

Autos Careers Classifieds Homes

SUBMIT

BUSINESS   **THE NEW! DELL VOSTRO 3400**
with the powerful new
2010 Intel® Core™ i3-350 processor
NOW \$569
Offer expires June 17th, 2010  

No fraud in city hall: city manager

By RENATO GANDIA, CALGARY SUN

Last Updated: June 9, 2010 12:02am



City manager Owen Tobert called for an outside audit to clear the air on spending.

The mayor and city manager lashed out at council Tuesday following a report that says there's no evidence of fraud in city contracts and an independent audit should be conducted to clear tarnished reputations.

Members of city council unanimously agreed to hire a third party to look at the city books and find out if its procurement system was in any way at risk of wrongdoing following City Auditor Tracy McTaggart's scathing report suggesting that \$747 million of city cash was overspent and there were no paper trails.

The new third party audit will also look into where \$4.8 million went, due to inadequate documentation, said a city manager's report presented to council.

Owen Tobert, the city's top bureaucrat, said he found the proper paper trails McTaggart missed, enshrined in electronic files which the auditor didn't look at.

He said the past few weeks have been the most difficult time of his 30-year career as a city bureaucrat, as allegations of potential fraud swirled following the auditor's May 20 report.

"I'm extremely disappointed that some members of council, without the benefit of any evidence jumped to conclusions and attacked in the media the reputations of our corporation, and staff, including myself personally, without a phone call, to confirm the legitimacy or not of any of these allegations," he told council.

"To see this corporation's reputation and personal relationships built over the past tossed in search of a headline is to say the least disappointing.

"It's disappointing to me and it's disappointing to all the men and women who proudly serve this great city."

Mayor Dave Bronconnier defended Tobert and rebuked council members and the city auditor, who have levelled allegations of potential fraud against city employees.

"Unfortunately right from the get-go here, there's some suggestions of inflammatory language, none of that has been proven to be the case," he said.

"The facts just don't bear out the comment."

McTaggart said in an audit committee meeting she all but guarantees fraud is occurring within the city given the size of the organization.

She also said there are at least two fraud files being investigated through the city's whistle blower program, but Tobert told council that claim was unfounded and there were no such cases.

Ald. Ric McIver said if there's fraud in the city, then "somebody call the cops," but obviously that's not the case according to what the city auditor and city manager reports stated.

"I've never said that there was and if we get evidence of that we'll deal with it," he said.

The scope of the new audit will come back to council in July and the probe is expected to be finished early next year.

renato.gandia@sunmedia.ca

Copyright © 2010 Calgary Sun All Rights Reserved