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Bureau of Finance | Office of the Chief Financial Officer

**AMMAR M. RIZKI**

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

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**MEMORANDUM**

Date: November 06, 2019

To: Honorable Donna Miller, Cook County Board of Commissioners  
Honorable Cook County Board of Commissioners

CC: Lanetta Haynes Turner, Chief of Staff  
John Roberson, Legislative and Governmental Affairs  
Tanya Anthony, Budget Director

From: Ammar M. Rizki, Chief Financial Officer, Bureau of Finance

Subject: **FY2020 Budget Questions**

Dear Honorable Commissioner Miller,

The Bureau of Finance is in receipt of your questions regarding the FY2020 Budget. Please find below the responses from the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Department of Revenue, Department of Budget and Management Services, Comptroller, Office of Contract Compliance and the Office of the Chief Procurement Officer.

**Office of the Chief Financial Officer**

*501835-Transportation and Travel Expenses.*

*Question:* FY2020 request is \$20,800 more than FY2019. Why has this account exceeded the FY2019 approved and adopted appropriation by almost \$4K? What is the year end projection? Why is it being increased by \$10K?

*Response:*

(Please note: The FY2020 request for Transportation and Travel Expenses for OCFO is \$15,000, which is \$10,600 more than FY2019 and the response below uses these dollar amounts. Commissioner Miller's office was contacted to clarify the submitted question.)

The increase in travel costs for the Office of the Chief Financial Officer in FY20 is related to its participation in several conferences in the coming year. Members of the OCFO will attend a conference being hosted by Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) in May 2020. This annual conference provides the latest information in ethics, policy, procedure and municipal finance best practices. It will provide the financial staff a continual education in today's current trends and case studies pertinent for finance officers representing all forms of state and local governments.

Additionally, the new Manager of Financial Planning will attend the annual Revenue Estimation Conference hosted by the Federation of Tax Administrators, to ensure he can bring back best practices to the Independent Revenue Forecasting Commission on county revenue estimate methodologies. The Conference brings state and local officials from across the country to discuss current topics and challenges related to revenue estimation.

### **Department of Revenue**

*501295 - Salaries and Wages of Per Diem Employees.*

*Question:* What type of positions will this funding be spent on?

*Response:* Student Administrative Aide (Intern)

*Question:* What are the projected expenditures by end of FY2019?

*Response:* \$7,835

*Question:* What are the projected expenditures for FY2020?

*Response:* \$31,200

Generally, our Student Administrative Aides assist with various divisions on the administration of Home Rule Tax compliance and enforcement efforts. Some of the duties and tasks consist of the following:

- Assists with outreach to previously identified delinquent and deficient taxpayers regarding the status of their accounts.
- Reviews incoming taxpayer correspondence and directs taxpayer inquiries to appropriate staff members.
- Participates in, with the coordination of staff, projects related to tax compliance, tax discovery and revenue recovery.
- Assists with clerical operations, data entry and customer service.
- Uses various software packages to type documents, create spreadsheets and maintain databases; may compile, tabulate and analyze statistical data, and research and collect information for inclusion in studies and reports.
- Collects information from files or staff for routine inquiries on office programs(s) or periodic reports; refers non-routine requests to supervisor or staff.
- Reviews incoming and outgoing materials and correspondence for consistency and conformance with procedures; assures that proper approvals have been obtained when needed.

### **Department of Budget and Management Services**

*Programs- Performance Management.*

*Question:* Programs-Performance Management. appears to be eliminated is this the case or is it being transferred to another department?

*Response:*

The Performance Management program is being transferred to the Bureau of Administration and is being managed under the Research, Operations and Innovation (ROI) Unit in an effort to better align process improvements with performance management.

## **Comptroller**

### *501210 - Planned Overtime Compensation.*

*Question:* The FY2019 YTD expenditures are \$18,285, but there was no appropriation for OT. What accounts for this year's OT spending and since there wasn't an appropriation it's over budget, will this be corrected by transferring funds into this account?

#### *Response:*

Overall, combined salaries and wages have a favorable budget variance. The deficit in our overtime account due to no appropriation will be offset from our savings in our regular salary account. Please note that Budget requested to record comp time earned hours as overtime instead of regular salaries during FY 2019.

