

BexarMet investigates accusations of accounting irregularities

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SAN ANTONIO – It was an intense meeting, at times, as the results of an investigation into accounting irregularities was revealed to BexarMet Board members on Monday.

“I am very upset with this situation,” said District 3 Board member Blanche Atkinson, as she criticized BexarMet administrators and their handling of the forensic audit. “It continues to go on and on and on, and I will not sit here and take this.”

Accountants with the firm Smith, Patterson, Johnson were hired to perform the forensic audit. They told the Board, after talking with BexarMet’s attorney, they decided to review seven of the whistle blower’s 14 complaints.

The investigation focused on accusations of adjustments to customer accounts, impact fee revenues, improperly authorized payments, inaccurate monthly finance statements, segregation of third party payments, allowance for doubtful accounts and current and long-term debt.

Of those issues, the auditors say they found the water company’s finance department handle adjustments to customer accounts effectively. Four areas were rated as “needing improvement.”

The two investigators found “unsatisfactory” were inaccurate financial statements and impact fee revenues.

The investigators say they did not look into whether the finance books were intentionally inaccurate. However, Gilbert Herrera, the recently suspended BexarMet business analyst who brought up the accusations, says it’s obvious something is wrong.

The Board is now asking the finance department to come up with a uniform way of documenting money expected on future projects. Some Board members are even suggestion personnel changes in the finance department.

District 5 Board member Vanessa Ybarra says the finance department needs a lot of improvement.

‘Even though the report didn’t seem negative, it didn’t seem positive either. It was not what Board members should accept from the finance department.’”