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March 15, 2016

Mr. Joseph Berrios  
Assessor  
Cook County Assessor's Office  
118 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL 60602

Mr. Roger Fross  
Locke Lord LLP  
111 South Wacker Drive, Suite 4100  
Chicago, IL 60606

Ms. Susan Feibus  
Assessor Compliance Administrator  
70 West Madison, Suite 3500  
Chicago, IL 60602

**Re: March 2016 Semi-Annual Report**

Dear Assessor Berrios, Mr. Fross and Ms. Feibus:

This is the first semi-annual report of the undersigned Director of Compliance issued pursuant to the July 29, 2015 draft Employment Plan. My top priority is to work cooperatively with the Assessor Compliance Administrator and the Cook County Assessor's Office to take the steps necessary to achieve Substantial Compliance. First and foremost on this path is the finalization of the Employment Plan and the development of a comprehensive Employee Handbook. While I have only been in the role of the Director of Compliance since February 8, 2016, a brief overview of my activities to date is warranted.

**Human Resources Director:**

The position of Human Resources Director was posted. Prior to my employment as the Director of Compliance, applications were received and validated. Candidates were selected for interviews, with oversight from the Assessor Compliance Administrator and the Director of Compliance. Working with the Deputy of Human Resources, Legal Counsel and the Assessor Compliance Administrator, interview questions were reviewed and developed. The questions were arranged in a logically sequential order. Five candidates were selected to interview for the position. One candidate was a no-show.

The interviews and the selection meeting were monitored and no deviations or irregularities in the process were noted. The panel made appropriate use of follow-up questions during the candidate interviews. The candidate selected for the position is a Human Resources professional with full spectrum Human Resources experience.

#### Employee Handbook:

The prior Assessor Compliance Administrator's reports to the court are clear that written policies and procedures covering all aspects of employment with the Assessor's Office are needed as a prerequisite to substantial compliance. To this end, a significant amount of time has been spent reviewing the draft Employee Handbook. Meetings have occurred with the Deputy of Human Resources and the Chief Deputy Assessor to discuss the draft Handbook, revisions to the draft Handbook, and the development of needed policies. Weekly meetings with the Human Resources Department about the Employee Handbook have been requested. The Chief Deputy Assessor was receptive to this request and has arranged for weekly meetings with the new Human Resources Director.

#### Meetings:

Meetings with the Assessor, the Chief Deputy Assessor, and many Department Deputies have taken place. I have had daily interaction with the Deputy of Human Resources and Legal Counsel. All have been available as needed and cooperative in responding to requests. Formal and informal meetings have occurred with staff. These meetings have been instrumental in helping me understand the operations of the Assessor's Office and the functions of specific roles within the Office.

#### Complaints/Unlawful Political Discrimination:

No complaints have been received by the Director of Compliance.

#### Political Contacts:

No reports of Political Contact have been received by the Director of Compliance. The Political Contact Log has been moved to the Director of Compliance's Office. The reporting form has been updated and reposted to the Assessor's Office internet and intranet sites.

#### Monitoring -

##### Disciplinary Actions:

The issuance of discipline to employees based on infractions of the Time and Attendance Policy was monitored. These meetings would benefit from a more formal process.

I have spoken to the Deputy Human Resources about the need for discipline to be issued in a timely fashion, and have suggested that these disciplinary meetings occur two times a month, or at the very least, once a month. Follow up is planned with the Deputy of Human Resources and the Director of Human Resources to further discuss the Time and Attendance process.

I also had the opportunity to monitor a Step 1 union grievance pertaining to the issuance of discipline, wherein it was alleged that the grievant was wrongfully disciplined, that the discipline was too severe in nature, and that a prior incident was used as a basis for the discipline in an untimely fashion. The process proceeded appropriately with both management and the union being afforded an opportunity to present their respective positions. The Department Deputy reduced the discipline, agreeing that the use of the prior incident was untimely per the collective bargaining agreement. The grievance has been advanced to Step 2 of the grievance procedure pursuant to the provisions of the collective bargaining agreement.

#### Performance Evaluations:

The issuance of performance evaluations to employees at the end of their probationary periods was monitored. Suggestions were made to improve the performance evaluation form utilized by the office. Currently, there is no formal training in place for managers/supervisors on the implementation of an effective and comprehensive evaluation process. A formal training program needs to be developed to cover this gap.

#### Job Descriptions:

The posting and filling of vacancies is understandably a priority of the Assessor's Office given that few position vacancies have been filled in the past year. Four groups of positions have been identified. I, along with the Assessor Compliance Administrator, had the opportunity to review the Requests to Hire, job descriptions and Job Opportunity Notices for the first group of positions: Director of Field Operations, Freedom of Information Specialist, Manager of Taxpayer Information, Assessment Operations Support Staff, Taxpayer Services Support Staff, Taxpayer Information Specialist, and Residential Field Workflow Coordinator. Many of the suggestions of the Assessor Compliance Administrator and the Director of Compliance were incorporated into the job descriptions. As part of this review process, meetings were held with employees holding these positions, for the positions where there was an incumbent employee, to discuss job duties and reporting structure. The application instructions contained in the Notice of Job Opportunity were updated to detail and highlight the information an applicant must provide in order to be considered for the position. Positions were posted in a manner to solicit both internal and external applicants. Per agreement with the Assessor Compliance Administrator, an internal preference was given to the Director of Field Operations, Manager of Taxpayer Information and Residential Workflow Coordinator.

The positions were posted March 9, 2016, with the application period ending March 22, 2016. The paper application system remains in use.

Training:

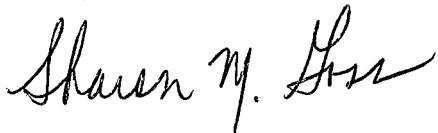
In anticipation of interviewing candidates for the first group of posted positions, interviewer training was presented to those employees who are anticipated to serve as part of an interview panel. An area focused on during discussions with the Deputy of Human Resources and elaborated on during the training session was the use of follow up questions during the interview process. Ultimately, the Deputy of Human Resources agreed that the use of follow up questions is an important tool to be used by the panel in determining the most qualified candidate for the position.

The drafting of training on Unlawful Political Contacts and Unlawful Political Discrimination is underway.

Conclusion:

While I have only been the Director of Compliance for a short period of time, I have approached my duties without bias and in the spirit of cooperation. I believe that there is understanding that much needs to be accomplished before the goal of Substantial Compliance can be met. I look forward to working with the Cook County Assessor's Office and the Assessor Compliance Administrator in combined effort to reach this goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sharon M. Goss".

Sharon M. Goss  
Director of Compliance  
Cook County Assessor's Office