



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
City of Albuquerque

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Investigative Informative Case Synopsis

FILE NO: 23-0088-C

SUBJECT MATTER: Allegation that a City employee was responsible for organizing the event “That’s A Moray”, a city-run event that reportedly oversold tickets, causing a shortage of meals and in the City refunding all tickets sold for this event, resulting in a waste of city resources.

STATUS: Final

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Christopher Saavedra
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CHRISTOPHER SAAVEDRA, EnCE, CIGI
INVESTIGATOR
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

February 29, 2024
Date of Completion

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Melissa R. Santistevan
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MELISSA SANTISTEVAN, CIG, CIGE
INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

April 24, 2024
Date of Completion

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VICTOR GRIEGO, CPA
ACCOUNTABILITY IN GOVERNMENT
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

May 15, 2024
Date of Approval

DISTRIBUTION:

- Honorable Mayor**
- President City Council**
- Chief Administrative Officer**
- City Councilors**
- Director Council Services**
- City Attorney**
- Department Director**
- Members, Accountability and Government Oversight Committee**
- File**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

According to City Ordinance 2-17-2, the Inspector General's goals are to (1) Conduct investigations in an efficient, impartial, equitable, and objective manner; (2) Prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse in city activities including all city contracts and partnerships; (3) Deter criminal activity through independence in fact and appearance, investigation and interdiction; and (4) Propose ways to increase the city's legal, fiscal and ethical accountability to insure that tax payers' dollars are spent in a manner consistent with the highest standards of local governments. The City of Albuquerque Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducts investigations, inspections, evaluations, and reviews in accordance with AIG standards.

On October 4, 2023, the OIG received an allegation stating that a City employee (E1) was responsible for organizing the event "That's A Moray", a city-run event. It was alleged that the City oversold tickets for this event, which caused a shortage of promised goods and services. This resulted in the City refunding all tickets sold for this event, causing a waste of City funds. Waste is the thoughtless or careless expenditure, mismanagement, or abuse of resources to the detriment of the City.

The OIG invoked §2-17-12 (B) of the Inspector General Ordinance and requested the Department of Arts and Culture (Department) investigate and provide its evidence and findings to the OIG for review. The purpose of the review was to obtain and review the evidence and to determine if the evidence is consistent with concluding whether the allegation of waste could be substantiated or not substantiated. The OIG independently verified the information provided by the Department through various sources.

The OIG concluded that the total amount of ticket sales for the event "That's A Moray" totaled twelve-thousand eight-hundred dollars (\$12,800.00). The total refunds issued were twenty-seven (27) tickets, for an amount of four-thousand three-hundred and twenty dollars (\$4,320.00). The total amount the Department paid the vendor for ninety-eight (98) meals. The total amount spent on the employees to run "That's A Moray" totaled one hundred and ninety-two dollars and ninety-seven cents (\$192.97). The event totaled five-thousand three-hundred and ninety dollars (\$5,390.00). The final total revenue that the Department generated after factoring in the total ticket sales, refunds issued, employee salary costs, and amount spent on the vendor, was two thousand eight hundred and ninety-seven dollars and three cents (\$2,897.03).

The OIG concluded that the allegation of waste could not be substantiated based on the evidence received and verified from the Department.

ABBREVIATIONS

City: City of Albuquerque
Department: Department of Arts and Culture
E1: City Employee
OIG: Office of Inspector General

INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Office of Inspector General (OIG) is to provide independent and objective insight, oversight, and foresight in promoting integrity, efficiency, overall effectiveness, accountability, and transparency in government to safeguard and preserve public trust. The City of Albuquerque OIG conducts investigations, inspections, evaluations, and reviews following AIG standards.

Complaint:

A City employee (E1) was responsible for organizing the event “That’s A Moray”, a city-run event. It was alleged that the City oversold tickets for this event, which caused a shortage of promised goods and services. This resulted in the City refunding all tickets sold for this event, causing a waste of City funds.

Background:

The Department periodically hosts special events at various City locations throughout the year. The event “That’s A Moray” was hosted for Valentine’s Day, each ticket package sold consisted of two (2) tickets to the event and included a meal and admission into the City Aquarium.

INVESTIGATION

Allegation:

A City employee (E1) oversold tickets to a City run event which caused a shortage of promised goods and services, resulting in a waste of city resources.

Authority:

301.1 Duty to the Public

The City of Albuquerque is a service institution. In carrying out their assigned duties and responsibilities, employees must always remember their first obligation is to the general public. This obligation must be carried out within the framework of federal, state, and local laws.

§2-17-2 (D) (2) Findings; Purpose; Goals

(D) The Inspector General's goals are to:

- (2) Prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse in city activities including all city contracts and partnerships;

§2-17-12 (B) Penalty; Cooperation; Retaliation Prohibited

All city officials, employees, contractors, and offerors in a city procurement process shall provide the Inspector General full and unrestricted access to all city offices, employees, records, information, data, reports, plans, projections, matters, contracts, memoranda, correspondence, electronic data, property, equipment and facilities and any other materials within their custody.

