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OIG AGAIN URGES SHERIFF'S OFFICE TO ADOPT MORE TRANSPARENT ACCOUNTING SYSTEM

The **New Orleans Office of Inspector General (OIG)** today released a public letter finding a lack of progress by the Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office (OPSO) in adopting a more transparent accounting and purchasing system.

Today's letter is a follow-up to an OIG letter released in October 2023, which recommended OPSO transition to the Budget, Requisition, and Accounting Services System (BRASS), the procurement platform used by the City of New Orleans. The 2023 letter suggested OPSO's adoption of BRASS would greatly improve transparency and information-sharing with the City, which provides more than 70% of OPSO's budget. Transitioning to BRASS would have no impact on OPSO's independence and would enable the City to ensure its limited resources are being expended in an efficient and effective manner.

Along with increased accountability, BRASS would offer a modern replacement for OPSO's current system, which OPSO has indicated will reach end of life in 2025. Using end-of-life software, or software for which vendors discontinue support or software updates, can present a significant security risk.

In its response to the 2023 letter, OPSO disagreed with the recommendation to adopt BRASS, but did agree with the objective to improve the agency's transparency with the City. OPSO determined the "best course of action for our organization" would be to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a new financial management system, stating that any new system would allow "read only" access to City leaders for better oversight.

Nearly a year later, in September 2024, the OIG contacted OPSO to inquire about the status of the RFP for the agency's new system. OPSO management informed our office there was no RFP process in place for a new system and no estimated date for when an RFP process would begin.

The OIG is concerned with OPSO's lack of progress and sense of urgency in procuring a new system, as the current system does not allow for effective oversight over the \$56 million in City money appropriated to OPSO and could significantly increase cybersecurity concerns.

In today's letter, the OIG recommends OPSO swiftly issue an RFP for a new financial management system, or reconsider adopting BRASS as its financial management system, as previously recommended.

Additionally, the OIG will be releasing a report in the near future regarding OPSO's Mardi Gras Pay and Paid Details.

Inspector General Ed Michel stated:

"The City furnishes over 70% of OPSO's budget, contributing \$56 million to OPSO's annual budgeted revenue. It is incumbent upon the City to ensure this taxpayer money is expended in an efficient manner pursuant to financial best practices and protocols. Therefore, we are urging OPSO to adopt a system that will enable City leaders and other stakeholders to provide proper oversight of these funds."

To view today's letter, visit nolaog.gov.

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