

Franklin County

Purpose/Conclusion:

Purpose:

To document the examination of Hotline H-24-136 and conclude on whether the allegations/concerns in the hotline referral are supported.

Conclusion:

We reviewed the concerns outlined in the hotline referral and concluded the concerns were not supported.

Testing Strategy:

Auditors are **required** to perform the following procedures to examine hotline allegations/concerns:

- Document the specific citizen hotline allegations/concerns by either copying the actual language in the web form or by scanning a copy of a written letter.
- Document the work performed to adequately address the hotline issue(s). Documentation should be sufficient to enable an experienced auditor or investigator to ascertain that the information collected and the work performed support the significant judgments and conclusions. If needed, additional steps may be added based on the size and complexity of the issue(s).

A citizen hotline was filed on March 28, 2024. We responded to the citizen with a letter at H-24-136 Letter letting them know that we would review the concerns during our accountability audit.

The citizen expressed their concerns in the two documents at H_24_136 and H_24_136(2). The concerns included:

For H-24,136

Concern 1

- Violating open public meeting laws and executive session laws.

Concern 1 Review

- *No dates or documentation was provided on the violation of open public meeting laws and executive sessions, other than the dates listed in the concerns below. We confirmed with the citizen on January 9, 2025 there were no additional dates of concern. We concluded on the specific dates below.*

Concern 2

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- Unlawful deductions from the Sheriff's paycheck and disabling purchase cards in retaliation. To appeal the deductions and disablement of purchase cards, the Sheriff requested a review by the County Commissioners who refused to hear about the matter. This concern was removed from the agenda.
- The deduction should not have happened without a court order.

Concern 2 Review

- *County Commissioners can determine the agenda and what to discuss and not discuss.*
- *Disabling purchase cards is outside of our authority, this is a management decision.*
- *Per RCW 42.24.115 the salary deduction and revocation of the card are both allowable*

Municipal corporations and political subdivisions—Charge cards for officers' and employees' travel expenses.

(1) Any municipal corporation or political subdivision may provide for the issuance of charge cards to officers and employees for the purpose of covering expenses incident to authorized travel.

(2) If a charge card is issued for the purpose of covering expenses relating to authorized travel, upon billing or no later than thirty days of the billing date, the officer or employee using a charge card issued under _____ this section shall submit a fully itemized travel expense voucher. Any charges against the charge card not properly identified on the travel expense voucher or not allowed following the audit required under _____ RCW 42.24.080 shall be paid by the official or employee by check, United States currency, or salary deduction.

(3) If, for any reason, disallowed charges are not repaid before the charge card billing is due and payable, the municipal corporation or political subdivision shall have a prior lien against and a right to withhold any _____ and all funds payable or to become payable to the official or employee up to an amount of the disallowed charges and interest at the same rate as charged by the company which issued the charge card. Any _____ official or employee who has been issued a charge card by a municipal corporation or political subdivision shall not use the card if any disallowed charges are outstanding and shall surrender the card upon _____ demand of the auditing officer. The municipal corporation or political subdivision shall have unlimited authority to revoke use of any charge card issued under this section, and, upon such revocation order being _____ delivered to the charge card company, shall not be liable for any costs.

Concern 3

- The Commissioners, after approving the original budget for the Sheriff's Office for a full-time Deputy, overtime and a vehicle and related equipment, the Commissioners decided to remove all capital expenditures from the budget and transferred the vehicle funds to the "overtime" line item. The Sheriff purchased the vehicle upon the original budget approval. The Commissioners did not make this decision to move funds in an open public meeting. The Auditor is not paying for the vehicle that was purchased under the original approved budget.

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Concern 3 Review

- The County Commissioners have the authority to set the budgets and make changes. We reviewed resolution 2023-346 [Resolution 2023-346](#) and attached budget and noted there is \$0 in the Sheriff capital expenditure line item (101520, object code 642102). This final budget was approved in an open public meeting (special meeting) on December 8, 2024 seen at the 31:25 minute mark here [12/08/2023 Franklin County WA 2024 Budget Meeting](#)
- The County eventually paid the vendor for the vehicle.
- No issues noted.

For H_24_136(2)

Concern 1

- April 3, 2024, the open public meeting did not follow the agenda for that day. There were several "agendas" for this day and it was not made available to the public.

Concern 1 Review

- We obtained the meeting agenda (Agenda 4.3.2024) from the County's website and watched the meeting on the County's website. We compared the agenda to meeting minutes [04_03_2024, BoCC Meeting Minutes](#) and we also watched the meeting and **confirmed after public comment at approximately the 29:30 mark, the Commission Chair moves from public comment to Commissioner and Administrator updates because "there is no regular business"**. We noted prior to adopting the agenda, all items listed under the consent agenda and regular business were pulled and moved to the next meeting, including Resolution 2024-086 and 2024-082.
- Only actions from the meeting were to approve warrants, approve payroll and public comment, County Administrator update, Commissioners update.
- No issues noted.

Concern 2

- Commissioner Didier wanted a large lot of equipment that was declared surplus at the HAPO Center be gifted to an organization of his personal choice based on his assessment of need.

Concern 2 Review

- We obtained the resolution surplusing equipment [Resolution 2023-097](#) at HAPO and the statement from Booker Auction [Booker Auction 06.06.23](#) showing the income from the sale of each item reviewed the surplussed equipment at HAPO here [Surplus property](#). It appears the items from HAPO were surplussed and sold at auction. It does not appear the items were donated.
- No issues noted

Concern 3

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- An executive session under RCW 42.30.110(1)(g) occurred and the three commissioners met with no one else attending. At the end of the session, it was stated no action was taken, yet they decided the county admin. would be getting a performance evaluation.

Concern 3 Review

- The Commissioners can go into executive session to discuss performance of an employee which could include an evaluation and issues surrounding an evaluation. The commissioners stated in an open public meeting that an evaluation would occur. There does not appear to be a violation of the executive session. Per RCW 42.30.110(1)(g) (g) Executive sessions can be held to evaluate the qualifications of an applicant for public employment or to review the performance of a public employee. However, subject to RCW **42.30.140**(4), discussion by a governing body of salaries, wages, and other conditions of employment to be generally applied within the agency shall occur in a meeting open to the public, and when a governing body elects to take final action hiring, setting the salary of an individual employee or class of employees, or discharging or disciplining an employee, that action shall be taken in a meeting open to the public;
- It appears the County complied with Executive Session requirements.
- No issues noted.

E.12.PRG - Hotline

Procedure Step: Reporting
Prepared By: DHO, 4/16/2025
Reviewed By: GLW, 4/16/2025

Purpose/Conclusion.

Purpose:

To report the results of the hotline examination to the citizen (if named in the referral) and to determine the method of reporting to the entity.

Conclusion:

We reported the results of the hotline examination to the citizen.