



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY AUDITOR

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To: Margaret Ewing, Human Resources Director

From: Bob Grogan, CPA, CFE *RTG*
County Auditor

Subject: Retention Benefit Payments Limited Scope Internal Audit
#19-11

Date: January 29, 2019

The Office of the County Auditor has completed a limited scope internal audit of the payment of retention benefits for the pay period ended January 25, 2019. The results of the audit identified no exceptions related to the payment of retention benefits or for required disclosures for seven employees receiving such benefit payments this pay period.

Results

Audit procedures determined that for the pay period ended January 25, 2019, seven employees were eligible for retention benefits and received the appropriate amount of retention benefit payments as outlined in the County's personnel policy. Additionally, the County was in compliance with the statutory disclosure requirements.

Audit Objectives

- To audit the payment of accrued retention benefits to ensure that the amounts distributed to employees are in compliance with County policy.
- Verify the County's compliance with the Local Wage Increase Transparency Act as prescribed by Illinois Compiled Statutes 50 ILCS 155/5.

Audit Background

For employees hired on or before November 30, 2002, the County offered an Employee Retention Program, whereby eligibility begins either at age 55 and 10 years of continuous service, or 20 years of continuous service independent of age. The program was established by a County Board resolution approximately 20 years ago and was designed to retain staff during a period of high turnover. Employees may earn up to 120 paid days with 20 years of continuous service, payable at termination.

The Illinois statutes require local governments to disclose certain wage increases made to employees. As prescribed by law, the payment of accrued benefits, under specific circumstances to employees not covered under collective bargaining agreements, is considered a disclosable payment requiring discussion by the governing board in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.

Audit Scope

This limited-scope internal audit was designed to test payroll transactions to determine if the transactions have been entered correctly as well as reviewing the transactions for compliance with applicable policies. The audit procedures consisted of examining the payroll and employment verification reports available to the County Auditor for the pay period ended January 25, 2019. On a sample basis, the service period and age of employees receiving retention benefit payments was examined to determine eligibility for retention benefits as defined in the County's personnel policy. The total number of hours of retention benefits paid to sample individuals in prior payroll periods in addition to the current pay period was calculated to verify that the employees did not exceed the maximum allowable retention benefit as outlined in the County's personnel policy. The sample represented 4,870.00 hours and \$209,994.06 of retention benefit payments.

Audit Findings

Seven employees received retention program benefits for the pay period ended January 25, 2019. The retention program benefit payments to these individuals were made in compliance with the County's policy.

The County was in compliance with the statutory requirements of disclosing the payments by discussing the payments during the County Board meetings prior to the issuance of the payments.

Recommendations

No recommendations are being made to the Human Resources Department for improvement of the process for payment of retention benefits at this time.

If you have any questions, please contact me or Chief Deputy Auditor Peter Balgemann.

cc: County Board
Thomas Cuculich, County Administrator