

**THE SEVENTH ANNUAL  
QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW  
OF THE  
JEFFERSON PARISH  
OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL'S  
OIG 2024 REPORT**

**BY  
THE JEFFERSON PARISH  
OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL  
QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**John E. Benz, Chair  
Duke McConnell  
Jim Letten**

**Presented to  
The Jefferson Parish Inspector General**

**May 8, 2025**

**CC: The Jefferson Parish President**

**The Members of the Jefferson Parish Council**

**The Jefferson Parish Ethics and Compliance Committee**

# I

## Introduction

The three members of the Jefferson Parish Office of Inspector General's Quality Assurance Review Committee (*hereafter* *OIG Review Committee, Review Committee or Committee*) are pleased to present to the Inspector General (*hereafter* *JPOIG, OIG or IG*), the Parish President, Council Members and the Ethics and Compliance Committee (ECC), this our Seventh Annual Review of the OIG's 2024 Annual Report—and the third such report by Inspector General Kim Chatelain and her staff and administration upon conclusion of her third full year.

We remain grateful for the continued trust which the members of the Jefferson Parish Ethics and Compliance Committee, Parish Government, Inspector General's Office and the citizens of the parish have placed in each of us both initially and through our re-appointments, by relying upon the three members of this committee to provide an objective view of—and make constructive observations and recommendations on—the IG's 2024 performance and report.

Moreover, we value and appreciate this continuing opportunity to provide meaningful feedback and input to help contribute to and enhance the continued quality of future OIG reports, processes, work product and positive outcomes—all in service to the government and citizens of Jefferson Parish.

# II

## The Committee's Continuing Mission and Goals

This is the *seventh* such report which the Review Committee has been tasked to produce. In 2019, the first year in which the Committee met and rendered a report, we had to *define* our mission and did so in the first OIG Annual Report which covered 2018. That is to say, the three members of the Review Committee felt—and *continue to feel strongly*—that in order to ensure that our service continues to have relevance and value, we are bound by the ongoing need and duty to understand and therefore define for the taxpayers what our continuing mission and goals consist of—and equally importantly, *what they do not*...and to remain consistent with those. Stated simply, we have unanimously determined that the contours of our mission and goals as stated in our reviews of the annual OIG reports remain valid, useful and appropriate.

It is therefore important to note that since the very formation of this Committee, we continue to recognize that our mission is *not to re-investigate, analyze, evaluate or pass judgment* on the OIG's investigations, decisions, conclusions, findings or recommendations. To do so would, in our estimation, run afoul of both the intent of the Parish in establishing the Review Committee and the essential separation of powers — by potentially intruding on the function, judgment and authority of the OIG as an essential, independent, non-political component of Jefferson Parish government. Stated simply, we the Committee do not seek to stand in the shoes of the Inspector General—nor do we seek to supplant or replace that office or any of its members or functions.

Rather, we have unanimously determined that our focus should and does remain on carefully reviewing the OIG's processes, functions and work product and additionally sharing practical

observations, recommendations and possible options which could hopefully assist the Inspector General's Office in producing reports of its functions and conclusions in the clearest, simplest, most understandable and easy-to-address format available under the circumstances; and to further provide, when appropriate, various options for the IG to consider with a view to improving future processes and reports issued by that office.

Moreover, and perhaps most critically, we continue to do so without regard to any external or self-serving personal interests, ideologies, political opinions, philosophies or views.

### **III**

#### **The Office of the Jefferson Parish Inspector General:** **Continued Dynamic Leadership**

The IG and her staff of professionals have worked diligently with focus and energy, as illuminated here by Inspector General Kim Chatelain in the 2024 Report. The Jefferson Parish Office of Inspector General is an office which under its 2022 change in leadership, has implemented continuing changes in and modifications to various systems, processes and methods of tracking, maintaining and reporting data, among others.

The year 2024 marked the 11th full year of the Jefferson Parish Inspector General's office since its creation in 2013—and the third full year of veteran Kim Chatelain as Inspector General since her appointment in March of 2022.

