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# **CITY OF SAN ANTONIO**

## **OFFICE OF THE CITY AUDITOR**



Audit of the Office of the City Clerk

Municipal Elections Contract

Project No. AU16-006

August 9, 2016

Kevin W. Barthold, CPA, CIA, CISA  
City Auditor

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## Executive Summary

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As part of our annual Audit Plan approved by City Council, we conducted an audit of the Office of the City Clerk's (OCC) Election Services contract with the Bexar County Elections Office. The audit objective and conclusion follow:

**Determine if key components of the City's municipal elections administration process are accurately monitored, supported, and in compliance with the election services contract terms.**

The City's municipal election administration process is accurately monitored, supported, and in compliance with the election services contract terms, the Texas Election Code and legislative requirements.

Related City Ordinances are presented and approved timely by City Council. Additionally, a standard application review process is in place and the OCC meets regularly with the Bexar County Elections Office to receive status updates on the election and to ensure Bexar County's compliance with contract requirements.

No recommendations were made for this audit.

The Office of the City Clerk's Management Acknowledgement of the results is in Appendix B on page 5.

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## Background

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The Office of the City Clerk (OCC) is responsible for administering municipal elections in accordance with the Texas Election Code. For each election held, the City enters into an Election Services contract with the Bexar County Elections Office (BCEO) to conduct the election.

The OCC's Municipal Elections Division is responsible for ensuring that City of San Antonio Voters are able to cast ballots for Mayor, City Council, and all Special City Elections. The OCC works with the Elections Office with a goal of implementing the most efficient and cost-effective elections. In FY 2015, the City paid \$2,002,608 to the BCEO for pro-rated election and equipment services expenses.

Election services conducted by the BCEO include hiring officials to serve as judges and clerks, administering training and payment to the judges and clerks, ordering and distributing election supplies, maintaining, testing, and delivering iVotronic voting units, securing polling locations and tabulating ballots.

The following table illustrates FY 2015 City elections conducted by the BCEO:

Type of Election	Date of Election	Contract \$ Amount
Special (to fill District 2 vacancy)	November 4, 2014	122,407
Special/Run-Off (to fill District 2 vacancy)	December 9, 2014	204,753
General, Charter & Special Sales Tax	May 9, 2015	824,253
Special/Run-Off (for Mayor and District 7)	June 13, 2015	851,195
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 2,002,608</b>

## Audit Scope and Methodology

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The audit scope included municipal elections conducted from October 1, 2014 to February 29, 2016.

To obtain an understanding of internal controls, we conducted interviews and walkthroughs with the City Clerk and Assistant City Clerk from the Office of the City Clerk (OCC) and the Bexar County Elections Administrator. Additionally, we reviewed the Texas Election Code, City Charter, OCC internal guidelines, and Election Services contracts.

Testing criteria included review of election calendars and notices, candidate applications and application fees. We also reviewed related ordinances (i.e. Ordering of the Election, Joint Election Agreement, Contract for Election Services, and Canvassing of the Election) to ensure compliance with state requirements.

We relied on computer-processed data in SAP, the City's accounting system, to validate contract expenses and application fees. Our reliance was based on performing direct tests on the data rather than evaluating the system's general and application controls. Our direct testing included reviewing that contract expenses were recorded appropriately for election services and validating that application fees were received from election candidates. We do not believe that the absence of testing general and application controls had an effect on the results of our audit.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our results and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for results and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

## Audit Results and Recommendations

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### A. Office of the City Clerk (OCC) Election Administration Process

The City's municipal election administration processes are accurately monitored, supported, and in compliance with the Election Services contract terms.

Per the Texas Election Code, certain duties cannot be contracted out but must be performed by the OCC to ensure that election operations are effective. This includes but is not limited to ensuring passage and implementation of all election related Ordinances, reviewing candidate applications, satisfying publication requirements of Notice of Election, reviewing and approving spelling and verbiage for voting machines and paper ballots, providing for translation of election Ordinances to Spanish, and conducting status meetings with the Bexar County Elections Office (BCEO).

The OCC maintains a master election calendar to ensure passage of election related ordinances, and has an established candidate application review process in place to ensure that submitted applications are reviewed timely and eligible candidates are placed on the voting ballot. This review includes verification of candidate residency, voter registration status, and petitions in lieu of an application fee.

Additionally, the OCC meets with the BCEO prior to and throughout elections as a means to provide assurance that contractual duties are being met. Controls in place by the BCEO include:

- Maintenance of a comprehensive checklist of processes needed to conduct elections
- Ensuring that security access is limited to appropriate personnel
- Overseeing annual preventative maintenance inspections on electronic voting equipment
- IT system controls to mitigate election result tampering

Based on our review, we concluded that the OCC and the BCEO have adequate controls in place to meet legislative and contractual requirements.

### Recommendation

None

## **Appendix A – Staff Acknowledgement**

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Sandy Paiz, CFE, Audit Manager  
Reina Sandoval, Auditor in Charge

## Appendix B – Management Response

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### CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

SAN ANTONIO TEXAS 78283-3966

July 21, 2016

Kevin W. Barthold, CPA, CIA, CISA  
City Auditor  
San Antonio, Texas

RE: Management's Acknowledgement of its Review of the Office of City Clerk's Municipal Elections Contract

The Office of the City Clerk has reviewed the audit report and provided its comments to the auditors. As there are no recommendations for management, no management responses are required.

Office of the City Clerk:

☒ Fully Agrees

☐ Does Not Agree (provide detailed comments)

Sincerely,

Melinda L. Uriegas, TRMC  
Assistant City Clerk

Date

Leticia M. Vacek, TRMC/MMC/CMC  
City Clerk

Date