

Policies and Procedures

Subject: Audit Committee

Purpose:

The purpose of the Audit Committee shall be to (1) assure that the Elmira Urban Renewal Agency ("Agency") fulfills its responsibilities for the Agency's internal and external audit process, the financial reporting process and the system of risk assessment and internal controls over financial reporting; and (2) provide an avenue of communication between management, the independent auditors, and the Commissioners.

Powers of the Audit Committee:

It shall be the responsibility of the Audit Committee to:

- Appoint, compensate, and oversee the work of any public accounting firm employed by the Agency;
- Conduct or authorize investigations into any matter within its scope of responsibility;
- Seek any information it requires from Agency employees, all of whom shall be directed to cooperate with committee requests;
- Meet with Agency staff, independent auditors or outside counsel, as necessary

The Agency Commissioner's will ensure that the audit committee has sufficient resources to carry out its duties.

Composition and Members

The Audit Committee shall be comprised of three (3) members to be appointed by the Agency's Board of Commissioners.

Audit Committee members shall be prohibited from being an employee of the Agency or an immediate family member of an employee in the Agency. In addition, audit committee members shall not engage in any private business transactions with the Agency or receive compensation from any private entity that has material business relationships with the Agency, or be an immediate family member of an individual that engages in private business transactions with the Agency or receives compensation from an entity that has material business relationships with the Agency.

Ideally, all members on the Audit Committee shall possess or obtain a basic understanding of governmental financial reporting and auditing.

The Audit Committee shall have access to the services of at least one financial expert; whose name shall be disclosed in the annual report of the Agency.

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The Audit Committee's financial expert should have 1) an understanding of generally accepted accounting principles and financial statements; 2) experience in preparing or auditing financial statements of comparable entities; 3) experience in applying such principles in connection with the accounting for estimates, accruals and reserves; 4) experience with internal accounting controls; and 5) an understanding of audit committee functions.

Meetings

The Audit Committee will meet a minimum of twice a year, with the expectation that additional meetings may be required to adequately fulfill all the obligations and duties outlined in this Policy.

Members of the Audit Committee are expected to attend each committee meeting, in person. The Audit Committee may invite other individuals, such as members of management, auditors or other technical experts to attend meetings and provide pertinent information, as necessary.

The Audit Committee will meet with the Agency's independent auditor at least annually to discuss the financial statement of the Agency.

Meeting agendas will be prepared for every meeting and provided to the Audit Committee members along with briefing materials five (5) business days before the scheduled audit committee meeting. The Audit Committee will act only on the affirmative vote of a majority of the members at a meeting or by unanimous consent. Minutes of these meetings will be recorded.

Responsibilities

The audit committee shall have responsibilities related to: (a) the independent auditor and annual financial statements; (b) oversight of management's internal controls, compliance and risk assessment practices; (c) special investigations and whistleblower policies; and (d) miscellaneous issues related to the financial practices of the Agency.

Independent Auditors and Financial Statements

The Audit Committee shall:

- Recommend and consult with independent auditors retained by the Agency and pre-approve all audit services provided by the independent auditor;
- Establish procedures for the engagement of the independent auditor to provide permitted audited services. The Agency's independent auditor shall be prohibited from providing non-audit services unless having received previous written approval from the Audit Committee. Non-audit services include tasks that directly support the Agency's operations, such as bookkeeping or other services related to the accounting records or financial statements of the Agency, financial information systems design and implementation, appraisal or valuation services, actuarial services,

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- investment banking services, and other tasks that may involve performing management functions or making management decisions;
- Review and approve the Agency's audited financial statements, associated management letter, report on internal controls and all other auditor communications;
- Review significant accounting and reporting issues, including complex or unusual transactions and management decisions, and recent professional and regulatory pronouncements, and understand their impact on the financial statements;
- Meet with the independent audit firm on a regular basis to discuss any significant issues that may have surfaced during the course of the audit; and
- Review and discuss any significant risks reported in the independent audit findings and recommendations and assess the responsiveness and timeliness of management's follow-up activities pertaining to the same;

Internal Controls, Compliance and Risk Assessment

The Audit Committee shall review management's assessment of the effectiveness of the Agency's internal controls and review the report on internal controls by the independent audit as part of the financial audit engagement.

Special Investigations

The Audit Committee shall:

- Ensure that the Agency has an appropriate confidential mechanism for individuals to report suspected fraudulent activities, allegations or corruption, fraud, criminal activity, conflicts of interest or abuse by the Commissioners, directors, officers or employees of the Agency or any persons having business dealings with the Agency or breaches of internal control;
- Develop procedures for the receipt, retention, investigation and/or referral of complaints concerning accounting, internal controls and auditing to the appropriate body;
- Request and oversee special investigations as needed and/or refer specific issues to the appropriate body for further investigation (i.e. City Corporation Counsel's office, Elmira Police Department, or other investigatory organization);
- Review all reports delivered to it by the Inspector General and serve as a point of contact with the Inspector General

Other Responsibilities of the Audit Committee

The Audit Committee shall:

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- Present annually to the Agency's Director and Board of Commissioners a written report of how it has discharged its duties and met its responsibilities as outlined in this Policy;
- Obtain any information and training needed to enhance the committee members' understanding of the role of internal audits and the independent auditor, the risk management process, internal controls and a certain level of familiarity in financial reporting standards and processes;
- Review this Policy annually, reassess its adequacy, and recommend any proposed changes to the Agency Director and Commissioners;
- Conduct an annual self-evaluation of its performance, including its effectiveness and compliance with this Policy and request the Board of Commissioner's approval of proposed changes.