Having previously served as the First Assistant Inspector General, it is important to note that IG Chatelain continuously served in that role from the date that office was created in 2013 until 2022, when she took the reins of the office as IG. Her extensive experience in hands-on management of the office and its staff, functions, missions and reports has given her a significant veteran status which has allowed her to bring with her the tools and depth to fully understand and work effectively in the Jefferson Parish government environment.

In addition to her many years of hands-on leadership and extensive investigative experience, IG Chatelain is a most capable veteran in this important role with some 32 years of licensed law practice as an attorney and four advanced certifications.

The Jefferson Parish Inspector General's Office mission has three primary objectives:

1. To detect and deter fraud, waste, abuse, and illegal acts through independent oversight.
2. To promote efficiency in government by assisting in improving operations.
3. To provide increased accountability in Parish government.

This Committee considers it worth noting that as the traditional core mission of an inspector general—including the Jefferson Parish, IG—includes, among myriad other of its missions and goals—that of *detering and preventing* not only fraud and abuse, but also potential *waste*.

The role of deterring and preventing waste is unique to an inspector general, in that in the US, prosecutors universally do not have the power or authority to issue opinions or discuss the particulars of investigations or issues before them—save where appropriate, to bring criminal charges.

By doing what traditional law enforcement *cannot* do—in furtherance of its fraud, abuse and waste prevention mission, through the issuance of publicly-expressed observations, concerns and warnings where warranted—the IG is pursuing a mission which ranks among the Inspector General’s core responsibilities.

The circumstances under which those observations, concerns and warnings are made public are to some extent illuminated and resolved through the March 17, 2025 Herman Report (legal opinion), and additionally by the January 15, 2025 Jefferson Parish Ordinance amendment discussed hereinbelow in Section VII, pertaining to the IG’s role in the issuance of Public Letters.

## **IV**

### **JPOIG 2024:**

### **Remaining Responsive and Proactive**

The Review Committee notes that an essential component of the Quality Assurance Review Process is the goal of establishing and testing the consistent responsiveness of the Office of the Inspector General, in order to ensure that this important office is willing to listen and itself be responsive and accountable to the citizens it serves—even as it works to ensure that those governmental components it monitors are as well.

The IG continues to build on that Office’s history and tradition of eager and effective responsiveness to questions posed by the Committee in the pursuit of transparency, excellence and increased accountability of government.

Now in 2025, we in the Committee take great pleasure in reporting for the *seventh* consecutive year that Inspector General Chatelain and her office management and staff continue to be available and eager to respond to all of the Committee’s questions.

We feel that this level and degree of transparency and responsiveness is exemplary and continues to resoundingly evidence an Inspector General and staff which continue to be dedicated to the highest standards in terms of efficiency in responding to the needs of parish government and the citizens they serve.

## V

# **The Inspector General's 2024 Annual Report**

## **Summary/Overview**

Having reviewed, analyzed and discussed the OIG's report for 2024, the Review Committee unanimously agrees once again that Inspector General Kim Chatelain and her very capable, highly qualified staff, continue their thorough, ethical and effective manner in arriving at and presenting the results of their investigations, positions, recommendations and monitoring reports with the primary goals of providing objective and diligent oversight—thereby deterring and reducing fraud, waste and abuse—as well as producing options and recommendations for more efficient and cost-effective expenditure of taxpayer money.

The 2024 report contains detailed information and descriptions of investigative staff members' academic and professional qualifications which evidence the impressive capabilities of the auditing and investigative staff—which in turn provides the credibility and necessary gravitas for all in their quest to leverage adherence to compliance requirements by all Parish officials.

The Inspector General herself has some 13 years in the Inspector General community, with a Bachelor of Arts degree from LSU (1989), and a Juris Doctorate from Tulane University Law School (1992). In addition to her 31 years as a licensed attorney, she is also a Certified Inspector General (CIG); a Certified Compliance and Ethics Professional (CCEP); a Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE); and a Certified Inspector General Evaluator (CIGE).

