

DEKALB COUNTY, GEORGIA



PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

AUDIT REPORT

**ROADS & DRAINAGE
HIRING PRACTICES**

**PREPARED BY
FINANCE- INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION**

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Finance Department
Internal Audit

TRANSMITTAL MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 7, 2015
TO: Peggy Allen, Associate Director-Roads & Drainage
FROM: Cornelia Louis, Deputy Director of Finance-Internal Audit
SUBJECT: Public Works Department-Roads & Drainage Division
Re: Hiring Irregularities

**Interim Chief
Executive Officer**

Lee May

**Board of
Commissioners**

District 1
Nancy Jester

District 2
Jeff Rader

District 3
Larry Johnson

District 4
Sharon Barnes Sutton

District 5
Mereda Davis Johnson

District 6
Kathie Gannon

District 7
Stan Watson

Attached is a summary report prepared by Internal Audit on a possible Hiring Irregularity at Roads & Drainage. The issues raised in the report were discussed with you during the Exit Conference on October 7, 2015.

As is customary, we do not include the auditee's comments in our report. However, you may consider sending your comments or response directly to Gwen Brown-Patterson, Interim Chief Financial Officer/Finance Director.

We appreciate the cooperation and assistance we received from Human Resources, Purchasing & Contracting, and Roads & Drainage staff during the course of this review. If you have any questions about the audit or this report, please feel free to contact me at 404-371-2639.

Sincerely,

Cornelia Louis

cc: Board of Commissioners (BOC)
Zachary Williams, Chief Operating Officer/Executive Assistant
Gwen Brown-Patterson, Interim Chief Financial Officer/Finance Director
Benita C. Ransom, Human Resources Director
Charles Mason, Assistant Director-Public Works
Margaret Britton, Special Projects Manager
Claudette Leak, Assistant to the COO

**ROADS & DRAINAGE HIRING
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GENERAL INFORMATION

Hiring, training, and retaining of employees is the primarily responsibility of DeKalb County Human Resources (HR) Department. In order for a position to be filled, the hiring department must create a requisition in NEOGOV. Once completed, the hiring manager must route the requisition for approval through the appropriate channels: approval 1-department head, approval 2-budget analyst, approval 3-Chief Operating Officer, and approval 4-Human Resources Director. As of April 9, 2015, the approval channel processed changed, which only requires approval by the department head and the Human Resources Director.

When the position has been approved through all channels in NEOGOV, the hiring department contacts the HR Generalist to post the position via job announcement and/or advertised for a minimum of three days (five days for a vacancy to be filled through competitive promotions). Applications are accepted before the close of the job announcement/advertisement. The Generalist creates a worksheet to review the qualifications of applicants. A register is prepared of qualified applicants and a referral list is submitted to the hiring department.

Registers will generally expire six months from the date of establishment. It can be used to fill positions in other departments that may come available. However, Human Resources may extend or reduce the life of a register at its discretion.

Qualified applicants are selected based on the Education vs. Experience Equivalence policy. The policy, implemented on May 1, 2012, defines the following:

Minimum Qualification - All successful candidates shall meet minimum qualifications as established in the position classification specification, which outlines education and experience requirements and provides that related experience can be substituted for requisite formal education for positions at pay grades 33 and below.

Equivalence – The substitution of experience for education is allowed when determining whether an applicant meets position qualifications. This provision provides for substitution of relevant work experience for education on a year-for-year basis. Only related professional-level experience will be credited for professional positions.

The hiring department schedules and conducts interviews and provides HR the recommended applicant(s) from the referral list. HR presents an offer to the applicant, schedules physicals, completes background checks, and performs E-Verify online with the 1-9 form.

Employees Separated Due to Reduction in Force (RIF) or Reorganization – Employees who are displaced due to no fault of their own, such as in a reorganization or RIF, may be transferred to an open position at the same pay grade or demoted to a position of a lower grade. The employee must meet the minimum job requirement(s) and the department with the vacancy must agree to the transfer or demotion.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Internal Audit received an anonymous complaint regarding the hiring of a Requisition Technician at Public Works-Roads & Drainage Department (R&D). The complaint alleged;

1. The position had not been posted nor was the new hire interviewed by R&D.
2. The new hire was not qualified.
3. The hiring was done by the County's Chief Operating Officer (COO).

The purpose of our review was to ensure that both HR and R&D complied with the County's hiring policies and procedures when the Requisition Technician (RT) position was filled on October 25, 2014. In addition, ensure the new hire met the minimum qualifications required by the RT position.

We reviewed employee files, the position register, emails, and policies and procedures as well as interviewing Human Resources, Purchasing & Contracting (P&C), and R&D staff.

Our review was conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Auditing Standards and included such tests of records and other auditing procedures as were considered necessary under the circumstances.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In October 2014, Purchasing & Contracting went through a reorganization in which nine employees were terminated. The Chief Executive Officer's and Chief Operating Officer's offices requested that HR find open positions in the County that meet their skills and qualifications.

1. Posting and Interview

During the reorganization, a Requisition Technician at R&D accepted a position with P&C, leaving that RT position open. The position would normally be filled from the existing RT register, which was posted on September 22, 2014 through September 24, 2014, for a vacancy within the Police Department.

Although the new hire was not on the register for this position, Employees Separated Due to Reduction in Force (RIF) or Reorganization policy allowed for the transferring of the former P&C employee to R&D.

The Associate Director of R&D informed Internal Audit that she had worked with the new hire for several years on various contracts, performed a telephone interview, and agreed to the transfer.

2. Qualifications

The minimum requirements for the RT position are: (1) a high school diploma or GED and (2) two years progressively responsible purchasing, contracting, inventory management or administrative/clerical experience, or (3) an equivalent combination of education, training, and experience.

An Internal Equity Comparison, completed for the new hire, showed that she possesses a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science, a Master of Science in Public Administration, and 27 years of related experience. She worked with P&C for eight years, over three years as a Buyer/Sr. Buyer, and has knowledge of R&D's systems and Oracle.

The new position was a demotion for the new hire with a significant decrease of \$688/month (\$8,256/year) in salary.

3. COO involvement

Although the COO's office, along with the CEO's office, requested HR to determine if there were County vacancies suitable for the nine terminated P&C employees, there was no evidence of the COO's direct involvement in hiring the new RT.

CONCLUSION

Based on evidence reviewed, we find the complaints were unsubstantiated, except for comments stated below.

COMMENTS

The anonymous caller revealed that a co-worker relay these complaints; therefore, the reporter did not have first-hand knowledge.

It was also noted that two R&D staff were in the process of being re-classed as RT's when the position became vacant. As of the report date, the two positions have been re-classed.

Although Administrative Procedures seem to permit the filling of a vacancy without the use of a register in cases of RIFs or reorganizations, we recommend HR establish a procedure to document the justification for these hirings.