



DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
CITY OF CHICAGO

TO: Joseph Ferguson
Inspector General

FROM: 
Amer Ahmad
City Comptroller

RE: I.G. Case # 11-0372

DATE: May 29, 2012

Please accept the following as the Department of Finance's (DOF) response to the Inspector General's ("IGO") public report of the above-referenced case forwarded to my office on April 12, 2012. We have provided under separate a cover a detailed confidential response addressing the IGO's disciplinary recommendations and identifying specific issues with the investigation's methodology and conclusions.

Ultimately, we thank the Inspector General's Office for bringing attention to a practices of the Booting Program personnel (taking lunches and breaks at the end of their shifts), as well as to the absence of appropriate Streets and Sanitation dispatch personnel, which resulted in an inefficient utilization of booting, supervisory, and investigative resources during the timeframe of early 2010 through mid 2011. We have confirmed that the inefficient lunch/break practice has ceased, and as of Booters stagger lunches and breaks throughout their shift. Additionally as of October 2011, the wireless technology that was designed as a solution to the unavailability of Street and Sanitation dispatch personnel has been fully deployed, and the supervisory and investigative personnel no longer are being utilized for dispatching duties.

Below please find DOF's responses to the IG's specific recommendations:

- 1. Review the staffing for the booting night shift and work with DSS to ensure that dispatchers are available to the night shift, for the entire shift.*

The night shift schedule, with respect to the supervisory and investigative personnel, has been reviewed and been determined to be appropriate. With respect to ensuring the availability of dispatchers on the night shift, as the IGO is aware, this is a resource issue that cannot be addressed without the Department of Streets and Sanitation. Such additional dispatchers could conceivably require additional resources in the Streets and Sanitation budget. In lieu of additional dispatchers, DOF has fully deployed the wireless technology described above.

- 2. Ensure that security personnel are available to the night shift and able to perform their assigned security functions as appropriate.*

The persons referred to as "security personnel" in this report do not actually provide security for the Booters, and therefore we believe the report's conclusion that such "security" is absent is unfortunately misleading. The personnel referred to in the report occupy the titles of Parking Revenue Security Supervisor and Parking Revenue Security Specialist (both obtainable from the Department of Human Resources or from the Department of Finance), the latter having been reclassified in August of 2011 to Parking Investigator. The previous title of Security Specialist was a bit of a misnomer. A Parking Investigator's official job description has nothing at all to do with the provision of security, nor does an occupant have to have any previous experience with the provision of security.

Just one of many of the Parking Revenue Security Supervisor position's job responsibilities is to "develop and implement safety, security, and surveillance standards" for the Street Operations Division, but this too is very different from the provision of security referred to in the body of the report.

To the extent that the Department of Finance is committed to making sure the occupants of these two positions are performing all of their required functions (especially since the deployment of the wireless technology), we would consider this recommendation as having been embraced.

- 3. Ensure that all employees working in the night shift are able to take breaks at appropriate times throughout their shift in accordance with state labor laws.*

Again, the Department of Finance thanks the IGO for bringing attention to our office of the practice by the Booting personnel of combining lunch and break times at the end of their shift in violation of existing DOF policy, which explicitly forbids such a practice. Booting personnel has ceased this practice as of December 2011 per the direction of the Deputy Director of Street Operations and now adheres to an appropriate break and lunch schedule.

- 4. While DOF is working toward an automated confirmation system, as of December 2011 this system was not functioning in a way that would eliminate the need for dispatchers. Thus, the IGO recommends that DHR conduct a position audit of the remaining security position and reclassify the position to more accurately reflect the employee's dispatch duties.*

The automated confirmation system was fully deployed to all booting vehicles in October 2011. It is indeed functioning as designed, which eliminates the need for dispatchers. Should the system ever need to be taken out of service for maintenance, then manual intervention (i.e., dispatchers) would be required on a temporary basis. As noted in the response to Recommendation #1, it would not be prudent to ask the Department of Streets and Sanitation to devote additional resources simply to provide "back-up" resources in the unlikely event of a system malfunction. And because such an occurrence is, and will continue to be, an unexpected incident requiring supervisory response, we believe such a response already falls within the duties of the Parking Revenue Security Supervisor position.

Again, I would like to express our appreciation for the IGO's work. I embrace this opportunity for further examination of our operations in order to make improvements, and do take evidence of inefficiency and waste very seriously. Throughout the years, the Department of Finance (formerly Revenue) has implemented many initiatives to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the boot program. These initiatives include improved technology, including GPS monitoring, expanded LPR capabilities, and remote access to the parking system, a reduction of the number of Booters per vehicle, Municipal Code changes, and making use of additional shifts. These changes have resulted in a 73% increase in the number of boots placed per year from 2002 to 2011, and we remain committed to such efforts to improve the efficiency of our operations.