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## External audit slows city contracts probe

By **MICHAEL WOOD**, CALGARY SUN

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External auditors tasked with probing contract overspending at city hall have slowed administration in its bid to overhaul procurement procedures.

The admission is contained in a report slated to be received by the city's Personnel and Accountability Committee Tuesday, the latest in the saga to investigate city purchases that spiralled millions of dollars more than the original contracts

Ald. Brian Pincott called the Deloitte and Touche investigation a "fairly significant piece of work," one reportedly worth \$1 million.

Administrators say the ongoing probe is causing some delays on their road to overhaul procurement policies.

"We have to have people here (at city hall) for them (Deloitte and Touche) to get them the files they're after," Pincott explained.

Former auditor Tracy McTaggart's scathing report on procurement procedures, launched in part to probe the sole-sourcing of contracts such as the controversial Peace Bridge, found an extra \$747 million in taxpayer cash was paid to contracts without sufficient documentation and wouldn't rule out the possibility of fraud.

Those allegations were dismissed by city manager Owen Tobert, which spurred the city to hire an external auditor.

The probe is ongoing, pouring over files identified in McTaggart's controversial procurement audit, and tasked with resolving fraud allegations as well as concerns over insufficient documentation for contract work.

Deloitte and Touche's appointment for the fact-finding mission raised the ire of at least one alderman following the announcement they would lead the probe in September.

Ald. Diane Colley-Urquhart, who is on the city's audit committee, said Deloitte, which has done extensive audit and consulting work for the city, shouldn't have been allowed to bid for the job given its relationship with city hall.

"They circled the wagons from the beginning. Nothing was wrong, they said. They tried everything in vain to deep-six this," Colley-Urquhart told the Sun back in September.

"Now they're trying to control the process."

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