Office of Inspector General
City of Jacksonville, Florida

Report of Investigation
COJ Surplus Auction
2025-0110
November 12, 2026

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Inspector General

Executive Summary

In September 2025, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) received a notification from the Office of Administrative Services, City of Jacksonville (COJ) regarding concerns about the unsatisfactory sale price of a 2006 International 4300 Truck (Tree Truck). The Property Control Administrator (PCA) in Procurement Services, COJ, listed the Tree Truck for auction on the online surplus platform GovDeals, with a final sale price of $1,650.00. However, subsequent records provided to the OIG indicated that the Tree Truck was sold for $30,000 via a social media platform. The OIG initiated an investigation in response to allegations that the PCA failed to follow established protocols and regulations governing COJ auction practices.

Based on the records reviewed and interviews conducted, the OIG substantiated allegations that the PCA failed to follow established protocols and regulations governing COJ auction practices.

The OIG referred the case to the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office (JSO). However, JSO suspended its investigation, citing the lack of criminal intent. In response, the OIG reopened its administrative case.

Background

Per Section 122.821, COJ Ordinance Code, the Chief of Procurement (Chief) shall establish a minimum price for the sale of each surplus vehicle, with the advice of the Chief of Fleet Management, based on the Kelly Blue Book (KBB) wholesale trade-in price for the same or similar vehicles in the same or similar condition. In the absence of a KBB price for vehicles or fleet equipment, the Chief of Fleet Management and the Chief shall set a price for the vehicles or fleet equipment based on industry standard and practice for the same or similar vehicles or fleet equipment.[1]

According to Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Number: PD-03-22 1. d., property is available to view by the public on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 7:30 a.m.to 3:30 p.m.

[1] Per the Chief of Procurement, the PCA shall establish a minimum price for the sale of each surplus vehicle based on the KBB wholesale trade-in price for the same or similar vehicles in the same or similar condition. In the absence of KBB, the PCA is required to coordinate with the Equipment Control Administrator/Officer to determine the minimum price based on known market precedent and the vehicle's condition.

Allegations, Governing Directives, and Findings

ALLEGATION: FAILURE TO FOLLOW ESTABLISHED POLICIES/MISUSE OF POSITION OR AUTHORITY

The PCA failed to follow established protocols and regulations governing COJ auction practices. If substantiated, the allegation would violate City Surplus Property Management SOP Number: PD 03,22, Section 1, and potentially violate Section 602.401, COJ Ordinance Code, and Sections 319.33, 812.014, 817.03, and 817.034 (4)(a)(3), Florida Statutes.

FINDING: SUBSTANTIATED

Records

GovDeals Bill of Sale and Asset Status History
According to the Bill of Sale (BOS) and the Asset Status History filed with GovDeals, the Tree Truck was not competitively bid. Based on the BOS the PCA provided to COJ, the Tree Truck sold for $1,650.00 on August 27, 2025, and the buyer (Buyer) paid using an electronic payment platform.

COJ Treasury Records
According to COJ Treasury records, the COJ received a $1,650.00 payment from GovDeals related to the sale of the Tree Truck.

Bill of Sale and Title for the Tree Truck provided to the Buyer
The Buyer provided the OIG with documentation comprising the BOS and title for the Tree Truck that the PCA had supplied to the Buyer. After reviewing these documents, the OIG determined that the Buyer's BOS differed from the BOS the PCA provided to COJ. The Buyer's BOS indicated that the Tree Truck was acquired for $20,000.64 via credit card rather than $1,650.00 via PayPal.[2]

Buyer Bank Records
The Buyer submitted banking documentation to the OIG regarding the $30,000 cash withdrawal from their bank account, which indicated the cash withdrawal occurred on the same day as the sale of the Tree Truck. Further review of the Buyer's banking information revealed no evidence of a credit card or other relevant transaction.

[2] During the Buyer's interview, the Buyer said they paid $30,000 in cash for the Tree Truck. After the interview, the Buyer provided the OIG the BOS that the PCA had provided to them. Upon reviewing the BOS, the OIG identified a discrepancy as the Tree Truck was recorded as sold for $20,000.64 via credit card. Subsequently, the OIG contacted the Buyer to clarify this disparity. The Buyer reaffirmed that the Tree Truck acquisition was finalized through a cash payment totaling $30,000 and explicitly confirmed that no credit card or other alternative payment methods were employed in this transaction. To corroborate this assertion, the Buyer provided the OIG with banking records showing a $30,000 cash withdrawal.

