



ASSOCIATION OF INSPECTORS GENERAL

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October 05, 2024

Leah Ward Sears, Chair
Atlanta Temporary Task Force
Members of the City Council
55 Trinity Ave. SW
Atlanta, GA 30303

Re: Comments on the Mission and Charter of the Atlanta Temporary Task Force.

Chair Sears and Members of the Atlanta Temporary Task Force:

The Association of Inspectors General (AIG) is an independent, non-partisan 501(c)(3) organization that for nearly 30 years has represented thousands of members working in hundreds of Inspectors General offices across the United States and internationally. Transparency, accountability and integrity in government operations are essential components of the public's trust and the AIG's mission is to advance professionalism and promote best practices towards those critical objectives.

For the last several months, the AIG has followed developments that, in essence, bear upon the state of the relationships among the Atlanta Office of the Inspector General (OIG), the independent OIG Governing Board, the City Administration and the City Council. Some of these issues came to the public's attention on May 20, 2024, when the Inspector General publicly addressed the City Council and described actions by City officials that indicated encroachment or obstruction of the OIG's independence.

One of the AIG's most important roles is to help facilitate informed discussion among all stakeholders responsible for delivering on a public mandate for independent and effective government oversight. It was for this purpose that the AIG reached out to the City of Atlanta to engage with the Atlanta Temporary Task Force (TTF) to support a resolution founded upon best practices and with input from stakeholders and affected parties.

While there has been very little information shared publicly about how the TTF will gather and evaluate evidence or the criteria upon which it will form findings and recommendations, the AIG has significant concerns about the TTF's ability to provide meaningful and well-informed solutions for the OIG and the City of Atlanta because of

what appears to be limited input from the public and subject-matter expert and a very compressed timeline to do its work.

Respectfully, AIG recommends that the TTF formally request that the City Council modify Resolution 24-R-3983, issued on September 3, 2024, to:

1. Charge the TTF with the additional duty to examine the policies and procedures of the City Administration and City Council to ensure they expressly provide for operational independence of the OIG and ensure accountability to the public.
2. Extend the time permitted for the issuance of a report from 45 days to 180 days.
3. Require at least 2 public work sessions for the TTF with subject matter experts and practitioners within the national OIG community to discuss best practices on topics that would include, but not be limited to, the policies and practices bearing on the guiding principles i.e. operational independence, independent legal counsel, and access to information as well as the day-to-day engagement between OIGs and the entities that they oversee.
4. Enhance transparency of process by calling for at least 3 additional public meetings to be conducted during non-business hours so that members of the public can meaningfully participate, permit virtual comments, and ensure ample periods for comment of at least 2 hours.

The AIG respects and appreciates the work of the TTF and the service of its members and wishes to ensure a process that more fully addresses the concerns of the City Administration and Council, as well as those of the OIG and OIG Governing Board.

We regularly engage with legislative bodies and various state, local and federal review efforts involving inspector general legislation and policy. It is our position that the Council mandated 45 day window is not adequate for a full and proper vetting of all the issues as noted above. Indeed, 21 days elapsed by the first TTF meeting and we note that 34 of the 45 allotted days will have passed after the meeting of October 7, 2024. The AIG views the role of an OIG as a public trust and highly values transparency and public engagement, thus we believe the requested modifications will ensure that bar is fully met.

The benefits of an independent and robust Inspector General's office are undeniable. We look forward to supporting Atlanta's Temporary Task Force in its effort to conduct a review and provide recommendations that represent the independent government oversight community's best practices.

Sincerely,



Will Fletcher
President, Association of Inspectors General

DM/wf

cc:

Andre Dickens, Mayor
Doug Shipman, City Council President
Michael Julian Bond, At Large Post 1
Matt Westmoreland, At Large Post 2
Jason Winston, District 1
Amir R. Farokhi, District 2
Byron Amos, District 3
Jason Dozier, District 4
Lilliana Bakhtiari, District 5
Alex Wan, District 6
Howard Shook, District 7 (Temporary Task Force Member)
Mary Norwood, District 8
Dustin Hillis, District 9
Andrea I. Boone, District 10
Marci Collier Overstreet, District 11 (Temporary Task Force Member)
Antonio Lewis, District 12
Corrine Lindo, Municipal Clerk
Leah Ward Sears, Former Chief Justice (Temporary Task Force Member)
David Dove, Executive Counsel for Governor Brian P. Kemp's Office (Temporary Task Force Member)
Richard Deane, Of Counsel - Jones Day (Temporary Task Force Member)
Tanya Miller, General Counsel – Georgia Federation of Public Service Employees (Temporary Task Force Member)
Norman Brothers, EVP & Chief Legal and Compliance Officer – UPS (Temporary Task Force Member)
Nicola Hines, Chair - Governing Board
Todd Gray, Vice Chair – Governing Board
Rebecca Brubaker, Governing Board
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