

NEWS RELEASE

Media Contact:

Leslie Guyer, CMC, City Clerk
lguyer@gulfbreezefl.gov
850-934-5100

CITY FINDS GOLF COURSE PURCHASE SAVED RATEPAYERS MILLIONS

GULF BREEZE, Fla. (DATE) -- The City of Gulf Breeze has responded to a draft report from the State Auditor General by saying its own review of the decision-making process around the purchase of the Tiger Point Golf Course in order to preserve the South Santa Rosa Utility System's wastewater sprayfield was the right move.

Ratepayers were spared the burden of financing about \$40 million in construction, permitting, and operating costs that would have been immediately necessary if the City lost its use of golf course land for its spray field, according to the City.

"Auditors have focused on the \$5.4 million cost of the golf course," said City Manager Samantha Abell. "But our analysis showed that the city made the 2012 purchase in order to preserve the spray field and expand the Tiger Point reclamation facility."

The draft audit included a total of 45 findings, many of which dealt with policy and procedural matters the City says it has already begun to address. The City said it agreed generally or in part with 36 of the findings and that it now "looks forward to addressing the concerns and to implementing improvements with the goal of achieving more transparency and accountability for its citizens." The preliminary report is not yet final. The City has 30 days to submit responses on the preliminary findings. However, the City published the preliminary report on its website to update citizens.

The City noted how seriously it took the audit and its response to the findings. The cost of assisting with the 28-month audit required responding to the questions from a five-member audit team, documenting requests and researching decades-old records and issues which took 14 City staff members nearly 3,000 man-hours at an estimated cost to the City of more than \$108,000.

Gulf Breeze RE Preliminary and Tentative Audit Findings 9.4.20:

<https://cityofgulfbreeze.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Gulf-Breeze-RE-Preliminary-and-Tentative-Audit-Findings-9.4.20.pdf>

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