

**From:** Laura Cesa

**Sent:** Monday, December 16, 2024 3:45 PM

**To:** City Clerk <[cityclerk@grand-rapids.mi.us](mailto:cityclerk@grand-rapids.mi.us)>

**Subject:** Opposition to proposed changes to City Comptroller Department

City Commission:

I am writing to object in the strongest terms to the proposal on the December 17<sup>th</sup> agenda to reallocate 13 of 16 staff members of the City Comptroller Department to the Fiscal Services Department under the City Manager (City Commission agenda item XI.2, attachment M). This proposal would defund 81% of the personnel resources in the City Comptroller Department and directly contradicts the City Charter.

Specifically, the City Charter prescribes the following duties to the **elected** City Comptroller, and not to the **appointed** City Manager: A. Issues and signs all checks B. Keeps the Account of Moneys Due from any and every source C. Keeps the Account of Moneys Received D. Keeps the account of funds and disbursements E. Prescribes the Uniform System for tracking the money F. Audits any and all accounts and reports findings to the City Commission G. Balances the books H. Has access to all books, records, and documents kept by any officer, employee, or department of the City. I. Audits and reports to the City Commission any claims against the city J. Presents detailed financial statements to the City annually or whenever required K. Provides all of the following for the Board of Education as well L. Performs other duties as required by the City Commission.

Simply put, the City Comptroller cannot perform these duties without the staff assigned. Furthermore, I find it alarming that this unprecedented change was added to the Fiscal Committee and City Commission agenda by the City Manager only two business days before being slated to be voted on, without the knowledge or consent of the City Comptroller and in the absence of public engagement. As recently as 2012, the citizens of Grand Rapids voted overwhelmingly against a proposal to amend the City Charter allowing the City Manager to appoint and oversee the City Comptroller Department. The proposed agenda item would seek to subvert the will of a majority of Grand Rapids voters. It is equally concerning that the City Manager and his team have already instructed the affected city employees that they will be reassigned before the proposal was even brought before and voted on by our elected officials. This is not transparent government, and frankly, gives the impression that there is something to hide.

I urge you to vote **against** this proposal and maintain the independence of the Comptroller's Office. It is essential to uphold the checks and balances our city relies on to prevent fraud and abuse.

Thank you for your consideration,

Laura Cesa

Ward 2 resident