At the Inspector General's request, an official, employee, or contractor shall prepare reports and provide interviews. If an official, employee, vendor, or contractor fails to produce the requested information, the Inspector General shall notify the Committee and make a written request to the Chief Administrative Officer for his assistance in causing a search to be made and germane exhibits to be taken from any book, paper or record excepting personal property. The Chief Administrative Officer shall require the officials, employees, vendors, or contractors to produce the requested information.

Evidence:

- Department ticket sale records for “That’s A Moray”
- Department vendor event invoice for “That’s A Moray”
- Department ticket refund records for “That’s A Moray”
- Department Kronos Timecard records for February 11, 2023

Analysis:

On November 9, 2023, the OIG requested that the Department of Arts and Culture (Department) investigate the event “That’s Amore” based on the allegation received by the OIG. On December 1, 2023, the OIG received the following response from the Department Director:

Here's a quick summary and clarification related to this event.

"That's A Moray" took place on Saturday, February 11, 2023. This is one of many after-hours, special events organized by the BioPark education program each year. The BioPark sold a total of 80 ticket packages and refunded 27 of those. Each ticket package included dinner for 2 and admission for 2 to the Aquarium, which included discovery stations, mini tours about the love lives of ocean animals, and mini backstage tours.

Unfortunately, there was misunderstanding between our onsite caterer and the education staff organizing the event. Each ticket sold was a package for two people, however [the onsite caterer] thought each ticket sold represented one person. As a result, the night of the event the caterer prepped for 80 people, but there were 160 people present.

After the event, 27 tickets of 80 tickets (impacting 54 total people) were refunded since they were not served dinner. However, the caterer did not charge the City for those

meals, so there was no loss of funds for the City. In addition, the event did occur, everyone attended (even those people who missed out on dinner). The caterer provided refreshments and snacks (no charge to the City) for the attendees who did not get dinner that night.

[E1] is the Guest Experience Manager so [they] oversees Education, Guest Services, Events, and Marketing. Although [E1] alone was singled out in this complaint, there were many people involved in this event, and other staff who were the primary leads for organizing and implementing this and other after-hours education events for the public.

[E1] and the education team had a debrief after the event (as they do after all special events). They identified the problems and successes along with tasks for improvement moving forward. Since that February event, there have been at least 10 additional special events of various sizes at the BioPark without complaints or major issues. Therefore, I have no reason to believe that the February event is indicative of a pattern of poor planning or mismanagement.

Please, let me know if you have additional questions.

The OIG requested and received the supporting documents from the Department on January 5, 2024. The OIG verified the documents received through independent sources. The OIG was able to conclude that based on the verified documents, the following number of tickets were sold on the following days:

2 tickets sold on January 17, 2023
1 ticket sold on January 18, 2023
27 tickets sold on January 19, 2023
50 tickets sold on January 20, 2023

The total amount of tickets sold for this event totaled eighty (80) ticket packages. The OIG identified the cost of the ticket package for “That’s A Moray” was one hundred and sixty dollars (\$160.00), which included the admission for two (2) individuals into the event with a meal included. Based on the amount of tickets sold and the cost for each ticket package, the OIG calculated that the total revenue generated from ticket sales totaled twelve-thousand eight-hundred dollars (\$12,800.00).

The investigation revealed that the Department issued a total of twenty-seven (27) ticket refunds, for an amount of four-thousand three-hundred and twenty dollars (\$4,320.00). The OIG also verified that the Department’s invoice for the caterer for “That’s A Moray” totaled five-thousand three-hundred and ninety dollars (\$5,390.00) for ninety-eight (98) total meals.

The OIG reviewed Kronos time cards and salary information for three (3) total employees that worked “That’s A Moray”. The OIG confirmed the total amount spent on employee pay was one hundred and ninety-two dollars and ninety-seven cents (\$192.97).

The breakdown of the revenue and expenses identified in the verified evidence provided by the Department is as follows:

Spending Category	Net Tickets	Monetary Value
Ticket Sales @ \$160 per Package	80	\$12,800.00
Ticket Refunds @ \$160 per Package	-27	(\$4,320.00)
Vendor Costs	-	(\$5,390.00)
Employee Overtime Costs	-	(\$192.97)
	53	\$2,897.03
	Total Ticket Sales	Total Monetary Value

The OIG concluded that the Department generated a final total revenue of two thousand eight hundred ninety-seven dollars and three cents (\$2,897.03) after factoring in the total ticket sales, refunds issued, employee costs, and the amount spent on the vendor.

Conclusion:

After verifying and reviewing the evidence provided by the Department, the OIG was unable to substantiate the part of the allegation that all tickets were refunded for the “That’s A Moray” event as a result of the vendor not having enough meals for each person present. The OIG concluded that only twenty-seven (27) total tickets sold were refunded as a result of this issue. As a result, the OIG concluded that the allegation of waste as outlined in the allegation received could not be substantiated.