



## Inspector General Insights

**Background:** On September 10, 2020, a private citizen contacted the Office of Inspector General (OIG) regarding a complaint against a contractor with a registered business in Collier County.

When the OIG interviewed the private citizen, she stated:

- She hired the contractor and paid him to pressure wash and seal her paver driveway located in Fort Myers, and she gave him a check for the full amount quoted.
- She complained about the condition of the driveway after the services were rendered, to which the contractor replied, "You get what you pay for."
- The contractor refused to redo the service, and he proceeded to go directly to her bank to cash her check. She was therefore unable to stop payment on her check.
- She performed additional internet research on the contractor after the fact, which revealed several complaints against him. She determined that he was operating tax, private investigation and real estate services businesses registered in Collier County, providing him access to sensitive personal information which could be dangerous in the hands of an unscrupulous character.

**Objective:** Our review was to determine if the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) had any business dealings with this contractor. Further, we wanted to determine if he was operating legally in the county, or if he posed a risk to the public, which would necessitate a referral to law enforcement.

**Scope:** We checked the BCC database, to ensure he was not a county vendor. We reviewed Florida Secretary of State (SUNBIZ) records, the Better Business Bureau history, the status of his Collier County business license, and the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation database, in addition to general online searches.

**Observations:** A review of the Florida Secretary of State (SUNBIZ) records revealed that the contractor operated six companies which were registered in Collier County, including active private investigation and real estate businesses. He was the registered agent for a bookkeeping and accounting service that became inactive in 2019, based on an administrative dissolution for failing to file an annual report. The pressure washing and sealing service referenced in the complaint was actively registered with the Collier County Tax Assessor's office.

The OIG confirmed that the contractor had several consumer complaints, he had a "F" rating with the Better Business Bureau, and he had six judgments of over \$68,000 filed against him since December 2018. In reviewing the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation database, he had active private investigation licenses and real estate licenses, and he was not registered as a Certified Public Accountant. There were no complaints shown on his licensed activities.

We did not find any evidence that the contractor had ever been a Collier County vendor.

**Recommendations & Actions:** None, as the OIG did not discover that the County had any dealings with the contractor, nor did we find any evidence of criminal or fraudulent activities that would cause us to refer this case to law enforcement.

**Conclusion:** The OIG advised the private citizen of our findings, and we closed the preliminary review with no further action.

Total # Transactions	Amounts Audited or Reviewed	Questioned Costs	Taxpayer Savings	Observations or Recommendations
6	\$ 68,000.00	N/A	N/A	N/A