



Accounting Division Completes Corrective Action Plan

Many reforms are now in place to restore professionalism to the Office of Erie County Comptroller

(Buffalo) – The Audit Division within the Office of Erie County Comptroller completed a corrective action plan to address numerous deficiencies discovered when Stefan I. Mychajliw took office on January 1st, 2013. Now the second department within the Erie County Comptroller's office, the Accounting Division, has completed and implemented plans to strengthen professionalism and maintain the long-term integrity of the office.

Many deficiencies, risks, and concerns within the Accounting Division were identified by the Comptroller's Office review that was released on January 18th, 2013. An Erie County Comptroller's Office Accounting Division and Control Quality Assurance Review identified many deficiencies and have now implemented and are in the process of implementing corrective action items to fix problems.

Some of the key findings and the corrective action taken were outlined in a report from the Accounting Division to Erie County Comptroller Stefan I. Mychajliw. Some key measures include:

Finding: No Succession Plan

Corrective Action: Upon taking office Comptroller Mychajliw asked current staff to review the succession plans of previous administrations. None existed. Nine of eleven workers currently in accounting positions can retire within five years. There was no plan in place to maintain the integrity of the office if many of those individuals retired. Deputy Comptroller Gregory Gach created a formal succession plan. Professional accountants have been hired and are being trained to replace employees who may leave the county workforce.

Finding: Low level clerical/patronage employees conducting professional accounting work

Correction Action: The Office of Erie County Comptroller created a reform initiative/reorganization plan to strengthen the professionalism of the office. We found low-level clerical positions were budgeted, and those workers with little to no accounting experience were responsible for professional accounting work. All five low level clerical/patronage positions were eliminated and four professional accountants were hired to replace them. The year to date vacancy savings to taxpayers by creating the reform initiative/reorganization plan is \$202,724.

Finding: Workers stopped conducting bank reconciliations in mid-November 2012

Corrective Action: Comptroller Mychajliw asked for an office review on whether or not workers were up to date conducting the county's bank reconciliations. Comptroller Mychajliw was told workers stopped conducting bank reconciliations in mid-November 2012. Erie County stopped conducting bank reconciliations for a month-and-a-half, creating a massive backlog. Associate Deputy Comptroller Mr. Douglas Riffel, formerly a private sector Certified Public Accountant (CPA) with 30 years of accounting experience, was put in charge of reconciling the accounts.

Finding: Workers stuck in same positions without knowledge of other job duties

Corrective Action: Cross-training now takes place so that workers are not stuck performing the same job duty year after year, severely limiting an employee's knowledge of other positions within the office. Job duties for workers are now rotated every 12 months in order to broaden their professional skill set within the Office of Erie County Comptroller.

Another initiative that strengthened the professionalism of the office was the hiring of Greg Gach, an MBA with more than 30-years of government finance experience, as Deputy Comptroller for Accounting. The SUNY at Buffalo graduate previously served as former Budget Director under former Erie County Executive and current Congressman Chris Collins and Deputy Comptroller for Accounting under then County Comptroller Mark Poloncarz.

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