

**STATE BOARD OF ACCOUNTS**  
**302 West Washington Street**  
**Room E418**  
**INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204-2769**

SPECIAL INVESTIGATION REPORT  
OF

POLICE DEPARTMENT  
CITY OF COLUMBUS  
BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY, INDIANA

January 1, 2013 to August 31, 2018



**FILED**  
10/16/2019



TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Description</u>	<u>Page</u>
Transmittal Letter .....	2
Police Department:	
Results and Comments:	
Background .....	3
Compensation Paid While Working For Columbus Regional Hospital .....	3-4
Special Investigation Costs .....	4
Internal Control Deficiencies .....	4
Insurance Coverage .....	5
Investigation by Law Enforcement .....	5
Exit Conference .....	6
Official Response.....	7-10
Summary of Charges.....	11
Affidavit.....	13



**STATE OF INDIANA**  
AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

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TO: THE OFFICIALS OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS, BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY, INDIANA

This is a special investigation report for the City of Columbus (City), for the period January 1, 2013 to August 31, 2018, and is in addition to any other report for the City as required under Indiana Code 5-11-1. All reports pertaining to the City may be found at [www.in.gov/sboa/](http://www.in.gov/sboa/).

We performed procedures to determine compliance with applicable Indiana laws and uniform compliance guidelines established by the Indiana State Board of Accounts and were limited to records associated with payroll records of the City Police Department and the Columbus Regional Hospital. The Results and Comments contained herein describe the identified reportable instances of noncompliance found as a result of these procedures. Our tests were not designed to identify all instances of noncompliance; therefore, noncompliance may exist that is unidentified.

Any Official Response to the Results and Comments, incorporated within this report, was not verified for accuracy.

*Paul D. Joyce*  
Paul D. Joyce, CPA  
State Examiner

August 30, 2019

POLICE DEPARTMENT  
CITY OF COLUMBUS  
RESULTS AND COMMENTS

**BACKGROUND**

The Indiana State Board of Accounts (SBOA) was made aware that employees of the Police Department (Department) received compensation from the City of Columbus (City) for performance of police duties and from Columbus Regional Hospital for performance of part-time security guard duties during the same work hours.

The Indiana State Board of Accounts examined the records and the accounting for payroll to determine if any compensation was paid for hours not worked for the City. The following describes non-compliance with statutes or the *Accounting and Uniform Compliance Guidelines Manual for Cities and Towns*.

**COMPENSATION PAID WHILE WORKING FOR COLUMBUS REGIONAL HOSPITAL**

Ronald May (May) and Dan Meister (Meister), City police officers, also performed part-time security guard services for Columbus Regional Hospital. Time records were maintained by the police officers for the City and Columbus Regional Hospital, but there were occasions where the two police officers reported time worked and received compensation from the City for the same time period they reported time worked and received compensation at Columbus Regional Hospital. For the period from January 1, 2013 to August 31, 2018, May and Meister received \$2,294.66 and \$1,501.48, respectively, in compensation from the City while working at Columbus Regional Hospital.

Indiana Code 5-11-9-4 states:

"(a) The state board of accounts is hereby authorized to prescribe the forms of accounts and vouchers provided for by sections 1 and 2 of this chapter.

(b) The state board of accounts shall require that records be maintained showing which hours were worked each day by officers and employees:

(1) covered by section 1 or 2 of this chapter; and

(2) employed by more than one (1) public agency or in more than one (1) position by the same public agency described in section 1 or 2 of this chapter."

An employee who works for more than one (1) governmental unit should not be paid by more than one (1) governmental unit for the same period of time worked. Such employee should use his/her accumulated leave time from one (1) governmental unit while serving the other governmental unit when there is an overlap in a work schedule. For example, a city police officer, who is also a member of a school board, attends a school board meeting during his/her normal police work shift. The police officer would be expected to use his/her leave time accumulated at the city while attending such meeting.

Another alternative is to add a statement on each affected Employee's Service Record, General Form 99A (1985) and/or Employee's Earning's Record, General Form 99B (1993) indicating the specific hours to be worked daily by that employee or official. (Example: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.)

In cities and towns where time cards are used, each elected officer or head of each department should be approving the time cards of each of the employees that they are responsible for. (Cities and Towns Bulletin and Uniform Compliance Guidelines, June 2012)

POLICE DEPARTMENT  
CITY OF COLUMBUS  
RESULTS AND COMMENTS  
(Continued)

May was requested to reimburse \$2,294.66 to the City for compensation paid while working for Columbus Regional Hospital. (See Summary of Charges, page 11)

Meister was requested to reimburse \$1,501.48 to the City for compensation paid while working for Columbus Regional Hospital. (See Summary of Charges, page 11)

**SPECIAL INVESTIGATION COSTS**

The State of Indiana incurred additional costs in the investigation of the City of Columbus Police Department.

