



**CITY OF EVANSTON, ILLINOIS**

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COMMUNICATION OF DEFICIENCIES  
IN INTERNAL CONTROL AND  
OTHER COMMENTS TO CITY COUNCIL

For the Year Ended December 31, 2023

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**SIKICH.COM**

## **COMMUNICATION OF DEFICIENCIES IN INTERNAL CONTROL AND OTHER COMMENTS TO CITY COUNCIL**

Mr. Luke Stowe, City Manager  
Mr. Hitesh Desai, City Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer  
City of Evanston, Illinois

As part of the annual audit, we are required to communicate internal control matters that we classify as significant deficiencies and material weaknesses to those charged with governance. A deficiency in internal control exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct, misstatements on a timely basis. A significant deficiency is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control that is less severe than a material weakness, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance. A material weakness is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies in internal control, such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the City's financial statements will not be prevented, or detected and corrected, on a timely basis.

During our audit, we also identify certain matters which we communicate only to management. While many of these matters are operational in nature, they may include internal control deficiencies that do not meet the definition of a significant deficiency or material weakness. We have chosen to communicate these matters in this communication. As discussed on the following pages, we identified certain deficiencies in internal control. This letter does not affect our report dated June 27, 2024, on the financial statements of the City.

The City's written responses to these matters identified in our audit has not been subjected to the audit procedures applied in the audit of the financial statements and, accordingly, we express no opinion on it.

We will review the status of these comments during our next audit engagement. We have already discussed many of these comments and suggestions with Hitesh Desai, City Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer and Jess Tapia, Sr. Financial Analyst and we will be pleased to discuss them in further detail at your convenience, to perform any additional study of these matters, or to assist you in implementing the recommendations.

This memorandum is intended solely for the information and use of the City Council and management, and is not intended to be, and should not be, used by anyone other than these specified parties.

*SiKich CPA LLC*

Naperville, Illinois  
June 27, 2024

## DEFICIENCIES

### 1. Fund Balance Adjustments

Throughout the year, certain adjustments associated with recreation program activities were recorded directly to fund balance accounts, which resulted in a variance from the previous year reported balance. The City should avoid recording adjustments directly to fund balance accounts, except when recording restatements or to record fiscal year end close activity. We recommend the City review fund balance accounts on a regular basis to determine whether adjustments are being made in error to these accounts. At year-end close, a reconciliation of fund balance should be performed to ensure balances agree to the prior year final balances.

### 2. Revenue Recognition

During testing of grants, it was noted that grant revenues related to fiscal year 2023 expenditures were reported as deferred revenue. An adjustment was proposed to properly recognize the revenue in the current fiscal year. Deferred revenue accounts should be evaluated as part of the City's year end close process to determine if any balances previously deferred are able to be recognized.

### 3. Governmental Fund Reporting

Governmental funds report activity using the modified accrual basis of accounting. AJE#08 and AJE#10 were proposed to remove long-term assets and amortization expense incorrectly recorded in governmental funds. Long term assets and associated depreciation or amortization related to governmental fund activity should only be reported at the Governmental Activities entity-wide level.

## OTHER COMMENTS

### 1. Deficit Fund Balances

The following deficit balances were reported as of December 31, 2023:

<u>Fund</u>	<u>Deficit</u>
Capital Improvements	\$ 8,173,411
Five Fifths Tax Increment District	<u>137,389</u>
TOTAL	<u>\$ 8,310,800</u>

The City should continue to monitor all funds reporting deficits, particularly the Capital Improvements Fund to determine if transfers are necessary to alleviate deficit balances resulting from increased capital outlay.

## **OTHER COMMENTS (Continued)**

### **1. Deficit Fund Balances (Continued)**

#### **Management Response**

Capital Improvements Fund is expected to have a positive fund balance as of July 2024 with bond proceeds funding capital projects. Five Fifths TIF has been reporting a positive fund balance beginning in 2024 with the first installment of property tax receipts.

### **2. Future Accounting Pronouncements**

The Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) has issued a number of pronouncements that will impact the City in the future.

GASB Statement No. 99, *Omnibus 2022*, addresses a variety of topics including: Classification and reporting of derivative instruments within the scope of Statement No. 53, *Accounting and Financial Reporting for Derivative Instruments*, that do not meet the definition of either an investment derivative instrument or a hedging derivative instrument; clarification of provisions in Statement No. 87, *Leases*, as amended, related to the determination of the lease term, classification of a lease as a short-term lease, recognition and measurement of a lease liability and a lease asset, and identification of lease incentives; clarification of provisions in Statement No. 94, *Public-Private and Public-Public Partnerships and Availability Payment Arrangements*, related to (a) the determination of the public-private and public-public partnership (PPP) term and (b) recognition and measurement of installment payments and the transfer of the underlying PPP asset; clarification of provisions in Statement No. 96, *Subscription-Based Information Technology Arrangements*, related to the subscription-based information technology arrangement (SBITA) term, classification of a SBITA as a short-term SBITA, and recognition and measurement of a subscription liability; extension of the period during which the London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR) is considered an appropriate benchmark interest rate for the qualitative evaluation of the effectiveness of an interest rate swap that hedges the interest rate risk of taxable debt; accounting for the distribution of benefits as part of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); disclosures related to nonmonetary transactions; pledges of future revenues when resources are not received by the pledging government; clarification of provisions in Statement No. 34, *Basic Financial Statements—and Management’s Discussion and Analysis—for State and Local Governments*, as amended, related to the focus of the government-wide financial statements; terminology updates related to certain provisions of Statement No. 63, *Financial Reporting of Deferred Outflows of Resources, Deferred Inflows of Resources, and Net Position*; and terminology used in Statement 53 to refer to resource flows statements. This statement is effective upon issuance for requirements related to the extension of the use of LIBOR, accounting for SNAP distributions, disclosures of nonmonetary transactions, pledges of future revenues by pledging governments, clarification of certain provisions in Statement 34, as amended, and terminology updates related to Statement 53 and Statement 63. The effective date for the requirements related to leases, PPPs, and SBITAs is the fiscal year ending December 31, 2023. The effective date for the requirement related to financial guarantees and the classification and reporting of derivative instruments within the scope of Statement 53 is the fiscal year ending December 31, 2024.

