City Council has historically set the salary of the mayor, including incumbent Mayor Demetric Slaughter and former Mayor Roger Bergeron, in its annual budgets, the budget ordinances did not contain “any specific language addressing the mayor’s salary” as required by a 2002 appellate court ruling. That court ruling states that “at a bare minimum” a law setting the salary of an elected official must say that the salary is set at a fixed amount. City officials could not provide the auditor with ordinances setting the mayor’s salary other than the budget ordinances. As a result, the audit said, the salary of the mayor may not have been properly set by the Council.

According to the audit report, although the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013, budget set the mayor’s salary at \$65,000, Mayor Demetric Slaughter claimed the same salary as former Mayor Roger Bergeron when she took office. Mayor Slaughter wrote a memo to the City’s payroll clerk directing that the mayoral salary be \$84,960, the same amount approved for the previous mayor. The audit states that to expend more than the amount appropriated by the Council for the mayor’s salary would require, at a minimum, a budget amendment. The auditor recommended that the City amend the budget by a separate ordinance setting the mayor’s salary based on what the 18th Judicial District Court rules.

The report also said that since Slaughter took office, she is also receiving a \$6,000 annual car allowance that was neither budgeted nor approved by a council-passed ordinance, an action that may violate state law. Slaughter said Bergeron received the car allowance, but the audit pointed out that the City’s present and previous budgets did not include additional funds for the payment of the car allowance.



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A third finding noted that Slaughter may have violated state law by receiving \$2,432 as reimbursement for January travel expenses related to her trip to Washington, D.C., to “network, meet and greet” staffers in U.S. Sen. Mary Landrieu’s office and Landrieu; “represent the city of Port Allen” at the inauguration of President Barack Obama; and travel through the Washington area “to get ideas and concepts of riverfront development and other economic development projects.”

But the audit said since Slaughter could not provide “an instance of city business conducted on this trip, she may have violated state law” by getting reimbursed from public funds. The audit recommended that the City seek legal advice as to the appropriate actions to be taken to recoup the City funds improperly used to reimburse the mayor’s travel expenses.

For more information, contact:

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