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Curryville faces citywide state audit

by Alex Harness
Editor

Problems have risen in Curryville, where the city's finances have been called into question. The state auditor, Susan Montee, ordered an audit to the city of Curryville. The city has numerous infractions being called against them.

The chief petitioner is Betty Haddock of Curryville. The city needed 43 signatures to perform an audit and a total of 65 signatures were turned in according to Allison Bruns, Director of Communications at the state auditor's office. The estimated cost of the audit is between \$11,000 and \$15,000.

Tompkins and Willing, certified public accountants, were selected to audit the city's financial statements for the years of 2007 and 2008. Since the 2007 audit had already been complet-

ed, the main focus was on the year of 2008.

Susan Montee stated in her report that her main focus was to "obtain an understanding of the petitioners' concerns and perform various procedures to determine their validity and significance, evaluate the city's internal controls over significant management and financial functions, and evaluate the city's the city's compliance with certain legal provisions."

Montee found that the duties of the officials in Curryville were not "adequately segregated and there is no supervisory oversight." She states the reason for this conclusion is the fact that the city clerk is the city treasurer's mother. The city clerk is Sandra Parrott, mother of the city treasurer, Deanna Feldmann. They both still hold the same office. The report states there is no administra-

tive control over the two city officials. The audit recommends that there be a documented comparison of records by another person besides the city clerk and the city treasurer.

The board of aldermen said, "We will review disbursements more closely."

The Law Enforcement Training (LET) fund has amassed to \$8,600 as of Dec. 1, 2009. Montee states that, "Section 488.5336 RSMo, provides that no municipality shall retain more than \$1,500 of such funds per certified law enforcement officer, candidate for certification, or a coroner and the coroner's deputies and requires any excess be transmitted quarterly to the city's general fund." The city of Curryville currently only has one police officer, Jerry Sutton. The way to fix this discrepancy would be to transfer the extra





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A view of Curryville's city hall in the middle of town. The police also runs out of this building. Curryville is dealing with an audit for the year of 2008.

money in excess of \$1,500 to the city's general fund. The board of aldermen said they would do this.

Property tags are not properly applied to the city's items. The audit recommends that the city correct this problem to improve accountability and make sure the city's assets are identified.

The audit found that

reasons for closing meetings and those votes to close were not documented. This is a breach of the Sunshine Law, which states that a question and vote must be placed to proceed into a closed meet-

ing.

The report also stated, "The city was unable to demonstrate how some topics discussed in closed meeting session complied with state law."

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Examples given in the report include the board approving the purchase of office equipment and discussing the city's cellular phone usage and solid waste contract in closed meetings. This does not give the public a chance to input on any of the board's decisions.

The city responded to this saying, "We will ensure we only discuss the indicated topic in closed sessions in the future."

Another problem arose when Alderman Dennis Dixon voted in the decision to appoint his sister and niece as the city clerk and the city treasurer, respectively.

This is in violation of Article VII, Section 6 of the Missouri Constitution, which says, "Any public official who names or appoints to public office or employment any relative within the fourth degree shall forfeit his office."

The audit states that any possible favoritism

or conflicts of interest should be documented so the public knows about it.

Ordinances of the city are also reported upon. The report mentions that the city of Curryville does not maintain a list of ordinances. This makes it difficult for the public to know what regulations are actually in effect. It also says that many of the ordinances appear obsolete. The recommendation made makes it clear that a city should keep a well-organized and current list of ordinances for the public.

A report goes over the treasurer ordinance saying, "The current city treasurer resided in the city when she appointed to this position, but has since moved outside the city."

This ordinance maintains that the city treasurer must live in the city limits while they are in office.

The city replied to this by saying, "We will

evaluate whether the ordinance should be updated."

The last part of the report states that the city did not submit an annual financial report to the state auditor's for the year of 2008.

The officials of the city of Curryville who were in office during the audit year and are currently still in office as of March 1, 2010 are: Roy Crane, Mayor; Dennis Dixon, Alderman; Richard Cox, Alderman; Phyllis Sisson, Alderman; Dorothy Chilson, Collector; Deanna Feldmann, Treasurer; Sandra Parrott, City Clerk/Court Clerk; and Jerry Sutton, Police Officer. Newly appointed Aldermen are Marcine Jaycna and Randy Dalton. It was also indicated by the city hall that Sandra Parrot, the current city clerk might resign her office due to health problems. The election for city officials takes place in April.