



Manatee County

Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller

R.B. "Chips" Shore

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MEMORANDUM

To: Jim Seuffert, Financial Management Department Director

From: R.B. "Chips" Shore, Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller

Date: February 18, 2004

Subject: Utilities Customer Service Division (formerly known as Public Works–Fiscal)
Follow-up Audit #2

The Internal Audit Department has completed a follow-up audit based on the Clerk of the Circuit Court's Audit Report to Utilities Customer Service, issued on November 26, 2002. The follow-up consisted of reviewing corrective actions implemented by the Utilities Customer Service (UCS) Division for the areas where we provided constructive criticism and recommendations.

We are pleased with management's response to issues raised in our original audit report. Some of the improvements noted included the development of refund checks procedures, establishment of fire-line rates, and the proper allocation of payroll cost. Internal Audit believes these controls have significantly improved the efficiency and accountability over the fiscal processes of the UCS Division.

Management has addressed all of the areas where improvements were recommended; however, several areas still require management's attention. During the meeting on January 23, 2004, your management staff, together with the Internal Audit Department staff, agreed on the following action plans:

1. Resolution R-03-128 imposes penalties on past due account balances which are not currently assessed. In addition, controls can be strengthened by establishing procedures that require the checking of customers' Utilities Customer Service accounts to ensure that past-due balances do not exist prior to issuing new Temporary Construction Meters

Management Action Plan: UCS management will confer with the County Attorney's Office and the County Administrator to determine whether the resolution language regarding the imposition of penalties on past-due balances will be enforced or removed from the Resolution. Management anticipates a resolution by March 2004.

Management has already implemented the procedural change on the checking of customer past-due balances prior to the issuance of temporary construction meters. This has been in effect since December 2003.

2. The prior audit noted that the Ordinances that set forth Utilities Customer Service procedures could be consolidated into one simple and straightforward Ordinance. Currently, several disjointed Ordinances govern day-to-day Utilities Customer Service operations. In addition, the current Ordinances dictate that owners of rental properties should be charged when their tenants become delinquent on their garbage collection fees. While management has chosen not to enforce owners' responsibilities for their tenants' delinquencies, the language still remains in the Ordinance.

Management Action Plan: Management continues to work with the County Attorney's Office for modification of the current Ordinances and a Utilities Customer Service-County Attorney work session is tentatively scheduled for early 2004. Management will continue its efforts to bring these issues before the Board. Management anticipates completion by September 30, 2004.

We would like to thank you and your staff for the attention given to the audit findings and the cooperation given to the Internal Audit staff. We believe management is diligently addressing these concerns in a appropriate manner. Due to the protracted nature of the remaining issues and management's continuing efforts at final resolution, an additional follow-up will not be scheduled. Management may forward information about the resolution of these matters upon completion.

RBS/RJO/MDB/WPA

cc: Board of County Commissioners
Ernie Padgett, County Administrator
John Barnott, Utilities Customer Service Administrator