Additionally, her top management team of professionals is equally impressive:

- Deputy Inspector General for Investigations: Jeffrey Adolf, with seven years of experience in the inspector general community, has a Bachelor of General Studies degree from LSU (2008), and a Master of Business Administration from the University of New Orleans (2011). He is additionally a Certified Inspector General Investigator (CIG) and a Certified Inspector General Evaluator (CIGE).
- Deputy Inspector General for Audit: Erica Smith has 15 years of experience in the inspector general community, with a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting and a Masters degree in accounting from the University of Florida (2003 and 2005 respectively); and is a Certified Public Accountant (CPA), Certified Financial Forensics Specialist (CFF); Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE), Certified Inspector General (CIG); and certified Inspector General Auditor (CIGA).

In all, the office staff qualifications are impressive to say the least, including:

Attorney (Juris Doctor degree): 2

Master's Degree: 7

Bachelor's Degree: 10

Certified Compliance and Ethics Professional: 1  
Certified Public Accountant: 1  
Certified Fraud Examiner: 3  
Certified Inspector General Evaluator: 2  
Certified Inspector General Investigator: 4  
Certified Inspector General Auditor: 3  
Certified Inspector General: 4

This Committee notes that all members of the information technology, investigative and auditing staff have Bachelor's degrees, ***with all professional (non-support) members having either a Juris Doctorate (JD) or Masters' Degree.*** Moreover, the geographic diversity of the professional staff is impressive, with members hailing from six different states.

## VI

### **OIG Mission and Meeting Challenges**

The Inspector General's office (notwithstanding continuing budget and funding demands and challenges) continues to energetically pursue all three core components of its mission, consisting of investigations, audits, inspections and performance reviews of parish government operations, in order to facilitate improvements in those operations and, wherever possible, deter fraud, waste, abuse, and corruption. That goal in turn is focused on providing increased accountability of all parish government departments, agencies, districts and entities receiving funds—as well as employees and officials themselves.

For 2024, the Inspector General's office oversight responsibility extends across virtually all Parish government operations and functions, to include:

- Expenditures of \$966.5 million
- Assets of some \$4.6 billion
- 68 Parish departments
- 49 special review funds
- 7 internal service funds
- 3 enterprise funds
- 31 special taxing districts

The OIG oversight responsibility also extends to individuals and organizations which receive Parish funds totaling some 625 contracts with a combined value of more than \$639 million in funds.

Notable OIG investigative activity in 2024 includes:

- JPOIG opened 70 “intakes” in the year 2024
- 56% of those (39 intakes), originated from information provided by individuals outside Jefferson government, including some referrals from other enforcement or other agencies.
- 34% (24 intakes), generated by individuals wishing to remain anonymous.
- 7% (five intakes), from information provided by Parish employees, officials, etc.; and
- 3% (two intakes), generated by information developed by members of the JPOIG staff.

### **JPOIG Milestones: 2013 to Present**

Consistent with the Office of Inspector General’s continued transparency regarding the office’s mission and in somewhat of a departure from previous reports focusing on the office’s yearly accomplishments, efforts, issues and challenges—the 2024 report contains a chapter looking at the Jefferson Parish OIG’s accomplishments from its creation in 2013 through the present.

Between 2013 and 2024, the OIG has opened 616 matters (referred to as “intakes”).

During that time, the office has published 19 position papers and public letters; 67 public reports, and has been the subject of six Parish Ordinance amendments.

The IG also notes that since 2013, the office has reached 308 findings, 202 of which remain unresolved (66%), with 61 resolved and 22 (7%), partially resolved. To that situation, IG Chatelain has noted that as a result of the large percentage of unanswered or unresolved matters...“The risk of fraud, waste and abuse identified by reports has gone unresolved or unanswered by Parish government or entities receiving funds from the Parish.”

This section goes on to discuss the identified causes for 160 findings (52%) as internal control, deficiencies, such as lack of policies and procedures or lack of segregation of duties or sufficient controls.

Further, the IG identifies the cause for 51 findings as non-compliance with laws/regulations and another 44 resulting from non-compliance with contracts or agreements. She notes that combining the two—the lack of internal controls and non-compliance with contracts and laws—accounts for 83% of intakes.

The 2024 report goes on to note that since 2013, the JPIG has identified:

- \$21 billion in funds at risk (in danger of loss, misappropriation, or miss spending significant internal control deficiencies);
- \$30 million in questioned costs (unsupported, unnecessary, unreasonable, or the result of non-compliance); and
- \$17 million in avoidable costs (which could have been avoided by more efficient management or implementation of cost savings recommendations).

