



# Richmond City Council

The Voice of the People

Richmond, Virginia

## Office of the Inspector General

August 29, 2019

Mrs. Selena Cuffee-Glenn  
Chief Administrative Officer  
City of Richmond

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

### Allegation:

The Office of Inspector General received a complaint alleging three employees from the Department of Public Utilities (Call Center) attended a conference in which they arrived on Saturday, April 6, 2019 for a conference that began on Monday, April 9, 2019, and used city funds to pay for their hotel and per-diem. This is in violation of Administrative Regulation 6.4 Travel Policy dated February 1, 2007.

### 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 investigator identified five employees from DPU that attended the Customer Service week conference (CS week), of which three attended the Engage 311 portion of the conference from April 8 – 10, 2019. The other two individuals attended the full conference from April 8 – 12, 2019. These employees are identified as a Training Specialist, Management Analyst, Customer Service Manager (CS Manager), Customer Service Supervisor (CS Supervisor), and a Program/Operations Manager (PM).

The investigator obtained and analyzed the travel documents of all five employees. The investigator discovered that the Training Specialist, Management Analyst and the CS Manager received a travel advance that included lodging and per diem for Saturday, April 6, 2019. The Training Specialist and Management Analyst then claimed Saturday, April 6, 2019 lodging and per diem on their travel expense settlements. The Training Specialist and Management Analyst

traveled to the conference on Saturday, April 6, 2019. These funds were ineligible because it was two days before the start of the conference and not an authorized travel day. This action violated Travel Policy 6.4(B) "...City funds to accommodate personal comfort, convenience, and taste is not permitted." Therefore, the Training Specialist received an overpayment of \$245.94 in lodging and per diem and the Management Analyst received an overpayment of \$302.53 in lodging and per diem. These two employees were overpaid a total of \$548.47.

The CS Manager also received a travel advance that included lodging and per diem for Saturday, April 6, 2019, however, the travel expense settlement and supporting documents actually show they traveled on Sunday, April 7, 2019. Upon completion of this travel expense settlement, the CS Manager repaid \$134.88 back to the City of Richmond. However, an additional \$24.04 is owed to the City based on overpayment of per diem.

The CS Supervisor travel documents were analyzed and found that there was an overpayment of \$24.00 on the per diem.

The Program/Operations Manager did not request a travel advance for this conference. The employee opted to pay out-of-pocket and be reimbursed for portions of the travel that the City is responsible for. The investigator reviewed their travel expense settlement and discovered there were a total of \$66 owed to the employee. The investigator spoke with the employee who stated the reason for not requesting per diem for the two days were because they did not have any receipts for purchases made. The employee was not aware that it was not required to produce receipts for per diem. The investigator also found the employee received an overpayment for luggage of \$30.00. Based on this information the employee is entitled to a refund of \$36.00.

The chart below depicts the travel expenses of all five employees:

Employee	Travel Advance	Travel Settlement	Actual	Total Due to City	Total Due to Employee
Training Specialist	\$1068.00	\$1125.36	\$879.42	\$245.94	
Management Analyst	\$1403.00	\$1403.00	\$1100.47	\$302.53	
Customer Service Manager	\$1313.00	\$1313.00	\$1154.12	\$24.04	
Customer Service Supervisor	\$1458.00	\$1650.94	\$1626.94	\$24.00	
Program/Operations Manager		\$3078.70	\$3114.70		\$36.00

## Interviews:

The investigator contacted the CS Week liaison regarding the registration of the five (5) City employees. Per the liaison, the Training Specialist, Management Analyst, CS Manager and the Program/Operations Manager registered on Monday, April 8, 2019. The CS supervisor registered on Tuesday, April 9, 2019 for the conference.

The investigator interviewed the Training Specialist regarding his/her travel to the conference on Saturday. The Training Specialist stated he/she was asked by the CS Manager if he/she would like to attend the conference and to copy his/her travel advance form for travel. The Training Specialist stated this was his/her first time traveling for the City and requested assistance from an employee who is familiar with the travel policy. The Training Specialist was asked if they were registered for any pre conference/conference on Saturday that would require them to fly in a day earlier. The Training Specialist reply was no.

The investigator interviewed the Management Analyst in regards to his/her travel to the conference on Saturday. The Analyst stated that he/she traveled on Saturday because it was an 8 hour flight and felt it was better for them to fly on Saturday. The Analyst also stated that they were primarily looking at the travel time versus the date of travel or the cost. Upon review of the travel documents it showed the analyst left Richmond at 11:09 am EST and arrived in Arizona at 2:49pm PST, which is actually a total of 6 hours and 40 minutes of travel time which includes a 3 hour time difference. This travel could have been taken on Sunday which would have allowed the analyst to register for the conference on Monday.

The investigator interviewed the CS Manager regarding his/her travel. The CS Manager stated that he/she had attended this conference for the last four (4) years for networking and gathering new ideas for the agency. When asked about the travel advance, the CS Manager said that he/she would have left on Saturday the 6<sup>th</sup>, but was not able to get a flight. When asked about the purpose for leaving on Saturday, the CS Manager stated that if he/she would have left on Saturday evening then he/she would have arrived in Arizona on Sunday. The investigator advised the CS Manager that if the employees traveled on Saturday, they would have arrived in Arizona on Saturday since the west coast is a 3 hour time difference earlier than Richmond. The CS Manager stated he/she was the supervisor of the Training Specialist who submitted his/her travel documents late. The CS Manager also stated that he/she spoke with a Senior Administrative (SA) Technician who stated that the employees should not travel two days before the conference due to possible questions surrounding why the employees were leaving early. The CS Manager was not sure if the SA Technician also spoke to the Training Specialist about his/her travel.

The investigator interviewed the SA Technician who stated he/she was involved in processing the travel advance for the employees attending the conference, and questioned the Management Analyst on the early travel and was told by the Analyst that there was an event on Sunday. The

SA Technician noticed on the documents submitted, that registration ran Sunday to Wednesday, but the conference began on Monday. When the CS Manager submitted his/her documents, the SA Technician noted that the advance included Saturday. When the SA Technician questioned the CS Manager, the CS Manager then changed his/her flight for Sunday.

**Conclusion:**

Based on the findings, the OIG concludes that the allegation is substantiated against the Training Specialist, Management Analyst, Customer Service Manager and Customer Service Supervisor. The Inspector General recommends appropriate action be taken against the employees who violated Travel Policy 6.4(B) "...City funds to accommodate personal comfort, convenience, and taste is not permitted." The action taken should include a repayment of all excess money paid to each employee.

The OIG also recommend based upon the circumstances of this case that appropriate action be taken against the Supervisor who approved the travel advance and settlement. The investigation supports the conclusion that the Supervisor was aware or should have been aware that the travel advances and settlement were approved in violation of Administrative Regulation 6.4 Travel Policy dated February 1, 2007.

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

Sincerely,



James Osuna,  
Inspector General

cc: Robert Steidel, DCAO of Operations  
Calvin Farr, Director of DPU  
City Council Members