Audit costs incurred because of poor records, nonexistent records, or any other inadequate bookkeeping practices, or because of theft or a shortage, may be the personal obligation of the responsible official or employee. (Accounting and Uniform Compliance Guidelines Manual for Cities and Towns, Chapter 1)

We requested May reimburse the State of Indiana \$2,608.88 and Meister reimburse the State of Indiana \$2,608.87 for the special investigation costs. (See the Summary of Charges, page 11)

**INTERNAL CONTROL DEFICIENCIES**

The City's Police Chief, Jonathan Rohde, had the responsibility of scheduling work hours for all the Department's employees and verifying that each employee worked the hours stated on their time cards by signing them as the Department head. The Department did not have a time clock and time cards were handwritten and maintained on a computer spreadsheet.

Due to the fact that Department employees did not punch a time clock, internal controls were not in place that allowed the Department employees to receive compensation from the City while working at Columbus Regional Hospital. The City did not set proper internal controls over time reporting of its employees that allowed for unauthorized compensation to be paid to Department employees.

The Indiana State Board of Accounts (SBOA) is required under Indiana Code 5-11-1-27(e) to define the acceptable minimum level of internal control standards. To provide clarifying guidance, the State Examiner compiled the standards contained in the manual, *Uniform Internal Control Standards for Indiana Political Subdivisions*. All political subdivisions subject to audit by SBOA are expected to adhere to these standards. The standards include adequate control activities. According to this manual:

"Control activities are the actions and tools established through policies and procedures that help to detect, prevent, or reduce the identified risks that interfere with the achievement of objectives. Detection activities are designed to identify unfavorable events in a timely manner whereas prevention activities are designed to deter the occurrence of an unfavorable event. Examples of these activities include reconciliations, authorizations, approval processes, performance reviews, and verification processes.

An integral part of the control activity component is segregation of duties. . . .

There is an exception of segregation of duties. If compensating controls are necessary, documentation should exist to identify both the areas where segregation of duties are not feasible or practical and the compensating controls implemented to mitigate the risk. . . ."

POLICE DEPARTMENT  
CITY OF COLUMBUS  
RESULTS AND COMMENTS  
(Continued)

***INSURANCE COVERAGE***

The following is information regarding employee dishonesty insurance obtained by the City.

<u>Period</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
11-01-12 to 11-01-13	\$ 100,000
11-01-13 to 11-01-14	100,000
11-01-14 to 11-01-15	100,000
11-01-15 to 11-01-18	100,000
11-01-16 to 11-01-19	100,000
11-01-17 to 11-01-18	100,000

***INVESTIGATION BY LAW ENFORCEMENT***

An investigation is currently ongoing by the Indiana State Police.

POLICE DEPARTMENT  
CITY OF COLUMBUS  
EXIT CONFERENCE

The contents of this report were discussed on August 30, 2019, with Luann Welmer, Clerk-Treasurer; James Lienhoop, Mayor; Dascal Bunch, President of the Common Council; Jonathon Rohde, Police Chief; and Mike Richardson, Deputy Police Chief.

The contents of this report were discussed on August 30, 2019, with Ronald May, former City Police Officer.

The contents of this report were discussed on August 30, 2019, with Daniel Meister, City Police Officer.

**RUCKELSHAUS, KAUTZMAN, BLACKWELL & BEMIS, LLP**

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JOHN K. RUCKELSHAUS (1900-1962)  
ARCH N. BOBBITT (1895-1978)  
JOHN C. O'CONNOR (1915-1996)  
JOHN C. RUCKELSHAUS II (1930-2015)  
WILLIAM A. HASBROOK, OF COUNSEL

*Via Electronic Mail: [ldavid@sboa.in.gov](mailto:ldavid@sboa.in.gov) and [aladson@sboafe.in.gov](mailto:aladson@sboafe.in.gov)*

September 16, 2019

State Board of Accounts  
302 W. Washington St., RM E418  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Re: OFFICIAL RESPONSE

Dear Sir or Madam:

Please accept this response as the Official Response of Ronald May and Dan Meister regarding the Indiana State Board of Accounts (SBOA) investigation Report (Report).

The Report indicates that there were occasions where Ronald May (May) and Dan Meister (Meister) reported time worked and received compensation from the City for the same time period they reported time worked and received compensation at Columbus Regional Hospital. This conclusion is misplaced.

During their respective interviews with the SBOA, both May and Meister advised that the Columbus Police Department (CPD) did not maintain a time clock and handwritten time cards were generated indicating the time officers were scheduled to work. May and Meister also advised that CPD officers were permitted to "flex" their time (i.e. report to work 1 hour early and leave work 1 hour early). It was common for both May and Meister to flex their time on days they were scheduled to work at the Columbus Regional Hospital.

