

**THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PERFORMANCE OVERSIGHT HEARING**

MARCH 15, 2021

**OPENING STATEMENT OF GEOFFREY A. CHERRINGTON
INSPECTOR GENERAL
WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY**

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and Committee members. I am Geoff Cherrington, the Inspector General for WMATA.

Thank you for asking me to be here today.

I appreciate this opportunity to discuss the significant work that the Office of Inspector General has completed to combat fraud, waste and abuse as part of the OIG mission to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of WMATA. I am also grateful for this chance to describe briefly OIG's responsibilities and authorities as an independent oversight unit of WMATA.

The WMATA Compact provides the basic statutory authorities of WMATA and of OIG.

It establishes OIG as "an independent and objective unit of the Authority" that

- "conducts and supervises audits, program evaluations, and investigations relating to Authority activities";
- "promotes economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in Authority activities";
- "detects and prevents fraud and abuse in Authority activities"; and
- "keeps the Board fully and currently informed about deficiencies in Authority activities as well as the necessity for and progress of corrective action."

In performing these four areas of responsibility, OIG has broad authority to conduct and supervise audits, evaluations and investigations of all WMATA activities.

By resolution the WMATA Board of Directors has directed that OIG "shall have access to all Authority records and the full cooperation of staff when necessary for performing the functions and responsibilities" of OIG, and "shall enjoy the greatest possible independence and freedom from interference, consistent with the WMATA Compact, including initiating, carrying out and completing any audit or investigation and issuing any subpoena in the course of an audit or investigation."

The Compact states no exceptions to OIG's oversight authority, whether the matters under review involve financial, operational, police, cybersecurity, or other WMATA activities. OIG has performed oversight in all these areas.

During Fiscal Years 2020 and 2021, as of March 1 this year, OIG has completed or currently has underway at least 95 audits, eight investigations of alleged misconduct, seven management alerts on matters requiring immediate management attention, three management assistance reports making urgent recommendations to management, and 11 special projects taking an in-depth look into various programs and practices at WMATA.

Our audits alone during this period have identified over \$65 million in funds that could be put to better use. Our written answers to the Committee's questions provide details about this work.

We also describe OIG's investigative process in the written answers. In addition to the investigations summarized in our written answers, OIG's investigations in earlier periods led to several significant criminal convictions that were achieved during the FY 2020-2021 time period.

I would like to commend WMATA management as they have accepted our vast number of recommendations and done so in a timely manner. I would also like to thank the WMATA Board of Directors for their support of OIG and the emphasis on effective oversight.

I would be happy to elaborate on any of these points and to answer any questions the Committee may have.