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Follow up to the B&F Committee meeting on 12.1.25

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Mon, Dec 1 at 6:31 PM ☆

This is to follow up on my public comments at today's meeting of the Budget and Finance Committee.

The WIC audit reported that many of the offices in the program failed to put in place internal controls for the handling of EBT cards. This created a significant risk of fraud, but it does not appear that the audit conducted further testing to determine the seriousness of the risk or whether the program may have experienced a loss as a result.

The WIC audit also reported a lack of proper inventory of equipment but again, apparently did not conduct further audit steps to determine whether any equipment may be missing or misappropriated.

I also noted that WIC program is a county obligation that the city has been operating since WIC was established during the Nixon administration. The program has evolved since then and it may be a compliance burden that the city could hand over to the county which operates similar benefit programs such as SNAP and Medicaid. The audit report indicates that the program has substantial compliance challenges, so it may be appropriate to explore transferring the responsibility for the program to Hamilton County.

With respect to the Lead Service Line Replacement Program, I have requested documentation that the GCWW conducted a "hazardous waste determination," concerning the scrap lead. With roughly 5 years of scrap lead unaccounted for, it could be a serious violation of environmental regulations if the GCWW did not carry out such a hazardous waste determination. The city council could get the answer to that question more easily than me.

Finally, I expressed my view that the internal audit function is underfunded, understaffed and underused. The city council should recognize the good work of the internal audit team at one of its meetings and also require that the city council be briefed at a public meeting whenever an audit report is issued.

Importantly, the municipal code requires that the internal audit manager submit her annual budget request directly to the city council, by passing the city manager. I have been told in a response to a public records request that such a direct submission does not happen. That the budget request for the internal audit function is included in the overall budget request for the City Manager's Office. The city council should require compliance with the municipal code with respect to the internal audit budget.

Please let me know if you have any questions or if I can be of assistance on any of these matters.

Thank you.

