City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:19-2003

Agenda Item Number: 6.

Agenda Date: 2/19/2019

In Control: Audit and Accountability Committee

AUDIT COMMITTEE SUMMARY
February 19, 2019
Audit of San Antonio Police Department
Property & Evidence Room
Report Issued January 14, 2019

Audit Objective

Determine if chain of custody and evidence preservation controls are adequate for SAPD Property and Evidence Facilities.

Background

The SAPD Property and Evidence Room (property room) has custodial responsibility for all property and evidence confiscated by SAPD officers. They are charged with protecting the integrity of all evidence, personal property, or property confiscated by SAPD. Their responsibilities include intake and logging all items received, assuring its safe storage, managing the chain of custody, and ensuring the proper disposal of items.

Chain of custody is the chronological, documented record of the location and possessor of evidence from its initial collection through potential testing, court use, storage, and disposition. The property room uses the FileOnQ system to manage all evidence, personal, and found property

Items of evidentiary value represent approximately 98.6% of items in the property room, with the remaining 1.4% being found and personal property. Typical items maintained include firearms, narcotics, currency, blood samples, clothing, backpacks, bicycles, sexual assault kits, bullet casings, etc. The property room performs periodic inventories of currency, firearms, and narcotics. Additionally, the Integrity Detail, the quality assurance unit of SAPD, performs periodic audits of the property room each fiscal year. The property room manages an inventory of almost 500,000 items with daily increases as evidence, personal, and found property are delivered into their custody by SAPD.

Audit Scope and Methodology

The audit scope included chain of custody and evidence preservation controls from FY2015 through

FY2018. We conducted observations of the property room and the drop-off facility to determine proper physical security. We reviewed inventories, as well as conducting are own inventory to verify the accuracy of physical inventory and inventory data within FileOnQ. In addition, we reviewed evidence preservation controls related to DNA evidence and hazardous materials. We verified the adequacy of controls over the purging and disposition of property and evidence. We reviewed chain of custody controls to determine if items temporarily released are properly documented. We reviewed cash handling controls. Additionally, we validated a sample of performance measures to determine if they are accurately reported. We reviewed for appropriate user access and data back-ups of the FileOnQ system. Finally, we reviewed the SANE kit testing process to determine compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Audit Conclusions

Chain of custody and evidence preservation controls are adequate for SAPD Property and Evidence Facilities. SAPD have effective inventory management processes and procedures in place to ensure that inventory files are complete and accurate. In addition, SAPD have effective chain of custody controls in place to ensure that evidence custody and documentation is accurately maintained. Furthermore, inventory levels are effectively managed through timely purging of items no longer needed, cash handling controls were executed in accordance with administrative directives, and performance measures are accurately reported. Finally, access and back-up controls for the FileOnQ system are effective.

However, there are opportunities to strengthen controls associated with user badge access which was excessive. Controls for the accuracy of data entry of currency were not being executed and there was a lack of documentation for the approval to convert narcotics. Finally, controls surrounding SANE kits were not consistently executed as intended.

We made recommendations to address the opportunities. Management agreed with the recommendations and developed positive corrective action plans.