## Findings Tracker: Fully Operational

In last year's 2023 Annual Report, the Committee determined from the IG's response that the previously implemented *Recommendation Tracker* was in the process of being discontinued to make way for a new data management process which as reported, is calculated to achieve similar results, while designed to utilize less time to enter necessary data.

According to Inspector General Chatelain, the previously-implemented *Case Management Tracking System* (CMTS) was originally established in 2015, consisting of a web-based application which was designed to support operations and serve as a repository for numerous types of data, including information about fraud, waste, abuse and illegal acts received by the JPOIG; as well as audit and investigative work progress and reports; referrals by the JPOIG to law-enforcement agencies; and document compliance by the JPOIG, with national standards to support review.

As of the present, the *Recommendation Tracker* functions of that system have now been replaced by *and included within* the new Case Management Tracking System (CMTS).

The Inspector General's Office has now completed the implementation of the new **Findings Tracker** update to its CMTS basic case management system. That update now allows the IG to utilize existing data and incorporates the **Findings Tracker**, as indicated in the office's 2024 Report.

The **Findings Tracker** provides important information for the public, including:

- Avoidable costs
- Funds recovered
- Fraud
- Funds at risk of fraud
- Revenues
- Potential economic loss which was prevented
- Waste and abuse
- Questioned costs



## **Referrals to Numerous Agencies**

Considering the OIG's value to Parish government in terms of dollars... The IG points out that the government can be measured through the *deterrence* of fraud, waste, abuse and illegal acts. In pursuing these goals and focusing on deterrence, the IG notes that cases were referred for investigation and enforcement to *some 44 different agencies and departments*, including, among others, those referenced hereinabove, in this Section.

Between 2013 and 2014, 101 referrals have been made to other agencies, based upon the IG identifying reasonable grounds to suspect possible violations of law. Of those, eight (8) have resulted in arrest or warrants having been issued.

Additionally, during that nine-year period, the Inspector General Office has referred cases to some 44 (external) federal, state or local agencies or political subdivisions for investigation, including, among others:

FBI

HHS OIG

US Department of Homeland Security

HUD OIG

National Park Service

US Coast Guard

Jefferson Parish District Attorney

Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office

Louisiana Attorney Disciplinary Board

Jefferson Parish Attorney

Jefferson Parish President

Louisiana State Attorney General

## **Annual Risk Assessments**

In addition to the above, the OIG conducts an Annual Risk Assessment which is a systematic process of identifying, analyzing and evaluating the risk of an event occurring that could

adversely impact a department's or agency's operations or objectives; and which identifies relevant risks—all for the purpose of allowing the Parish to initiate audits, evaluations and investigations to eliminate or mitigate those risks.

In 2024, that risk assessment process identified the following high-risk areas, including among others:

- East Bank Consolidated Fire Services
- Personnel Department
- Purchasing Department
- Building Permits Department
- Consolidated Recreation Department

In conducting its Risk Assessments, the IG has concentrated on these principal risk categories:

- Fraud risk and
- Operational risk

Adopting and applying the occupational fraud risks developed and identified by the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE), JPOIG—in an effort to protect taxpayer resources and property—looks for and identifies the following:

- Corruption risk
- Cash misappropriation
- Fraudulent disbursements
- Misuse or theft
- Compliance risk
- Management risk
- Personnel risk
- Technological risk
- Process risk.

Moreover, the Inspector General's Office has categorized Parish departments and functions according to the revenue sources:

**Special Revenue (dedicated funds):**

- Consolidated fire district
- Fire Districts
- Juvenile services
- Drainage
- Streets
- Sewerage
- Parkways
- Playgrounds
- Lafreniere Park
- Animal shelter
- Off-track betting
- Tourism
- Riverboat gaming.

**Internal services:**

- Central garage
- Electronic information
- Engineering.

**Grants:**

- US Department of Federal Transit
- US Department of Housing and Urban Development

**Other Parish entities:**

- Records,
- Parish courts and constables

**General revenue: (sales, tax, etc.):**

- Parish Council
- Parish President
- Property Maintenance.