## OTHER COMMENTS (Continued)

### 2. Future Accounting Pronouncements (Continued)

GASB Statement No. 100, *Accounting Changes and Error Corrections—an Amendment of GASB Statement No. 62*, enhances accounting and financial reporting requirement for accounting changes and error corrections. This Statement defines *accounting changes* as changes in accounting principles, changes in accounting estimates, and changes to or within the financial reporting entity and describes the transactions or other events that constitute those changes. This Statement also addresses corrections of errors in previously issued financial statements. This Statement requires that (a) changes in accounting principles and error corrections be reported retroactively by restating prior periods, (b) changes to or within the financial reporting entity be reported by adjusting beginning balances of the current period, and (c) changes in accounting estimates be reported prospectively by recognizing the change in the current period. This Statement requires disclosure in notes to financial statements of descriptive information about accounting changes and error corrections, such as their nature. Furthermore, this Statement addresses how information that is affected by a change in accounting principle or error correction should be presented in required supplementary information (RSI) and supplementary information (SI). This Statement is effective for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2024.

GASB Statement No. 101, *Compensated Absences*, requires that liabilities for compensated absences be recognized for (1) leave that has not been used and (2) leave that has been used but not yet paid in cash or settled through noncash means. A liability should be recognized for leave that has not been used if (a) the leave is attributable to services already rendered, (b) the leave accumulates, and (c) the leave is more likely than not to be used for time off or otherwise paid in cash or settled through noncash means. This Statement requires that a liability for certain types of compensated absences—including parental leave, military leave, and jury duty leave—not be recognized until the leave commences. This Statement also requires that a liability for specific types of compensated absences not be recognized until the leave is used. This Statement also establishes guidance for measuring a liability for leave that has not been used, generally using an employee’s pay rate as of the date of the financial statements. With respect to financial statements prepared using the current financial resources measurement focus, this Statement requires that expenditures be recognized for the amount that normally would be liquidated with expendable available financial resources. This Statement amends the existing requirement to disclose the gross increases and decreases in a liability for compensated absences to allow governments to disclose only the net change in the liability (as long as they identify it as a net change). In addition, governments are no longer required to disclose which governmental funds typically have been used to liquidate the liability for compensated absences. This Statement is effective for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2024.

GASB Statement No. 102, *Certain Risk Disclosures*, provides users of government financial statements with essential information about risks related to a government’s vulnerabilities due to certain concentrations or constraints. This Statement defines a concentration as a lack of diversity related to an aspect of a significant inflow of resources or outflow of resources. A constraint is a limitation imposed on a government by an external party or by formal action of the government’s highest level of decision-making authority. This Statement requires a government to assess whether a concentration or constraint makes the primary government

## **OTHER COMMENTS (Continued)**

### **2. Future Accounting Pronouncements (Continued)**

reporting unit or other reporting units that report a liability for revenue debt vulnerable to the risk of a substantial impact. Additionally, this Statement requires a government to assess whether an event or events associated with a concentration or constraint that could cause the substantial impact have occurred, have begun to occur, or are more likely than not to begin to occur within 12 months of the date the financial statements are issued. If a government determines that those criteria for disclosure have been met for a concentration or constraint, it should disclose information in notes to financial statements in sufficient detail to enable users of financial statements to understand the nature of the circumstances disclosed and the government's vulnerability to the risk of a substantial impact. The requirements of this Statement are effective for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2025.

GASB Statement No. 103, *Financial Reporting Model Improvements*, improves key components of the financial reporting model to enhance its effectiveness in providing information that is essential for decision making and assessing a government's accountability. This statement also addresses certain application issues. This Statement requires that the information presented in MD&A be limited to the related topics discussed in five sections: (1) Overview of the Financial Statements, (2) Financial Summary, (3) Detailed Analyses, (4) Significant Capital Asset and Long-Term Financing Activity, and (5) Currently Known Facts, Decisions, or Conditions. Furthermore, this Statement stresses that the detailed analyses should explain why balances and results of operations changed rather than simply presenting the amounts or percentages by which they changed. This Statement describes unusual or infrequent items as transactions and other events that are either unusual in nature or infrequent in occurrence. This Statement requires that the proprietary fund statement of revenues, expenses, and changes in fund net position continue to distinguish between operating and nonoperating revenues and expenses. Operating revenues and expenses are defined as revenues and expenses other than nonoperating revenues and expenses. Nonoperating revenues and expenses are defined as (1) subsidies received and provided, (2) contributions to permanent and term endowments, (3) revenues and expenses related to financing, (4) resources from the disposal of capital assets and inventory, and (5) investment income and expenses. This Statement requires governments to present each major component unit separately in the reporting entity's statement of net position and statement of activities if it does not reduce the readability of the statements. This Statement requires governments to present budgetary comparison information using a single method of communication—RSI. Governments also are required to present (1) variances between original and final budget amounts and (2) variances between final budget and actual amounts. An explanation of significant variances is required to be presented in notes to RSI. The requirements of this Statement are effective for fiscal years ending December 31, 2026. Earlier application is encouraged.

We will advise the City of any progress made by GASB in developing this and other future pronouncements that may have an impact on the financial position and changes in financial position of the City.