



Town of Orange

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Town Administrator's Office

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November 15, 2024

Via Electronic Mail and First-Class Mail

Jeffrey S. Shapiro, Esq., CIG
Office of Inspector General
John W. McCormack State Office Building
Room 1311
One Ashburton Place
Boston, MA, 02108

Dear Jeffrey S. Shapiro,

The Town of Orange, Massachusetts (the "Town") has received your letter dated October 18, 2024, entitled, "Dexter Park and Fisher Hill Elementary Schools – Demolition and Renovation Projects – Disposal of Surplus Inventory". This letter acknowledges its receipt and provides corrective actions with your associated recommendations.

DISCUSSION

The above referenced letter from the Office of the Inspector General for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (OIG) provides observations concerning the disposition and disposal of equipment associated with the now defunct Dexter Park Elementary School and the accompanying renovation and expansion of the Fisher Hill Elementary School. In the interest of brevity, the verbatim observations are not presented here but include a donation of an oven hood to a restaurant located in the Town, donations of kitchen equipment to a local not-for-profit charity, and reimbursing a recycling company to remove and dispose of miscellaneous furniture and equipment. Certain items were not dispositioned or disposed of in accordance with Massachusetts General Law. The above referenced letter provided recommendations for corrective actions concerning the proper processes for handling municipal surplus equipment.

Table 1 below presents the recommendations provided by the OIG along with corrective actions taken, or to be taken, by the Town.

OIG Recommendation	Town of Orange – Action Plan
<i>Maintain written inventory procedures and inventory lists for all town- or school-owned property, equipment, and supplies from the time of acquisition until the end of their useful life;</i>	<i>Develop policies for inventory; send to Town Boards and Committees to adopt & implement into their respective Town Departments.</i>
<i>Determine the value of unwanted surplus items prior to taking steps for disposal;</i>	<i>Develop policies that list formal procedures for determining the value of unwanted surplus items.;</i>

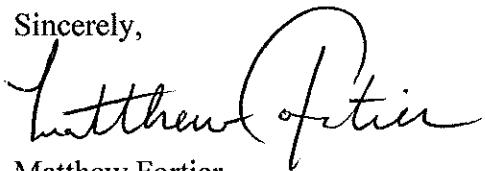
<i>Adopt written procedures for the disposal of surplus items valued at less than \$10,000.</i>	<i>Develop policies with written procedures for the disposal of surplus items valued at less than \$10,000. Amend the Town Bylaw to reflect new policy language.</i>
<i>Ensure that surplus items are properly disposed of through written procedures or through competitive sealed bids or public auctions, depending on their value;</i>	<i>Above policies shall include written procedures for surplus disposition that are in compliance with MGL.</i>
<i>Ensure that votes by governing bodies to transfer or dispose of surplus items are accurately recorded in meeting minutes and include a detailed inventory list;</i>	<i>Educate governing bodies that votes by governing bodies to transfer or dispose of surplus items must be accurately recorded in meeting minutes and include a detailed inventory list</i>
<i>Maintain a written inventory of items being transferred to other political subdivisions and items being disposed of, including their values;</i>	<i>Above policies shall include procedures for the documentation and transfer of inventory to other political subdivisions and items being disposed of, including their values</i>
<i>Ensure that OPMs for local projects are able to demonstrate their knowledge of statutes, regulations, bylaws, policies, and procedures governing the disposal of surplus property, equipment, and supplies;</i>	<i>OPMs shall be subject to a qualifications-based hiring method, which will include scoring criterion for the understanding of procurement law and procedures. For MSBA projects specifically, OPMs shall be certified in the Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Officer Program (MCPPO).</i>
<i>Enroll employees in OIG Academy courses and designate at least one employee to obtain the OIG's Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official (MCPPO) Designation.</i>	<i>The School and Town each currently staff at least one person with the MCPPO Designation; those employees will aim to earn credits toward the renewal of their OIG MCCPO designations</i>
<i>Make the MCPPO Designation a preferred qualification for municipal procurement officers.</i>	<i>Review job descriptions with procurement officer duties for language that lists the MCPPO designation as preferred.</i>

Table 1

CONCLUSION

The Town has received the letter from the OIG and is actively implementing corrective actions as shown in Table 1. The Town is grateful to the OIG for the report and providing solutions to help make the Town not only more compliant with applicable regulations, but better streamlined to provide efficiency in the disposal of declared surplus equipment.

Sincerely,



Matthew Fortier
Town Administrator
Town of Orange

cc (by email):

Mallory Ellis, Chair, Orange Elementary School Committee
Josefa Scherer, Vice Chair, Orange Elementary School Committee
Jessica Reske, Secretary, Orange Elementary School Committee
Yarelyn Ramos-Martinez, Orange Elementary School Committee
Frank Hains, Orange Elementary School Committee
Thomas Smith, Chair, Orange Select Board
Patricia Lussier, Vice Chair, Orange Select Board
Andrew Smith, Clerk, Orange Select Board
Jane Peirce, Orange Select Board
Julie Davis, Orange Select Board
Dr. Elizabeth Teahan-Zielinski, Superintendent of Schools, Orange Elementary Schools
Martin Goulet, Senior Project Manager, LiRo Hill
Mary Pichetti, Executive Director, Massachusetts School Building Authority
Eugenia M. Carris, General Counsel, OIG
George A. Xenakis, Director, Audit, Oversight and Investigations Division, OIG
Nataliya Urciuoli, Senior Executive Assistant, OIG