## VII

### **Funding and Budget**

Notwithstanding ever-present budget and funding demands and challenges, the OIG continues to pursue its multiple missions of investigation, audits, inspections and performance reviews of Parish government operations to assist in improving those operations and, wherever possible, to deter and identify fraud, waste, abuse and illegal conduct. IG Chatelain and her staff are committed to continuing the accomplishment of all three prongs of this mission.

As noted, budget and funding for the Jefferson Parish Inspector General's Office is funded by a dedicated property tax. In November 2020, the citizens voted to renew the tax mileage to fund the office for an additional 10 years, through 2032.

Specifically, in 2022, the millage rate for the district returned to .5 when the citizens voted to renew the millage for the additional 10 years.

Last year (2024), the properties were assessed again and the Council *rolled back* the district rate to .47.

The OIG salaries for employees are determined by the Inspector General while the Parish calculates related, additional benefits, such as health, retirement and post-employment benefits.

The office's personnel costs for 2024 were \$1,175,472, which represented 78% of the office budget. The IG's leased space in Elmwood (which is mandated to be separate from government buildings and which is shared with the Ethics and Compliance Commission), was \$110,198. .

## VIII

### **IG's Public Letters:** **Challenges, a Legal Opinion and an Ordinance Amendment**

During 2024, as part of its oversight activity, the Inspector General Office, published two Public Letters.

According to its own 2024 Annual Report, the IG noted that such Public Letters are issued (1) before an action order decision is made; or (2) as an early communication upon the discovery of information, but before a full analysis can be completed... in prompting change to prevent a loss." JPOIG 2024 Annual Report, p.33.

In the first of these, the IG issued a Public Letter to the Parish Council (JPIG #2024-0004), on April 30, 2024, raising concerns about the use of dedicated millage funds under circumstances which the IG deemed potentially violated State law.

In the second (and more controversial) Public Letter, issued on September 19, 2024 (JPIG #2024–0001), Inspector General expressed concern over the Parish’s commitment to expend several million dollars of public funds through the Jefferson Redevelopment Inc. (JRI) and Jefferson Facilities, Inc. (JFI) in connection with the planned Port Orleans Brewing Company Project in Gretna.

Because this second Public Letter resulted in a highly charged, negative response from some Council members—based upon the assertion that the IG had violated an obligation to disclose any such letters to affected Council members and discuss same prior to any release—the Jefferson Parish Ethics and Compliance Commission (ECC) engaged a local law firm to research, opine on, and resolve the issue of whether the Public Letter question was, or was not as alleged, issued in accordance with Jefferson Parish ordinances and Applicable Standards and Procedures established by the Association of Inspectors General (AIG).

On March 17, 2025, following an in-depth examination of material facts and circumstances, and consistent with his obligation to the ECC, New Orleans Attorney Stephen Herman of the Fishman Hood LLP firm published a 19-page report essentially resolving the matter, and with commentary.

As Mr. Herman noted in his Report, in his engagement, he was *not* asked to:

- Attempt to determine whether the substance of either of the IG Public Letters were correct or incorrect on the facts or law; nor
- Attempt to determine whether or not the Parish Council was or was not within its authority and discretion to include within its 2024 operating budget a transfer from the criminal justice fund to the general fund; nor
- Determine whether the Parish Council was or was not within its authority and discretion to approve the Gretna Brew Pub Project; nor
- Determine whether the project was a good investment for the people of Jefferson Parish.

To that end, in his legal report, Mr. Herman expressed no opinion on such matters.

Following a close examination, Mr. Herman did opine on whether Public Letters 2024-01 and 2024-04 were issued in accordance with Jefferson Parish Ordinances and all Applicable Standards and Procedures established by the AIG.

Noting that the Public Letters in question were not formal audit reports—nor the findings nor recommendations of formal investigations, evaluations, inspections or reviews— but rather interim and remedial attempts to prevent potentially improper transfers and or waste, Mr. Herman in his Report concluded that:

- There is nothing in the Jefferson Parish Ordinance that was in effect at the time that public letters 2024–01 and 2024–04 were issued or the Standards and Procedures promulgated by the Association of Inspectors General which explicitly prohibited the Inspector General from releasing a “Public Letter” in an attempt to prevent what is perceived to be potentially problematic legislation and/or potential waste.

