



BROWARD OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 28, 2021

City of Deerfield Beach Officials Withheld Public Records Regarding Retiree Health Benefits Misspending

Broward Inspector General John W. Scott announced today that the Broward Office of the Inspector General (OIG) issued [a final report](#) finding misconduct by the City of Deerfield Beach's human resources and risk management (HR) director in 2017 and 2018, when she failed to produce responsive documents to residents who requested public records about the overpayment of health benefit subsidies to retirees over the age of 65.

Residents made the requests to gain clarity on the city administration of the health plan and the scope, magnitude, duration, and cost of misspending on health care costs for retirees over the age of 65. Specifically, the OIG determined that the HR Director withheld a document that was in her custody and directly responsive to public records requests we investigated. That particular document, referred to as the Retiree Health Plan Analysis, included facts that formed the basis for its author to conclude that the city had contributed to subsidies for retirees without authority for more than a decade, that the city's HR employees instructed several retirees not to enroll in Medicare, that retirees could attempt legal action against the city, the scope of the coverage at issue, and other observations that would have provided fodder to critics of the city's administration.

The OIG also established that the City Clerk oversaw a public records process that failed to properly respond to one public records request, also in violation of state public records law.

The city's response to the OIG's report reflects its acceptance of our factual findings and recognition of the need for improvement of the city's process of record maintenance and system for tracking and responding to public records requests. As a result of the OIG investigation, the city is implementing several changes in its processes, and the OIG has requested the city provide a status report on its progress in implementing those changes in 120 days.