



BROWARD OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Parkland Employees Bought Sod and Related Services for the City in Violation of the City's Purchasing Code

Broward Inspector General John W. Scott issued a [final report](#) today finding that City of Parkland employees violated the city's purchasing code when they piggybacked a contract to purchase, install, and remove sod for city grounds between 2013 and 2015.

Instead of using the lowest bidder and primary awardee on the piggybacked contract as required by code, city employees bought sod from another vendor that was not an awardee for much of the sod the city purchased during the review period. The OIG determined that the former superintendent of parks and special events who made the initial arrangement to use the piggyback became familiar with the other vendor when he made earlier sod purchases on behalf of another city. In seeking commission approval to give the work to the other vendor, he claimed that the primary awardee turned down the work and that the other vendor agreed to match the primary awardee's bid prices. But the vendors denied these claims, and the OIG found no witness or record to corroborate them. Moreover, the other vendor consistently charged – and the city approved and paid – more than what the primary awardee had bid.

The OIG also found that, in violation of the clear purchasing code mandate to competitively solicit vendors, the city used the other vendor to purchase ground preparation services that were never included in the piggybacked contract.

Successor employees continued to repeatedly and exclusively use the other vendor for the city's sod needs, paying it \$283,523 during the review period, and finance department employees failed to implement controls written into the city code intended to avoid such violations. Among its findings, the OIG identified \$84,571.83 in questionable city expenditures, including \$33,631.55 in wasteful spending and \$50,940.28 in direct violation of the city code.

The OIG commends the city's substantial efforts to tighten its procurement processes since our investigation began. Nonetheless, the city should be sure to follow through on its changes and also implement additional steps the OIG recommends in the report.