


**Department of
Telecommunications
Response
Case # 23-0036-I**

FROM	NAME & TITLE:	Simon Etta, Director of Telecommunications	CITY OF BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS:	Office of the Comptroller Department of Telecommunications 217 E. Redwood St, Suite 1100		
	SUBJECT:	Response to OIG Case #: 23-0036-1		
	TO:	Isabel Mercedes Cumming Office of the Inspector General 100 North Holliday Street, Suite 635	DATE:	

RE: OIG Case #: 23-0036-1 Lack of Suspension for Election Phones

The Department of Telecommunications (Telecom), has received and reviewed the Management alert dated July 7, 2023, regarding the lack of suspension for the Baltimore City Board of Elections phones.

On, July 11, 2023, members of Telecom staff met with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] from Board of Elections to review and develop written procedures for the election phone process. Along with our already established procedures through our automated ticketing system, the additional written procedures will ensure there is appropriate documentation for the activation and suspension of the lines, regardless of personnel turnover.

The investigation conducted by your office reviewed the [REDACTED] phone bills for the election phones from January to April 2023, and it shows Telecom made payments in the amount of \$33,514.89 for that period. Telecom requested and received a credit from [REDACTED] in the amount of \$41,209.02 for January through March, with partial credit for April 2023. A journal entry credit [REDACTED] in the amount of \$27,929.07 was therefore issued to the Board of Elections.

Telecom acknowledges the need to provide oversight, and administrative controls regarding issuance of City wireless devices and has implemented changes over the last 2 years to improve those areas. Specifically, the following improvements have been made:

1. On September 30, 2020, we implemented the [REDACTED] ticket system. Through this system, all requests for phone services or repairs must be entered. The only exception was wireless devices which continued to be requested via email to the Telecom billing department.
2. On July 1, 2021 the ordering of wireless devices was integrated into [REDACTED] to move it from a manual system with requests made by email to the new system so requests, status and data could be tracked via automation.
3. Each quarter, Telecom coordinates a meeting of telephone coordinators and fiscal officers to discuss changes, new products and concerns. On June 22, 2021, attendees at the meeting were notified that that all requests regarding wireless devices would

- now be done via [REDACTED] electronic ticketing. In addition, an electronic communications blast was sent to all City employees on December 13, 2021.
4. We continued efforts to improve operations with the implementation of annual business review with agencies starting January 31, 2022. To date, we have met with 40 agencies in business reviews of their telecommunications services.

Your report highlighted the fact that despite improvements in oversight and administrative controls, we unfortunately still had staff who bypassed the established protocols including the ticketing system and continued to correspond directly with the Board of Elections via email/phone. This led to lack of documentation. Although it would have been months later, we do believe the issue raised in your report would have been identified before our next scheduled annual business review with the Board of Elections on August 17, 2023.

We thank you for bringing this matter to our attention and if additional information is needed, please feel free to contact me.

CC: Honorable Bill Henry, City Comptroller
Erika M. McClammy, JD
Deputy City Comptroller & Equity Officer