

Board of Directors
Harris County Water Control and
Improvement District No. 157
Harris County, Texas

In planning and performing our audit of the financial statements of Harris County Water Control and Improvement District No. 157 (the District) as of and for the year ended May 31, 2021, in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, we considered the District's internal control over financial reporting (internal control) as a basis for designing our auditing procedures for the purpose of expressing our opinion on the financial statements, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the District's internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of the District's internal control.

Our consideration of internal control was for the limited purpose described in the preceding paragraph and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be significant deficiencies or material weaknesses and, therefore, there can be no assurance that all deficiencies, significant deficiencies or material weaknesses have been identified. However, as discussed below, we identified certain deficiencies in internal control that we consider to be material weaknesses.

A deficiency exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent or detect and correct misstatements of the District's financial statements on a timely basis. A deficiency in design exists when a control necessary to meet a control objective is missing or an existing control is not properly designed so that, even if the control operates as designed, a control objective would not be met. A deficiency in operation exists when a properly designed control does not operate as designed or when the person performing the control does not possess the necessary authority or competence to perform the control effectively.

A material weakness is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control, such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the District's financial statements will not be prevented or detected and corrected on a timely basis.

A significant deficiency is a deficiency, or combination of deficiencies, in internal control that is less severe than a material weakness, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance.

We observed the following matters that we consider to be material weaknesses.

Material Weaknesses

The District's management consists of an elected Board of Directors (the Board). Day-to-day operations are performed by private entities (Consultants) under contract with the District. The Board supervises the performance of the Consultants; however, although Consultants can be part of the District's system of internal control, the Consultants are not members of management. Per auditing standards, management is responsible for design and implementation of the District's system of internal controls.

Per auditing standards, one of the primary controls within the system of internal controls is related to the preparation of the financial statements. Management of the District is responsible for either preparing the financial statements or having the knowledge to determine whether the financial statements have been properly prepared and are free from potential misstatement. The absence of this expertise within management, or a Consultant of the District hired to perform this service, is considered by auditing standards to be a material weakness in internal control over financial reporting.

During the course of performing an audit, it is not unusual for the auditor to prepare various journal entries to correct and present the financial statements on the government-wide basis of accounting. Additionally, we noted adjustments to various accounts, such as cash, interfund receivable and payable, penalty and interest revenues, and interfund transfers, which were necessary in order for the fund financial statements to be in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles. The inability of management (or a Consultant of the District hired to perform this service) to detect these necessary adjustments is considered by auditing standards to be a material weakness in internal control over financial reporting.

Finally, management, or a Consultant of the District, does not prepare the capital asset and depreciation register or post adjustments related to the presentation of the capital assets in the government-wide financial statements. As management is not preparing or reviewing and does not have the expertise to prevent, detect and correct related significant potential misstatements, this is considered by auditing standards to be a material weakness.

The material weaknesses noted above, if not corrected, could result in a material misstatement or omission of a required disclosure in the financial statements.

Management's Response

The District responds that the auditor's Management Letter, and the material weaknesses identified therein, are prepared in response to Statement on Auditing Standards No. 115 (SAS 115) and are not prompted by any other circumstances identified during the course of the audit and disclosed to the District's Board.

As you know, the Board has, since the inception of the District, engaged the auditor to perform the District's audit and to prepare the financial statements and capital asset and depreciation schedules upon which the audit is based. It is our understanding that this is the usual and customary practice for smaller special districts in Texas, as it is more cost effective to engage Consultants to perform such services than to employ persons (who would constitute district management) to perform same. It is also the Board's understanding that, under the requirements of SAS 115, the engagement of the auditor to perform these services resulted in the Management Letter because (1) the Board members are not able to prevent, detect and correct a misstatement in the preparation of the District's financial statements or its capital asset and depreciation schedules or to make adjustments to same, and (2) the Board has not implemented controls to prevent, detect and correct a misstatement in the preparation of the District's financial statements or capital asset and depreciation schedules, such as the hiring of an employee or the engagement of another Consultant to prepare the District's financial statements or capital asset and depreciation schedules.

With respect to items (1) and (2) identified above, the Board responds that its members are appointed or elected in accordance with the requirements set forth in the Texas Water Code, and that such members do not necessarily have the ability to prevent, detect and correct a misstatement in the preparation of the District's financial statements or its capital asset and depreciation schedules or to make adjustments to same.

Further, the Board responds that it is a small government unit and that it engages the auditor based upon the auditor's professional qualifications, and in light of such qualifications, does not feel that the addition at this time of an employee or the engagement of a Consultant to prepare the District's financial statements and capital asset and depreciation schedules (as a form of control) would be cost effective. Additionally, the Board adds that the District does not have any employees, but rather engages Consultants who possess industry knowledge and expertise to provide financial services, including its bookkeeper, auditor and financial advisor, as well as Consultants that provide legal, engineering, and operation and maintenance services. In particular, the District's bookkeeper presents periodic financial information (unaudited) to the Board for review, which information generally reflects income, disbursements, adjustments and the status of investments relative to the District's various accounts.

Management's written response to the material weaknesses identified in our audit has not been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the financial statements, and accordingly, we express no opinion on it.

This communication is intended solely for the information and use of management, the Board of Directors and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, and is not intended to be, and should not be, used by anyone other than these specified parties.

BKD, LLP

October 7, 2021