



EOLEO SEP07'11 P4700

County of Erie

MARK C. POLONCARZ
COMPTROLLER

August 26, 2011

Commissioner Peter M. Vito
Erie County Department of Central Police Services
45 Elm Street
Buffalo, NY 14203

Mr. Vito:

On behalf of the Erie County Comptroller's Office, I am in receipt of your letter dated August 22, 2011 regarding 2007 Homeland Security Contracts. I am puzzled as to why you are continually interjecting yourself in a matter that does not relate to your department and disappointed that you continue to level these meritless claims, in what can only be characterized as a 'political hit job.'

Your assertion that the Accounts Receivable ("A/R") claims "were received in [the Comptroller's] office and posted on the dates shown to the SAP system by comptroller's clerk...therefore [Comptroller's Office] obviously received them, posted them and then failed to submit these claims to New York State," demonstrates your lack of understanding of SAP as well as the standard operating procedure for A/R Claim Vouchers, which was outlined in Mr. Poloncarz's correspondence to you dated August 11, 2011.

Accounts Receivable are established and "parked" in the SAP accounting system by County departments' designated employees. A department may submit claims electronically or via USPS mail service, especially if the department does not require signatures from the Comptroller's Office. I emphasize that a parked and subsequently posted A/R does not mean that the Comptroller's Office received the claim, or that the A/R claim was mailed by the Comptroller's Office.

A department's verification of claim submission to the Comptroller's Office, and subsequent mailing by the Comptroller's Office to New York State, is the signed copy of the State Aid Voucher. With respect to the six A/R claims, the Department of Emergency Services could not provide any signed State Aid Vouchers.

Further, as evidenced by your reference to only three claims amounting to \$271,639.71 in your letter dated August 9, 2011, that had not it been for Mr. Poloncarz's notification on August 11, you would not have known about the three additional claims amounting to \$314,648.02, which the County's Department of Emergency Services also failed to deliver to our office.

Again, if a department does not receive a signed State Aid Voucher in a timely manner, then it is the department's responsibility to inquire about the status of its claim submission. Given that these A/R's were parked dating back to March 2011, and are only now being reviewed by the Department of Emergency Services, the Comptroller's office has been cooperative and given immediate, priority attention to each request.

Vito Homeland Security Grant Letter

August 26, 2011

Page 2 of 2


With respect to "jeopardizing revenue owed to Erie County," it is not the Comptroller's Office's responsibility to determine whether A/R claims are valid and reimbursable; this responsibility rests with each originating department. To suggest otherwise is a clear indication you are only interested in scoring political points by manufacturing a crisis that does not exist.

Regardless of your interjection into this situation caused by another County department's failure to deliver the contracts to the Comptroller's Office, since August 11, we have worked amicably with Commissioner Gregory Skibitsky and his staff to file all six claims with New York State within an hour of receiving each A/R Claim Voucher. I thank Commissioner Skibitsky for his cooperative efforts and I am glad to see that there are honorable individuals working in county government who are interested in performing the work of the people and not scoring meritless political hits.

Considering this issue has been resolved, and it has not been a concern of Central Police Services from the outset, there is no need to engage in further correspondences with you. Going forward, any future discussion relating to Department of Homeland Security Emergency Services' contracts will be directed to the County's Department of Emergency Services, not Central Police Services.

I would like to lastly note that I have extended you the courtesy of forwarding you this correspondence electronically so that you may receive it before I send it to the media. I would hope in the future you might consider extending our Office the same courtesy rather than going to them first.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lorne Steinhart".

Lorne Steinhart

Deputy Comptroller – Accounting Division

Cc:

Hon. Mark C. Poloncarz, Esq.

Commissioner James Sherry, NYS Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services

Commissioner Gregory Skibitsky, Erie County Department of Emergency Services

Erie County Legislature