



## COUNTY OF WINNEBAGO

Office of the County Auditor

**County Administration Building**  
404 Elm Street, Room 201  
Rockford, Illinois 61101

**WILLIAM D. CROWLEY**  
County Auditor  
Phone (815) 319-4206  
bcrowley@wincoil.us

May 19th, 2017

To: Frank Haney, Winnebago County Board Chairman

From: William D. Crowley, Winnebago County Auditor

RE: Recommended Rejection for Invoice 2017-501, Christopher Brooke Beal (\$7,375)

Pursuant to the Illinois Compiled Statute 55 ILCS 5/Div. 3.1. Sec. 3-1005, the County Auditor is required to audit all claims against the County, and recommend to the County Board the payment or rejection of all claims presented.

As part of my monthly review of all claims against the County, County Administration recently presented my office with an invoice payable to Christopher Brooke Beal in the amount of \$7,375 for services described as "consulting – host agreement analysis". I am recommending to the County Board that this invoice, as presented, be rejected for payment as I find no evidence that the County Board has authorized Mr. Beal as an awardee under the approved list of Host Fee Fund expenditures.

Additionally, I am recommending that Winnebago County discontinue any relationship with this vendor as a basic internet search in my office revealed that in December of 2012, Mr. Beal pled guilty to embezzling \$850,000 from the Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County and was sentenced to serve 7 years in prison.

These events call into question some of the basic internal processes at Winnebago County. I have several concerns as follows:

- Additional steps should be performed to properly evaluate vendors prior to contracting. Currently, the purchasing office screens vendors in a Federal and State suspended and debarred database prior to entry in the accounts payable system. At a minimum, I believe completing background checks for sole proprietor consultants should be considered.
- Mr. Beal issued a report to administration on March 23<sup>th</sup>, 2017. A request for final approval of Mr. Beal to be added as a vendor was made to my office on May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017. All vendors should be formally approved prior to work commencing.
- I believe Mr. Beal's services have been procured prior to the involved department having the appropriate budgetary authority. The County's sporadic use of purchase orders continues to permit this type of situation.



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- Mr. Beal's services were procured without approval of the County Board to analyze an agreement formerly approved by the County Board. It is unclear to me if this is permissible or appropriate.
- It is my understanding that Mr. Beal's services were procured outside of the purchasing office. In current County policy it is unclear as to who can bind the County contractually and at what dollar threshold.

Fortunately, I believe these issues can be resolved through the drafting of clear and concise policies and procedures to be approved by the County Board and included in the County Code of Ordinances. My staff and I are available to assist you. Please let me know if you any questions or comments at [bcrowley@wincoil.us](mailto:bcrowley@wincoil.us) or 815-319-4206.