



Clerk of the Circuit Court Board of County Commissioners

Marion County



Internal Audit Division

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Myra Tedder, MSTU/Assessments Department
Mike May, Growth Management Bureau Chief

FROM: David R. Ellspermann, Clerk of the Circuit Court

DATE: August 5, 2003

RE: MSTU/ASSESSMENTS DEPARTMENT SPECIAL REVIEW

The Internal Audit Division has completed a special review of the MSTU/Assessments Department (Department). This review was primarily limited to the Department's activities involved in the maintaining of the assessment rolls database used for annual billing of fees.

We conducted this review pursuant to an unpublished management letter comment presented to County Administration and other interested parties by the County's external auditors (Purvis, Gray and Company) following their FY 2001 financial audit. The external auditors, during a meeting in April 2002, stated their understanding that responsibility for the assessment rolls had been recently transferred from the Property Appraiser to the BCC. Because the amounts of assessment revenues billed annually are significant, Purvis Gray recommended "...that the County continue its efforts to develop control and review procedures to ensure the completeness and accuracy of such assessment rolls."

Background

The Department performs a number of services and functions. According to the Department's website, the Department assists homeowner in self-assessment for roads and drainage and is also responsible for the implementation and management of 35 MSTUs and 2 Countywide MSBUs that provide services such as recreation, street lighting, road maintenance and road improvements. In addition, the website notes that "in March 2001, the BCC considered and approved the transfer of management of all non-ad valorem assessments from the Marion County Property Appraiser's Office to the MSTU/Assessment Department." The Countywide non-ad valorem assessments are for Solid Waste, Fire Protection and Clean Water Program (Stormwater).

Activities Performed

Promptly after the above mentioned meeting with the external auditors, the Internal Audit Division performed a preliminary review of the assessment rolls database in May 2002. This review included discussions of the database controls and procedures with Department management and staff and the Information Systems Department staff member who designed the database, as well as the examination of pertinent documentation. We made a determination that control and review procedures were satisfactory. We planned to review this subject in greater detail at a later time, which we have just completed.

As part of our current audit activities, we met with Department management and staff to follow up on information obtained during our 2002 activities. Our review was concentrated on non-ad valorem assessments for Solid Waste, Fire Protection and Stormwater because of their Countywide impact on taxpayers and because procedures are similar for the many other MSTUs.

We addressed the relevant activities and procedures performed by Department personnel to ensure that the assessments database is properly maintained and procedures are in place to ensure accuracy. We reviewed documentation (written instructions and procedures) maintained by the Department and observed Department staff as they performed certain duties. We also met with the responsible Information Systems Department employee to again review the assessments database implementation and maintenance procedures, as well as system controls.

Conclusion

We found that the responsible Department staff members are knowledgeable of, and appropriately perform, their duties. Based on our activities, we believe that the responsible County departments (MSTU/Assessments and Information Systems) have developed and implemented control and review procedures to ensure the completeness and accuracy of MSTU assessment rolls. The system and database seem to be suitably designed and operating as expected. We continue to recognize that this is an important area and intend to review the matter of MSTU assessment rolls on an annual basis.

This review was performed by Wallace Watford, Internal Auditor, and Sachiko Leon, Staff Auditor. We would like to express our appreciation to the management and staff of both the MSTU/Assessments Department and Information Systems Department for their cooperation and assistance in the conduct of our review.

c: Patrick G. Howard, County Administrator
Janet Y. Tutt, Deputy County Administrator
John Carter, Management Services Bureau Chief