

November 19, 2024

Civil Service Board Meeting Public Comments

Good Afternoon. My name is Nathan Biller, and I'm a member of StrongTownGR, an organization dedicated to transparent local accounting.

The issue before us is clear: the removal of 2 Financial Systems Administrators from the City Comptroller's office was improper and introduces significant legal and operational risks to the City. As reported by the Comptroller and APA representatives, these positions are necessary for the Comptroller accounting staff to perform their responsibilities for the City and provide effective governance and administration of the City's accounting system. Reverting to the approved job descriptions, where these roles operate under the managerial direction of the City Comptroller and Deputy Comptroller, is a straightforward way to resolve this issue and remove the City's potential legal liability.

The current arrangement undermines the checks and balances enshrined in our City Charter, diminishes the Comptroller's effectiveness, and leaves the City vulnerable. It also seems plausible that the Deputy City Comptroller left because they were still tasked with overseeing accounting systems but lacked the staff to execute those responsibilities. Such a dysfunctional arrangement breeds inefficiency and frustration, which is neither fair to our employees nor fiscally responsible for taxpayers. And considering your last agenda item, which mentioned recruitment efforts for a new deputy comptroller, the time to address this issue is now before another deputy quits after six months when they realize they weren't given the staff necessary to accomplish their job responsibilities.

Moreover, the City Charter does not authorize accounting functions under the City Manager. Until any proposed changes go through the proper channels that would include the APA, the Public, and the City Commission, these roles and the public funds to pay for them must revert to their rightful place under the Comptroller's office as the documentation provided by the APA representative and City Comptroller have clearly shown.

Finally, I find it concerning that an elected official requesting to address this board was relegated to the public comment period and restricted to three minutes. Elected officials should be offered the courtesy to present their concerns as agenda items or, at minimum, be exempted from the public comment time limits.

I urge the members of this board to act swiftly to correct this error and protect the integrity of our governance structure. Thank you for your time, consideration, and service on the Civil Service Board.