Herman Report to ECC, p.2.

In his Report, Mr. Herman goes on to note:

- With hindsight, it would have been prudent and may have been more effective for the IG to have raised the concerns identified in the Public Letters privately with the Parish Councilmembers before releasing them to the public. But the Inspector General is ultimately vested with the responsibility to assess the urgency of the situation, and—within certain legal requirements and limitations, which have now been made more clear—to determine the appropriate timing and methods that are most likely to be effective in preventing a potentially unauthorized transfer of funds and/or a potentially ill-advised series of expenditures that she and her staff have (correctly or incorrectly) identified as possible waste.

Herman Report to ECC, p.8.

The Herman Report also takes up the issue of whether the IG had maintained the requisite level of independence in performing her duties in accordance with the Standards and Procedures established by the AIG. On this issue, Mr. Herman opined that the IG and her office did maintain the requisite level of independence in the performance of their duties.

On the Gretna Brew Pub matter, Mr. Herman wrote:

- I believe that the Inspector General’s office has generally pursued the matters falling within its purview independent of undue influence or agenda.

Herman Report to ECC, p.9.

In his report’s Conclusion, Mr. Herman states:

- Based on a thorough review of the matter, it is my opinion that the...[relevant]...Jefferson Parish Ordinance and Association of Inspectors General standards in effect at the time could arguably be interpreted to allow the Inspector General to release Public Letters 2024–01 and 2024–04. The better interpretation and practice would have been to communicate those concerns to the Jefferson Parish Council members privately before releasing them to the public. But I think it was possible, under the ordinance and standards in effect at the time, for the IG to believe that the promulgation of such Public Letters fell within her general mandate to monitor and attempt to prevent a potentially unauthorized transfer funds and/or possible waste. It is also my opinion that the Inspector General’s Office has generally pursued the matter

falling within its purview independently, within the meaning of the relevant Jefferson Parish ordinance and Association of Inspectors General Standards.  
Herman Report to ECC, p.19.

On January 15, 2025, the Jefferson Parish Council passed an ordinance amending Chapter 2 of the Code of Ordinances, Article V, relative to, *inter alia*, the authority and investigative powers of the Office of Inspector General, Jefferson Parish, Louisiana. In section (9), entitled “Reporting the results of inspector general findings”, the following amended language was included:

(b) Prior to concluding a report or recommendation, including early communications or letters, which contains findings as to the person or entity being reported or who is the subject of the recommendation, the inspector general shall provide the affected person or entity an opportunity to respond by providing a copy of the report or recommendation in compliance with subsection (c) herein. Person or entity, for the purposes of this section, shall not include a person or entity incidentally named in a report, but not the person or entity being reported or who is a subject of the report or recommendation.

(c) Such person or entity above shall have thirty (30) working days to submit a written explanation or rebuttal of the findings before the report or recommendation is finalized, and such timely submitted written explanation shall be attached to the finalized report or recommendation...

The Committee notes for clarity that the Inspector General’s issuance of the two Public Letters which became the subject of the referenced controversy—and additionally the subject of the Herman ECC opinion—occurred many months prior to the January 15, 2025 amendment to the referenced Parish ordinance requiring thereafter that such letters be presented and disclosed to affected persons or entities with opportunity for rebuttal, prior to any public release.

The Committee also notes for completeness and clarity, that prior to the issuance of the Public Letters in question, the IG had, at the outset, previously publicly announced an audit of Jefferson Facilities Inc. (JFI) and of Jefferson Redevelopment Inc. (JRI), in an examination and evaluation of the lease between GFI and the Orleans Brew Pub entities. Specifically, as referenced on page 26 of the IG’s 2024 Annual Report, the IG announced the existence of four ongoing audits—two of which had been previously announced as underway—those being GFI, Number 2024–0007, and JRI, Number 2024–0008.

Finally, the Committee notes that the Inspector General and her staff clearly maintain that it has been the policy and practice of that Office to issue Public Letters without providing advance notice. We also note that the policies and practices observed by the OIG appear to be consistent with the independence of the Office and its non-partisan mission.

