



## BROWARD OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

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### MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable Claire Schubert, Mayor, Town of Hillsboro Beach  
And Members, Town Commission of Hillsboro Beach

From: John W. Scott, Inspector General 

Date: August 8, 2014

Subject: **OIG Observation, Review and Comment Re: *Town of Hillsboro Beach Procurement Practices, Ref. OIG 14041002***

In April 2014, while inquiring about another issue, OIG staff developed concerns regarding the operation and management of procurement practices by the Town of Hillsboro Beach (Town). We subsequently conducted a limited review of the Town's procurement practices as executed in Request For Proposal (RFP) 2012-02 for Solid Waste and Recyclable Material Collection.

Customarily, solicitations such as an RFP must state the criteria by which each proposal will be evaluated, so that prospective vendors and the public are assured of a competitive, transparent and fair process. An RFP also generally requires that certain supporting documentation be provided as part of the proposal. Finally, if any prospective vendor has a question, the accepted industry practice is to provide any answers and clarifications by way of an addendum to the RFP so that all prospective vendors will be acting upon the same information and no vendor obtains an unfair advantage.

RFP 2012-02, which was drafted by the Town Attorney, contained all of the typical required elements of an RFP as described above. However, an interview with the Town Clerk, the official responsible for issuing and evaluating the RFP, confirmed our concerns. Although she is responsible for addressing any questions asked by potential proposers and for evaluating the proposals, she stated that she had no experience executing procurements and no understanding of their general requirements. Specifically, the Clerk explained that she was not aware of the evaluation criteria contained in the RFP and did not evaluate the proposals in accordance with those criteria. She admitted that she did not review the proposals to determine if the required documentation was included, a fact that might affect a finding of responsiveness. She also stated that she responded via email to vendors asking questions, but failed to publish or provide those responses to other vendors.

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John W. Scott, *Inspector General*

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The OIG appreciates the cooperation of the Town during the investigation and separate procurement review. There was no evidence that the Clerk was intentionally engaging in any form of misconduct or gross mismanagement. Furthermore, we are aware that the Town is a small entity with a limited need for large public procurements and limited resources. Nonetheless, at a minimum, the Town must do more to ensure compliance the most basic and fundamental public procurement requirements. The OIG recommends that the Town of Hillsboro Beach consider steps to increase its staff's proficiency in the realm of public procurement. The Town can provide the Clerk with procurement training<sup>1</sup> or it may consider contracting for professional procurement services on an as-needed basis.

OIG staff is available to discuss this recommendation and its findings with Town officials. We will also continue to make available our services to the Town as it addresses the concern raised in this review.

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<sup>1</sup> The National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP) is offering an 8-week online course entitled "Developing and Managing Requests for Proposals." Additional information can be obtained at <http://www.nigp.org>.