



Richmond City Council

The Voice of the People

Richmond, Virginia

Office of the Inspector General

December 22, 2020

Mr. J. E. Lincoln Saunders
Acting Chief Administrative Officer
City of Richmond

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) has completed an investigation in the Department of Finance. This report presents the results of the investigation.

Allegation:

The Office of Inspector General received a complaint from the Administration alleging an employee from the Department of Finance filed and received unemployment benefits while being employed by the City of Richmond. These funds are distributed through the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) and Charged to the City of Richmond.

Legal Requirements:

In accordance with the Code of Virginia, §15.2-2511.2, the Office of the Inspector General is required to investigate all allegations of fraud, waste, and abuse. Also, City Code section 2-231 requires the Office of the Inspector General to conduct investigations of alleged wrongdoing.

Findings:

The employee was identified as a Tax Enforcement Officer assigned to the Department of Finance. Their duties are to ensure that businesses in Richmond are in compliance with tax laws.

The investigator contacted VEC and requested the initial and weekly claim filing for this Tax Enforcement Officer. The Investigator received and analyzed the requested data. The investigator discovered that Tax Enforcement Officer filed for unemployment benefits on May 2, 2020. The Tax Enforcement Officer identified their employment with the City of Richmond and indicated their last physical day of work was March 30, 2020, and indicated the reason for separation was COVID-19. The Tax Enforcement Officer also indicated on their initial filing that they were not working part-time for any employer, when in fact the employee had secondary employment.

On the Weekly Certification Summary, the Tax Enforcement Officer indicated they did not work or earn money during the week ending May 2, 2020. The Tax Enforcement Officer received a total of \$978.00 which consisted of one weekly payment of unemployment benefit of \$378.00 and \$600.00 from the CARES ACT.

Interviews:

The investigator interviewed the subject employee who stated that they had filed for unemployment because; they had a second job that was paying in cash and the hours were cut, the subject employee needed money to pay bills. The subject employee admitted they did not file for unemployment benefits from their second employer due to being paid in cash. The subject employee also stated they were told by individuals they could apply for unemployment without penalty. The subject employee admitted they knew that the information provided on their initial and weekly claim filing was not accurate but did not believe they committed any fraud.

The investigator conferred with the Department of Finance and was advised that all salaried employees including this Tax Enforcement Officer received their full salary during the City's COVID-19 shutdown.

Conclusion:

Based on the findings, the OIG concludes that the allegation is substantiated against the Tax Enforcement Officer. The Inspector General recommends appropriate action be taken against the employee who violated Administrative Regulation 1.1 Code of Ethics and Administrative Regulation 1.6 Business Conduct (C) "Maintain the highest degree of honesty and integrity..." The action taken should include a repayment of all excess money paid to the Tax Enforcement Officer.

If you have any questions, please contact me at extension 1840.

Sincerely,



James Osuna,
Inspector General

cc: John Wack, Director Director of Finance
Mona Atkins-Easley, Director of Human Resources
Honorable Members of City Council