## IX

### **A Conversation with Inspector General Chatelain:** **Questions and Straightforward Answers**

During the course of our compilation of the OIG's 2024 Annual Report, as is our practice—the members of the Review Committee had the privilege of communicating directly and very productively with Inspector General Chatelain and her team leaders.

She was gracious enough to make herself and her staff available at any time, to field any questions or requests— for which we remain grateful.

The following are some of the questions we posed to the IG, along with her candid and helpful responses.

**Question 1. What progress do you believe your office is making in the ongoing process of auditing the Volunteer Fire Companies on what you have reported?**

***IG Response:*** According to the Inspector General, her office has continued to receive “good responses” from those fire companies. However, the problems identified in the OIG report have not been solved as the IG believes that more central supervision and coordination is necessary to achieve more efficiency, and to limit at-risk funds. Each company has a governance committee populated by its own members. A feasibility study to determine how to effectively centralize governance over these diverse companies is underway. Currently, the Parish fire chief does not exercise authority or control over those volunteer fire companies in question, which would require a potentially expensive structural change.

The IG also noted that two fire chiefs spoke following the OIG meeting indicating that while they did not agree with the IG's report—they felt that the IG had nevertheless been fair.

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**Question 2. What type of active oversight (if any) do you believe should be imposed upon the volunteer fire departments in question?**

**(For instance, should there be active oversight by the Parish Fire Chief? And if so, would this likely help to ameliorate some of the problems which the OIG has to investigate and address?)**

***IG Response:*** A resolution to this question has not yet been reached as of the date of this Report. According to the IG, the ongoing study which would ideally make such a determination and possibly recommendation—would have as its goal the overall, consistent supervision of those volunteer fire departments. While there is a recommendation of consolidation, there has been no execution on the study, resulting in a persistent lack of clarity on the matter.

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**Question 3: When was the last time your office had a *triennial peer review* by the National Association of Inspectors General (NAIG)?**

**IG Response:** *According to the IG in that office's 2024 Report, the previous peer review took place three years ago, and the subsequent triennial OIG Peer Review was carried out and completed in September of 2024—with excellent results, with the JPOIG continuing its consistent record of very good scores .*

*This triennial peer review was carried out by the Association of Inspectors General (AIG), and the review team consisted of inspectors general from federal, state and local government across the country. That AIG review provides assurance that the JPIG is following established policies and procedures and applicable standards. (The 2024 review report covered January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2023.)*

*Additionally and importantly, the AIG Peer Review Report found no violations or failures, and that it was the unanimous conclusion of the [AIG] team that both the OIG's AD (audit division) and ID (investigations division) met all relevant AIG and IIA standards for the period under review.*

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**Question 4: Regarding the changes which you commenced making to the office systems... How successful do you feel the migrations have been?**

**IG Response:** *The migration to Microsoft Office 365 is complete, and the migration of data related to the Case Management System is also complete. The deployment of the new **Findings Tracker** was completed and fully operational by the first quarter of 2024.*

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**Question 5: Is the new Findings Tracker (which replaced the Recommendations Tracker) completed, and if so, how is it performing in the CMTS?**

**IG Response:** *Inspector General Chatelain indicates that it is performing well, as set forth in the OIG 2024 Report's Section on Milestones, P.21 et seq.*

*Specifically, the **Findings Tracker**—consists of two reports (one of findings and one of identified costs). Together, these two reports incorporate data not previously published, including:*

- 1. Categorizing all findings according to the issue identified;*
- 2. In every Report, including the type of Report;*
- 3. Publishing of current status of findings: i.e., resolved, partially resolved, or unresolved; and*
- 4. Costs identified by type and finding.*

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**Question 6:** Are you seeing improvements and responses to your questions or recommendations by the Parish departments, agencies and entities your office is overseeing?