The FY 2019 YTD overtime expense incurred for processing payroll and garnishments is mainly due to staff shortages caused by various extended leave of absences (LOA) and staff vacancies. As result of the LOA's and vacancies, we required the payroll and garnishment team to work overtime (comp time hours earned) when necessary to ensure the timely and accurate processing of payroll and garnishments. We expect to minimize the requirement of overtime (comp time hours earned) once staff returns from LOA's and staff vacancies are filled. We recently filled three (3) staff vacancies (Assistant Payroll Supervisor, Central Payroll Processing III and Central Payroll Processing Assistant) and continue to work with BHR on filling two (2) other vacancies (Central Payroll Processor II and Deputy Comptroller of Payroll and Garnishments).

## **Office of Contract Compliance**

*Question:* Initiatives for FY19 include: The Mentor/Protégé Initiative. A key component for M/WBEs is access to capital and streamlining the payment process so they get paid sooner; How can Contract Compliance assist with these issues?

#### *Response:*

OCC engages in robust outreach to attract more interest in Cook County's M/WBE program. A key innovation in those efforts is to leverage resources from Assist Agencies, Chambers of Commerce and other small business support organizations to help minority and women-owned businesses increase their operational capacity; ensure legal compliance; professionalize their internal operations; gain access to capital and manage their finances to grow their businesses.

Streamlining payment processes requires the effort of County user departments, the Bureau of Technology, the County Comptroller and County vendors to identify best practices and institute operational changes where appropriate. OCC will advocate on behalf of M/WBE firms for support and operational improvements to ensure their prompt payment for services rendered.

*Question:* Performance Measures show FY2019 projection for number of Certified firms at 600 and FY2020 target is 625. The target is only 25 more than this year's projection?

#### *Response:*

OCC continuously encourages minority and women-owned firms to certify as MBEs and/or WBEs. Such certification requires annual maintenance and so each year new firms certify while others choose not to recertify. OCC's efforts include making the certification process less onerous while maintaining its rigor. Past years have shown our overall number of certified firms decrease. Maintaining our current number

will be a challenge and so implementing a target of increasing the number by 25 is a responsible goal that OCC hopes to exceed.

*Question:* A-101. OCC will add one FTE funded by Cook County Health to support CCH compliance and outreach. What will the goal be to increase M/WBE utilization in our health system and what outreach efforts do you anticipate for FY2020?

*Response:*

OCC's participation goals are set by the Cook County Code. Achieving those goals is always a function of the goods and services being procured, the structure of the procurements being advertised and the availability of MBEs and WBEs in the marketplace. OCC will continue to engage the business community through outreach events and email marketing, while adding social media marketing, leveraging our public access cable channel, engagement with assist agencies and chambers of commerce, and collaborating with community organizations and elected officials.

#### **Office of the Chief Procurement Officer**

##### *540129-Maintenance and Subscription Services*

*Question:* Why is there a big increase in this line item for FY2020?

*Response:*

Every year, we pay for our software licenses out of this line which are used Countywide for procurement purposes (Prodagio, Marketplace, and NetTrax). About \$200K of the total allocation is for our current software systems and potential minor enhancements.

The increase in this line is related to our modernization efforts and moving the office away from paper as quickly as possible. Since we are consistently short staffed, it's historically been difficult to focus our efforts on medium- and long-term efficiency solutions, that's why this year we've increased our allocation with the goal of modernizing in the short/medium term. We continue to work with the Bureau of Technology on software solutions, to increase efficiencies of throughout the procurement processes. We expect to utilize the increased allocation to bring in an outside consultant to assess our current systems and provide multiple options to increase efficiencies, improve transparency and enhance strategic sourcing. Both the modernization assistance and the strategic sourcing expertise will greatly assist the OCPO with its core objectives of improving efficiency, provide best value and increase transparency to the procurement process.

Rough Estimates FY20 Budget:

- Prodagio - \$105K
- MarketPlace - \$65K
- NetTrax - \$2,500
- Enhancements/Upgrades - \$30K
- Consultant/Staffing Supplements - \$150K
- Additional Software Solutions - \$130K
- Additional Hardware Needs - \$20K