

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL
CITY OF BALTIMORE



Isabel Mercedes Cumming
Inspector General

Investigative
Report Synopsis

OIG Case # 23-0031-I

Issued: November 14, 2023



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL
Isabel Mercedes Cumming, Inspector General
City Hall, Suite 635
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202



November 14, 2023

Dear Citizens of Baltimore City,

The mission of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) is to promote accountability, efficiency, and integrity in the City of Baltimore (City) government, as well as to investigate complaints of fraud, financial waste, and abuse. The following synopsis is a condensed version of the full report provided to City management officials and does not contain all investigative information. The OIG commends DOT for its agency response and prompt attention to the following matter.

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) received a complaint alleging a Department of Transportation (DOT) Supervisor allowed a DOT employee (DOT Employee) to take Baltimore City furniture home for personal use. Further, the complaint alleged the DOT Employee sustained an injury while taking the furniture home.

Investigation revealed that an office move for a DOT division took place over a few months in 2022 and 2023. In regards to the complaint, according to the DOT Employee, the employee attempted to move a broken chair to the old office so it could be discarded. The DOT Employee explained that the chair fell while loading it onto a vehicle, and they sustained an injury. The DOT employee did not know where the chair was placed after the injury occurred or its current location.

Regarding the DOT Employee, the chair, and the injury, the DOT Supervisor confirmed they gave the DOT Employee permission to take a surplus desk chair home and that it was intended for the DOT Employee's personal use. According to the DOT Supervisor, they told the DOT Employee not to move the chair on their own because it was heavy. Regarding the current location of the chair, the DOT Supervisor was uncertain. The DOT Supervisor said they plan to complete an inventory and have had cameras added to the new office location. Additionally, the DOT Supervisor explained that they have not permitted anyone else to remove property for personal use.

The OIG reviewed City Administrative Manual (AM) policies addressing inventory and supplies. AM-305-1, Part I *Control of City Inventory and Management of City Assets*, states surplus materials must be returned immediately to stock, and employees are not allowed to borrow equipment for personal use. According to the AM-306-1 *Property Disposal Program*, the City Purchasing Agent has the sole authority to determine the disposition of surplus property, including the movement and storage of such property.

The investigation substantiated the allegation that the DOT Supervisor authorized the DOT Employee to take home a City-owned chair. The chair remains unaccounted for to date. The OIG recommended the DOT division review AM 306-1 and AM 305-1 so compliance with City protocols when conducting inventory and surplus property management are met.

Sincerely,

Isabel Mercedes Cumming
Inspector General

REPORT FRAUD, WASTE AND ABUSE

HOTLINE 443-984-3476 800-417-0430 EMAIL OIG@BALTIMORECITY.GOV WEBSITE OIG.BALTIMORECITY.GOV

This public synopsis is only a summary of a more comprehensive report of investigation submitted to the appropriate City management official

CC: Hon. Brandon M. Scott, Mayor of Baltimore City
Hon. Nick Mosby, Baltimore City Council President
Hon. Bill Henry, Baltimore City Comptroller
Honorable Members of the Baltimore City Council
Hon. Ebony Thompson, Acting Baltimore City Solicitor

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Department of Public Works

Response

Case # 23-0018-I

CITY OF BALTIMORE
BRANDON M. SCOTT, Mayor



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Corren Johnson, Director
417 E. Fayette Street, 5th Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

September 19, 2023

Baltimore City Office of the Inspector General
100 N. Holliday Street, Suite 635
Baltimore, MD 21202

RE: OIG Case No. 23-0031-I Disposal of City Property

Dear Inspector General Cumming:

This serves as the Department of Transportation's (DOT) response to the OIG case referenced above. After conducting a comprehensive review of the case notes and interviews, our agency has determined the need to provide guidance and education to key employees. This is not limited to those mentioned in the case but extends to all divisions within the Department of Transportation. Our primary objective is to ensure that everyone is well-versed in the correct procedures for disposing of City assets.

To support strict adherence to the City's policies, we will schedule training session(s) for all division chiefs and managers by November 1, 2023. During this training, we will thoroughly review and disseminate the Standard Operating Procedures and relevant Administrative Manual policies:

- AM-305-1: Control of Inventory and Management of City Assets
- AM-306-1: Property Disposal Program (Excluding Real Property)

Furthermore, as part of our commitment to oversight and accountability, we are requiring each division chief to share this crucial information with their respective teams. Additionally, they will be tasked with appointing a representative who will be responsible for the proper handling and securing of all expendable items. These representatives will be responsible for submitting the Disposal Property form(s) to the Bureau of Procurement. To streamline this process, we will maintain a consolidated list of these designated representatives for easy reference within the Department and provide examples for proper form completion.

Finally, I would like to confirm our agency's concurrence with the findings of the OIG investigation. Consequently, the team member who authorized the improper disposal of property in the case has received counseling for their failure to adhere to the proper disposal procedures outlined in AM 306-1.

We sincerely appreciate your diligence in bringing this matter to our attention. Should you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to reach out to either myself or Mrs. Laetitia Gardener, Deputy Director for Administration, at Laetitia.Gardener@baltimorecity.gov. We thank you for your continued support and we remain committed to ensuring the utmost compliance with the City's policies and procedures.

Sincerely,

Corren Johnson
Director

cc: Faith Leach, City Administrator
Simone Johnson, Deputy City Administrator
Laetitia Gardner, Deputy Director of Administration
Veobia Akilo, Chief of Staff
Tavon Braxton, Deputy Director of Operations