**IG Response:** *The Inspector General did state still only approximately 1/3 of items addressed over the year have been corrected, and there's still not yet a 100% response rate.*

*In some cases, however, the IG is happy that the office sometimes receives responses, but not always solutions. The process, however, still needs improvement, as the responses received are often "not substantive". Also, when no response is received, the IG re-contacts the relevant entity to hopefully generate a more fulsome response to help resolve the issue. This is a work in progress.*

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**Question 7:** *Referring to last year's OIG 2023 Report regarding Parish employee drug testing... The Inspector General previously noted that as part of the current background investigation process, new Parish employees are tested during the hiring process, although not thereafter.*

**What is the current status of the OIG's inquiry into of that important public safety mater?**

**IG Response:** *As IG Chatelain indicated last year, the Inspector General's Office performed a comprehensive evaluation of drug testing policies within the Jefferson Parish fire services. (The OIG findings and recommendations are included in the JPIG EBCFD/VFC Drug Policy Evaluation, contained in JPOIG report #2021-0019, which was published on October 10, 2024.)*

*The IG recognizes that the regular drug testing of firefighters is critical to public safety, stressing that both East Bank and West Bank firefighters should be subjected to the same testing standards.*

*That evaluation concluded that EBCFD maintained and implemented policies and procedures to test and identify substance abuse among firefighters as part of their fire civil service system. That evaluation found:*

- *The [East Bank] policies and procedures satisfied state law mandates, and would support employment action against the employee in appropriate situations;*
- *The policies distinguished prohibited substances; and*
- *EBCDFD maintained an adequate rate of random drug testing.*

*However, the evaluation also found that the volunteer fire companies' policies and procedures varied widely, concluding that the majority of volunteer companies:*

- *Did not have policies and procedures in place to test and identify substance use or abuse;*
- *Did not address the use of medication while on duty;*
- *Did not meet state law requirements necessary to support employment action; and*
- *Did not conduct drug testing in a manner compliant with state law and regulations, which could lead to liability issues for the volunteer companies and the Parish.*

*The evaluation also identified opportunities for corrective action by both the VFC's and the Parish.*

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**Question 8:** *How do you feel your office is progressing in tackling all three designated functions?*

**IG Response:** *The IG reported that, as indicated in her office's 2024 Annual Report, all three functions are being carried out. Although the vast majority of the resources and budget have been (necessarily) devoted to investigations and audits—through a concerted effort by the Inspector General and her team, that office has carried out – and continues to carry out to the extent possible—evaluation activity in compliance with the AIG's Principles and Standards for the Offices of Inspectors General.*

*Specifically, in this year's 2024 report, the IG reports two (2) ongoing evaluations underway:*

- *An evaluation of the Building Permits Department's processing of third-party inspections; and*
- *An evaluation of the Personnel Department's ability to efficiently and effectively recruit employees and provide departments with qualified candidates for employment.*

*Additionally, the IG published one report in 2024.*

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**Question 9:** *Are all of your available positions (FTEs) presently filled?*

**IG Response:** *Inspector General reported that the office does not currently have the position of in-house General Counsel filled.*

*As a result of the retirement of the office's in-house legal counsel (General Counsel), the office is presently conducting a search for a qualified individual to fill that position. That said, the office always maintains two Deputy IGs and two Auditors.*

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## **X**

### **Conclusion**

For this, the seventh consecutive year of the Committee's review, Jefferson Parish's Inspector General Kim Chatelain and her staff of highly educated and qualified professionals were at all times accessible, responsive, candid, clear, helpful, and eager to provide whatever information we requested in order to make our seventh review as complete, accurate and effective as possible.

As citizens of Jefferson Parish, we the members of the Quality Assurance Review Committee have an interest—shared with all those who live and work here—in Parish government which is honest, efficient, transparent and responsive to the needs of all.

The Office of the Inspector General under IG Chatelain's leadership continues to provide accountability and oversight of government functions in positive, constructive ways by operating fairly and without political or personal agendas, thus maintaining productive dialogs with all branches with which it interacts. Moreover, it does so while maintaining the essential political, economic, social, personal and other distance and objectivity to enable it to effectively demand accountability and point out shortcomings in Parish government components and processes in need of repair whenever necessary.

We remain grateful for the honor and privilege to have the trust of the citizens we serve in this role—and we thank Inspector General Kim Chatelain and her outstanding team for their work, accessibility, cooperation and dedication to public service. We commend and offer our gratitude to Inspector General Chatelain and her entire staff for a job well done in service to us all.