
SALT LAKE CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

DATE: September 5, 2003

SUBJECT: **City Attorney's Office – Audit Observations and Recommendations**

AFFECTED COUNCIL DISTRICTS: Citywide

STAFF REPORT BY: Gary Mumford

KEY ELEMENTS:

The City Council contracted with the Deloitte & Touche CPA firm for several small audits. The audits were not extensive or all-encompassing but were very limited-scope studies with rather small budgets. One of the audits was an analysis of the City Attorney's Office. The audit report includes an executive summary, background, observations/recommendations, and management's response. The audit concluded that opportunities exist to achieve greater effectiveness and functionality including utilizing support staff to a greater degree and implementing a case and time tracking system. At the time of the audit, the City Attorney was in the midst of evaluating office polices, procedures and practices in order to identify opportunities for improvement.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Attorneys are performing duties that could be assigned to paralegals or support staff. At the time of the audit, the Salt Lake City Attorney's Office (excluding Prosecutor's Office) had 12 attorneys and 6 support staff. The auditors compared Salt Lake City's staffing to the cities of Honolulu, Pittsburg, and Tallahassee and noted that these cities have a greater ratio of support staff to attorney's than Salt Lake City. *Following the audit, the City Attorney requested and the City Council approved an additional paralegal position. The City Attorney identified work areas that could more appropriately be performed by a paralegal than an attorney. He will continue to examine the allocation of work among attorneys, paralegals and other support personnel. The City Attorney expects that the ratio of support personnel to attorneys will likely increase over time.*
2. The auditors reported that the City Attorney's Office would benefit from enhanced case and workload tracking systems. *The Attorney's Office introduced a revised time reporting program in July. The City Attorney is assessing whether the case tracking function can be performed by the "Risk Master" program recently purchased by the Risk Management group.*
3. The auditors determined that opportunities exist to achieve greater effectiveness and functionality by defining reporting relationships, making performance evaluations, and assessing office workloads. *Changes in some office assignments will be announced in the very near future. Other changes in the organizational structure of the office, as well as key processes, are being considered.*

OPTIONS:

- a. The Council may wish to discuss the above observations and recommendations with the City Attorney.
 - b. The Council may wish to request a written report from the City Attorney within about six months on actions taken in response to observations noted in the audit report.
 - c. The Council may wish to encourage the Administration to consider the observations relating to the ratio of attorneys to paralegals and support staff when developing the budget for fiscal year 2004-05.
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