***Official Response***

***Page 2***

**As a result of flex time, the time stated on the officers' time cards did not always reflect the actual time worked by the officers. The time cards reflect the hours the officers were scheduled to work (Example: 9.a.m. to 5 p.m.); not the hours the officers actually worked (Example: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.). Therefore, May and Meister did not receive compensation from the City for the same time period they received compensation at the Columbus Regional Hospital. May and Meister received compensation from the City for the total number of hours the officers worked at CPD in a given pay period (i.e. 80 hours).**

**Very truly yours,**

**RUCKELSHAUS KAUTZMAN  
BLACKWELL & BEMIS, LLP**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Merchant', is written over the printed name and firm name.

**Edward J. Merchant**

**EJM/hal**



**columbusindiana**  
unexpected.unforgettable.

Alan L. Whitted, City Attorney

October 7, 2019

Ms. Lisa David  
IN State Board of Accounts  
302 W. Washington Street, Suite E418  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

RE: Response to SBOA

Dear Ms. David:

Two former supervisors took advantage of the Columbus Police Department's time management system by circumventing its established internal controls. The actions by these two individuals were contrary to the core values of the department, and are not indicative of the honesty and integrity of the department's other employees.

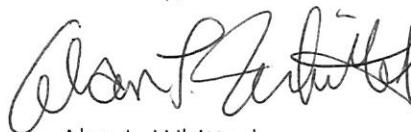
The Columbus Police Department has 98 employees who work different shifts and in different divisions. There is an established chain of command within the department, where supervisors are delegated certain responsibilities. One of the responsibilities delegated to supervisors is the scheduling, verification and submission of work hours. Unfortunately, two supervisors took advantage of the position to which they were entrusted. When this was discovered, the police department's administration took swift action to hold the employees accountable for their actions. Both supervisors were removed from their supervisory roles and from their ability to act as law enforcement officers, and a criminal investigation by an independent third party was requested.

The Columbus Police Department has since fully implemented an electronic time keeping system with checks and balances that greatly reduce the possibility and likelihood of individual abuse.

Lisa David  
October 7, 2019  
Page Two

The Columbus Police Department's pursuit to improve its time keeping system began in 2014, when the police department made a request to invest in electronic time keeping software in order to eliminate errors and reduce time spent scheduling and managing officers' work hours. The first electronic time keeping system was purchased by the prior city administration in 2015. In 2016 it was determined that this system was incompatible with the complexities of the police department's work schedule. Chief Jonathan Rohde and the City administration recognized the need to improve the time keeping system, and considerable research was done to find an electronic timekeeping system that would not fail. In 2017, a software program was identified through a collective effort that included many city departments. In 2018 the system was configured and by the fourth quarter, the system was being utilized in duplication with the existing process to ensure a flawless transition. On January 1, 2019, the transition from paper to electronic time reporting was complete, which accomplished the intended goals while also establishing checks and balances in order to reduce the likelihood of individual abuse.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alan L. Whitted". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and "W".

Alan L. Whitted  
City Attorney

ALW/krb

POLICE DEPARTMENT  
CITY OF COLUMBUS  
SUMMARY OF CHARGES  
(Due to Malfeasance, Misfeasance, or Nonfeasance)

	<u>Charges</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Balance Due</u>
Ronald May, former City Police Officer:			
Compensation Paid While Working For			
Columbus Regional Hospital, pages 3 and 4	\$ 2,294.66	\$ -	\$ 2,294.66
Special Investigation Costs, page 4	<u>2,608.88</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,608.88</u>
 Total Ronald May, former City Police Officer	 <u>4,903.54</u>	 <u>-</u>	 <u>4,903.54</u>
 Dan Meister, City Police Officer:			
Compensation Paid While Working For			
Columbus Regional Hospital, pages 3 and 4	1,501.48	-	1,501.48
Special Investigation Costs, page 4	<u>2,608.87</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,608.87</u>
 Total Dan Meister, City Police Officer	 <u>4,110.35</u>	 <u>-</u>	 <u>4,110.35</u>
 Totals	 <u>\$ 9,013.89</u>	 <u>\$ -</u>	 <u>\$ 9,013.89</u>

This report was forwarded to the Office of the Indiana Attorney General and the special prosecuting attorney.

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AFFIDAVIT

STATE OF INDIANA        )  
Greene COUNTY)

I, M. Annette Ladson, Field Examiner, being duly sworn on my oath, state that the foregoing report based on the official records of the City of Columbus, Bartholomew County, Indiana, for the period from January 1, 2013 to August 31, 2018, is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

M. Annette Ladson  
Field Examiner

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 3 day of October, 2019

J. Kramer  
Notary Public

My Commission Expires: 1-22-2025

County of Residence: Greene

