



City's audit reflects great results

Zack Chalifour, CPA, speaks with the Chiefland City Commission about its annual audit review.

**Story and photos
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CHIEFLAND – The report of the 2018 annual audit of the city of Chiefland shows great results.

Zack Chalifour, CPA, a partner in James Moore & Co., presented a quick oral review of the findings of the review Monday night (May 13) during the regular City Commission meeting. He also provided the Commission members with bound copies of the entire external audit.

Brendan McKitrick, CPA, and a manager in James Moore & Co., worked with Chalifour on the audit. McKitrick was on vacation; so, Chalifour made the presentation and answered questions singlehandedly Monday night.

Chalifour thanked City Manager Mary Ellzey and the city staff for assisting in the audit, as James Moore & Co. heralds its fourth year as the city's external auditor. James Moore & Co. has an office in Gainesville among its various offices in Florida.

All four of the reports in the audit statement reflected the city performing extremely well in its recording all of its financial matters, Chalifour said.

It was a very smooth audit, completed on time and with very positive results, Chalifour said.

In regard to the first aspect – the financial statements themselves -- the firm issued a statement that the financial statements are fairly presented. This statement with no significant caveats is the best statement the city could have earned in this regard, Chalifour said.

Other Post-Employment Benefits, though, is an area noted as being the single outlier. This issue is a non-issue in regard to having any budgetary impact or having to do with the day-to-day business of city operations, but it came to exist as part of municipal audits as the result of cities that had separate pension funds with books showing a negative amount or a deficit.

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The City Commission on Monday night (May 13) are seen here. They are (from left) Vice Mayor Tim West, City Commissioner Rollin Hudson, Mayor Chris Jones, City Commissioner Donald Lawrence and City Commissioner Norman Weaver.

Chiefland and other small cities that use the State Retirement System often choose to not pay an actuary to create a theoretical number to comply with government accounting standards in this regard, Chalifour said.

This choice has no budgetary impact, Chalifour said. It is very common to see this “qualification” to the report. Not hiring an actuary to create this theoretical number, he said, is the one deviation from government accounting standards; however, this is a very common qualifier for many small municipalities.

The second report looks at internal controls over accounting report processes. If there were any deficiencies in internal controls, the CPA firm would have to note them in a letter. There were no deficiencies or comments in that letter for Chiefland in 2018, Chalifour said.

The third report is a management letter required by the Florida Auditor General’s Office, Chalifour said. There were no negative trends that met the threshold required for reporting, Chalifour said. The city is in very good financial condition, he intimated, and all of the trends are going in a good direction.

The fourth report reviewed by the external auditing team deals with cash and investments by the city. The city is in compliance with those specified statutes in that regard, Chalifour said.

After the Certified Public Accountant completed his reports, City Manager Ellzey shared an historic perspective.

This report, she said, reflects the status of a city with a strong and proper set of books, because the staff have been diligent in overcoming all previous noted deficiencies in the past four years. Ellzey said she is proud of the staff’s ability to overcome all issues which previously were listed.

James Moore & Co. has been very good to work with, Ellzey said, noting that help from the firm allowed the city to provide good accounting.

Among the city staff who are part of the whole team working on the accounting are City Manager Ellzey, Deputy City Clerk Laura Cain, Planning Project Coordinator Belinda Wilkerson, Project and Finance Coordinator Seth Sache, and Billing Account Clerk Anita Parrish.