



Rock Island County Board
Chairman Richard H. "Quijas Brunk"
Vice-Chairman Brian D. Vyncke

Chairman's Statement on Forensic Audit 12/21/2021

In response to the theft of over \$115,000 of taxpayer funds, in June of this year, the county board ordered that a forensic audit be conducted, which included an assessment of internal controls, as well as the identification of best practices that will help prevent such incidents in the future. This audit was conducted by Marcum LLP, a national accounting and advisory firm. The audit focused primarily on the Auditor's Office and the Treasurer's Office, and I would like to thank both Ms. Palmer and Ms. Ewert for helping to facilitate the audit.

First, a digital forensic audit, which included an analysis of emails, documents, and files, indicates that there was no prior knowledge or collusion, regarding the theft. It revealed no unexpected activity by the Auditor or the Chief Deputy Auditor; Which I do not believe anyone expected otherwise, and I for one am pleased to see confirmed.

With that said, the review of internal controls has highlighted significant opportunities for improvement. According to the United States General Accounting Office, "Internal control comprises the plans, methods, policies, and procedures used to fulfil the mission, strategic plan, goals, and objectives of the entity." The forensic auditor's report prioritizes the creation of detailed procedural manuals within the Auditor's and Treasurer's Offices, to allow those offices "the ability to follow proper protocol, and test the prescribed procedures in order to prevent any type of action that would result in the county (taxpayers) becoming a victim of misappropriation of assets". In addition to this, the report highlights other opportunities to align with best practices, not only within the Auditor's and Treasurer's Offices, but in various other county offices involved in the allocation and/or distribution of county assets.

Administratively, we have already began taking action based on feedback from the forensic auditors. I have asked staff to begin exploring opportunities that may exist, based on the recommendations. Also, Information Systems has already acquired a cyber-security/phishing training solution, which is currently being tested. While the incident in June was not the result of a network hack, or the breach of a firewall, it is our hope that this training solution will help to heighten awareness related to all communications whether via, email, phone, fax, carrier, or other method. This training will be implemented in all offices and departments that fall under the operational purview of the County Board & County Administration, and will be made available to all other county offices as well. The County Board urges the use of this resource, by all county offices.

We have already learned much from the forensic audit, and I believe there exists a great opportunity to learn even more, by heeding the observations outlined in the report and by giving serious consideration to the recommendations made. The Forensic Audit Report is an invaluable tool that can be utilized to make improvements, benefiting county operations, county staff, and ultimately county residents. The County Board and Administration is reaffirming our commitment to doing everything within our

statutory authority to ensure best practices in protecting county assets, and will work collaboratively with the various county offices to that end.

Thank you.

Richard H. "Quijas" Brunk
County Board Chairman