

# MEMORANDUM

CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS

DATE: October 30, 2020

TO: Max Frantz, Comptroller  
Ruth Lueders, Deputy City Comptroller

FROM: Erica Bills, Internal Auditor

**SUBJECT: Gun Buy Back Event - Boston Square**

**Audit Objectives:** This review addresses the internal controls and procedures followed during the gun buyback program on October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020 in the Boston Square neighborhood.

**Scope & Methodology:** Held planning meetings with Deputy Chief of Police, Scott Rifenberg, and Assistant to the City Manager, Asante Cain to establish proper procedures and controls needed to handle both weapons and gift cards. Provided a listing of all gift cards to Deputy Chief of Police, which was used to track the type of weapon collected. Reviewed colored post-it-notes used to identify the number of gift cards to be provided to the resident for their weapon. Performed complete counts of both the post-it-notes and gift card listing used for documentation. Reviewed the inventory of gift cards both prior to and after event.

**Background:** On Tuesday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, the City Commission approved a gun buyback program proposed by the police department as a part of the police department's three-year strategic plan to address the recent increase in gun violence compared to prior years. With assistance from the executive office, comptroller's office, and local neighborhood organizations, the police department held their first of two gun buyback events on October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020 on Kalamazoo Ave in the Boston Square neighborhood.

To properly track & document the type of gun collected and the number of gift cards to reimburse the following processes were put in place:

- 1) Two 'stations' were set up on location that were staffed by different officers. These officers never switched duties and remained at assigned station.
- 2) Upon analyzing the resident's weapon, a colored sticky note (yellow, pink, or orange) was attached to the vehicle's window identifying the type of weapon. The resident would then pull to the next station.

3) At the next station, an officer would remove the sticky note and write the last 3 digits of the gift card numbers distributed to the resident on the note. The sticky notes would then be kept for auditing purposes.

4) A separate officer would then document the type of weapon next to the gift card number on the gift card listing.

Gift Cards were distributed as follows (in \$50 increments):

- Tier 1 – Revolvers (poor condition) - \$50 (Yellow)
- Tier 2 – Shotguns, Revolvers, Rifles - \$100 (Pink)
- Tier 3 – Assault Rifles, Semi-automatic weapons - \$200 (Orange)

See findings below.

**Findings:**

1) A total of 280 gift cards, valued at \$50 each, for a total of \$14,857 (taxes & fees) were purchased using funds provided by the SAFE Task Force (\$20,000 total). The remaining balance being used for advertising and administrative expenses.

The Comptroller’s Office received 280 gift cards (counted and verified number) and delivered all gift cards to the Police Department on Friday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 in a sealed box. Zero (0) gift cards were returned on Monday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020 indicating all gift cards had been distributed. Total value of gift cards distributed is \$14,000.

2) We tabulated the sticky notes and summarized the following information:

<u>Type</u>	<u># Guns Collected</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Total</u>
Semi-Auto Pistols	34	200	\$ 6,800
Revolver - Tier 2	34	100	3,400
Revolver - Tier 1	2	50	100
Shotgun	18	100	1,800
Rifle	11	100	1,100
Assault Rifle	4	200	800
	<u>103</u>		<u>\$ 14,000</u>

\*The Police Department did collect 4 additional weapons; however, these were determined to not be eligible for a gift card as they did not meet the established criteria.

- Most common guns turned in: Semi-automatic pistols & Revolvers (good condition)
- Average value of guns turned in: \$135.93

There were 103 total sticky notes, which reflect the total number of eligible guns collected by the police department.

3) The colored sticky notes properly match the gift card listing for each type of gun collected as well as the last 3 digits of the gift cards. When the value of each type of weapon is calculated, the total value equals \$14,000, the exact amount of gift cards distributed.

**Conclusion:** Based on the documentation utilized and retained, all internal controls put in place for the Boston Square Gun Buy Back event were properly followed and adhered to. There were no discrepancies between the gift card listing and the sticky notes and it is apparent that proper separation of duties was followed at the event.

*It is recommended that the police department utilize the same procedures and internal controls going forward for the second gun buy back event, which will be held Saturday, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020, as they have been proven to be effective and secure in managing & maintaining gift cards.*

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to reach out to Erica Bills, Internal Auditor. Ext. 3126