

MUNICIPAL AUDITING REPORT CITY OF ROANOKE



Employee Loitering **April 10, 2019**

Report Number: 19-007
Audit Plan Number: 19-313

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SUMMARY OF COMPLAINT

An anonymous report concerning Roanoke City Public Works employees sitting in city vehicles parked on Norfolk Avenue near the Community High School was filed with the City's hotline service. The allegation reported through the hotline was as follows:

- A City of Roanoke public works truck sits on Norfolk Avenue behind Community High School for hours each day. It is truck 3824 and about half of the time has one employee in it (the same male) and the other half of the time has two employees sitting in it (the second employee is also the same male each time).

INVESTIGATION OBJECTIVES & SCOPE

Investigation Objective:

1. Were employees of the Stormwater Division's Central Business District (CBD) crew incurring excessive idle time during scheduled work time downtown?

Yes – CBD crew employees were incurring excessive idle time without management's knowledge. Management has addressed the issue with the employees involved and has implemented processes to improve crew productivity and oversight.

Investigation Scope:

Our surveillance was limited to Norfolk Avenue near Community School and Historic Fire Station #1 on Market Street, conducted at various times on March 5, 6 and 7. Management of the Stormwater Division performed a spot check of Norfolk Avenue on March 8, and interviewed the employees involved on March 11 and 12.

End of Investigation Objectives & Scope

BACKGROUND

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is responsible for issuing individual and general permits that regulate stormwater discharges from municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4). DEQ administers these programs through the Virginia Stormwater Management Program (VSMP) regulations, which are authorized by the Virginia Stormwater Management Act.

The City of Roanoke is required to control discharges from municipal separate storm sewer systems under the General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater from Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems to the maximum extent practicable in a manner that protects the water quality in nearby streams, rivers, and wetlands. Under the permit, the City must develop, implement and enforce programs that include the following six (6) minimum control measures:

1. Public Education and Outreach
2. Public Involvement and Participation
3. Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
4. Construction Site Stormwater Runoff and Control
5. Post-Construction Stormwater Management Regulations
6. Pollution Prevention for Municipal Activities

The City has developed best management practices to control stormwater pollution. The current MS4 Program Plan details how the City is addressing the minimum control measures noted above.

The City's Stormwater Utility Division actively works on projects to reduce flooding and improve water quality. The Central Business District (CBD) crew is responsible for cleaning, and maintaining the City's downtown area, including the sidewalks and other public areas. The goal of the CBD crew is to keep the downtown area clean, and prevent trash and pollutants from washing into the streams via the storm drains.

The Stormwater Utility Division began implementing a new cloud-based asset management system on March 25, 2019 which should enhance the documentation and monitoring of stormwater activities including in the CBD.

End of Background

Objective 1: CBD Crew Activities

Audit Objective:

Were employees of the Stormwater Division's Central Business District (CBD) crew incurring excessive idle time during scheduled work time downtown?

Yes

Overview:

The Stormwater Division has a crew of three people assigned to the Central Business District (CBD) who are responsible for cleaning public spaces downtown, including streets, sidewalks, and the Farmers Market. Two members of the crew work from 6:00 AM to 2:30 PM. The third person operates a street sweeper from 3:00 AM to 6:00 AM and then assists the CBD crew until 10:15. The CBD crew is one component of the City's overall plan for reducing nonpoint source pollutants that can negatively impact water quality.

Based on the citizen report received, we conducted spot checks of the street on which employees were alleged to be parking on March 5, 6, and 7. Our observations were consistent with the concerns cited by the citizen. There were two trucks assigned to the CBD crew and both were observed to be parked for extended times while the employees remained inside the vehicles and appeared to be using their personal phones.

We immediately briefed the Assistant City Manager (ACM) and soon thereafter met with the Stormwater Utility Manager to learn more about the CBD crew. The Utility Manager had been briefed by the ACM and had confirmed the situation using one of his supervisors to perform spot checks. After our meeting, management talked with the crew members involved, as well as their supervisor.

Based on weather conditions and reduced activity downtown during winter months, the CBD crew was able to work less without incurring significant complaints about CBD conditions and appearance. The crew had stopped filling out daily checklists on the premise that they knew the work that needed to be done and that the checklist served no purpose. This eliminated one of the controls that helped management monitor CBD crew activity.

Going forward, management has committed that the supervisor will conduct more spot checks on the CBD crew, including inspecting areas that have historically been challenging to keep clean. Management also intends to assign the CBD crew additional locations around the City to monitor and clean during the slower activity winter months. The Stormwater Division has recently installed a new asset management system that is capable of tracking work by location and time. This new system (VueWorks) is cloud based and employees will be able to use tablet computers to log work as it is completed in the field.

SUMMARY OF MANAGEMENT ACTION PLANS

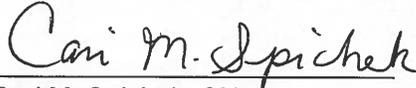
See **Exhibit 1** for Management's written action plans and comments.

MANAGEMENT COMMENTS

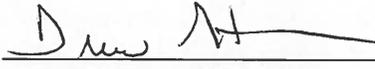
See **Exhibit 1** for Management's written action plans and comments.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank Dwayne D'Ardenne, Stormwater Utility Manager and Michael Venable, Stormwater Civil Engineer, for their cooperation and assistance throughout this Investigation.



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DATE: April 22, 2019

TO: Drew Harmon, Municipal Auditor

FROM: Dwayne D'Ardenne, Stormwater Utility Manager

SUBJECT: Response to Employee Loitering investigation

Below is a summary of actions that have or will be taken by Stormwater Utility Management as a result of the recent investigation related to Employee Loitering.

1. The current Crew Lead for the Central Business District (CBD) crew, will begin a new position on April 23, 2019 as a member of the Stormwater Construction crew.
2. The Maintenance Supervisor (to which the CBD Crew Lead reports) will make more routine spot checks of the CBD crew's quality and quantity of work.
3. The Stormwater Utility began implementation of VueWorks asset management system on March 25, 2019 which is being designed to include a revamped daily checklist to be completed by CBD staff allowing time/date stamps upon each task completion. This new technology will not only ensure team members remain "on-task" but will also provide documentation for the City's annual MS4 Annual Report to DEQ.
4. Finally, to ensure CBD crew members always have sufficient work to fill their days, the crew will be assigned additional locations to monitor and clean as necessary during the slower activity winter months. These locations may include neighborhood "village centers" as well as other locations identified by the Maintenance Supervisor or other City management as needing additional attention during the non-growing seasons.

We very much appreciate your staff member Cari Spichek, for her professional manner and approach during this investigation.

cc: Sherman Stovall, Assistant City Manager for Operations
Bob Bengtson, Director of Public Works