Text Messages

According to text messages exchanged between the Buyer and the seller of the Tree Truck (Seller), the Seller arranged to meet the Buyer at the COJ Surplus Facility, 1096 McDuff North Avenue, Jacksonville, FL 32254, on August 27, 2025, where the Tree Truck was located. The Seller agreed to the sale for $30,000 in cash. Text messages also revealed that the Buyer maintained a conversation with the Seller about when they were at the bank withdrawing the cash and when they were on the way to the COJ Surplus Facility.

Testimony

Chief of Procurement

The Chief stated that the PCA is responsible for managing the disposal of surplus COJ vehicles and equipment. The PCA's main duties involve valuing, entering, and auctioning surplus items through GovDeals. The Chief noted that the PCA has the authority to enter a "Strike Price,"[3] which bypasses the need for a competitive bid. However, the price should be based on the KBB value and the vehicle's actual condition. In the absence of KBB value, the PCA is required to coordinate with the Equipment Control Administrator/Officer to determine the minimum price based on known market precedent and the vehicle's condition. The Chief stated that they could not justify the $1,650.00 "Strike Price" for the Tree Truck.

Buyer

The Buyer stated they saw the Tree Truck listed for sale while scrolling through Facebook Marketplace and OfferUp. The Buyer messaged the Seller their telephone number so the Seller could contact them, and the Seller responded promptly via text. The Buyer indicated that after deciding to purchase the Tree Truck, the Seller informed them the Tree Truck was located at the COJ Surplus Facility, 1096 McDuff North Avenue, Jacksonville, FL 32254. The Buyer did not know the Seller's name. After inspecting the Tree Truck, the Buyer decided to proceed with the purchase. The Buyer and the Seller entered a designated office space at the COJ Surplus Facility, 1096 McDuff North Avenue, Jacksonville, FL 32254, where an individual, identified by the Buyer as the PCA, was seated behind a desk. The Buyer provided the PCA with his driver's license, and the PCA completed the necessary paperwork (BOS and Title). During this procedure, the Buyer stated that he provided the Seller with $30,000 in cash as part of the transaction.

Property Control Administrator

The PCA stated that he was unaware of Section 122, COJ Ordinance Code requirements to establish a minimum sale price based on the values outlined in the KBB. According to the PCA, the Seller purchased the Tree Truck via PayPal for $1,650 and subsequently resold it to the Buyer for $20,000 in cash. The Seller did not have a location or storage space to move the Tree Truck after buying it. As a result, the PCA allowed the Seller to keep the Tree Truck parked on the COJ Surplus Facility while they brought prospective buyers to inspect it. According to the

[3] Strike Price is the equivalent of a Buy Now option

PCA's account, the Seller facilitated the Buyer's visit to the COJ Surplus Facility, where the Buyer inspected the Tree Truck and subsequently paid the Seller what the PCA understood to be $20,000 in cash. The PCA saved the official GovDeals BOS that reflected the $1,650 price and used his personal Adobe Acrobat subscription to edit the BOS by changing the Buyer's name and altering the purchase price from $1,650 to $20,000.64

The PCA stated he altered BOS's and vehicle titles "hundreds of times" as a courtesy to help the Seller and other buyers bypass transfer fees. The PCA further stated he kept the Seller's GovDeals transactions off "official records" because the Seller received Social Security disability benefits. The PCA denied receiving cash, kickbacks, bribes, or financial gain from the Seller or Buyer.

The PCA disclosed extensive social ties with COJ customers, including the Seller. These connections included visiting the Seller and the Seller's cousin at their home, where they fixed vehicles.

The PCA stated that the Seller had installed audio equipment in one of his (PCA's) personal vehicles. According to the PCA, he and the Seller visited a pawn shop, where the Seller helped the PCA select the stereo system to purchase, and the Seller came to his residence and installed the speakers and sound system in the garage at no charge. The PCA characterized the stereo installation as a casual favor between acquaintances, describing it as the Seller "simply doing me a solid". The PCA emphasized that the stereo installation occurred well before the Tree Truck transaction.

Seller

The Seller indicated that they purchased the Tree Truck via GovDeals using a Strike Price mechanism but could not recall the specific purchase price. After purchasing the Tree Truck, the Seller stated his brother relisted it for resale on Facebook Marketplace, whereupon the prospective Buyer contacted them and agreed to purchase the Tree Truck. The Seller met the Buyer at the COJ Surplus Lot to inspect the Tree Truck and complete the purchase. The Seller could not recall the amount the Tree Truck sold for; however, the Seller recalled that the Buyer paid in cash.

The Seller indicated that to save time and avoid paying title transfer fees twice, the PCA had the Buyer sign all required paperwork for the sale of the Tree Truck at the COJ Surplus Facility. The Seller described their relationship with the PCA as professional and transactional. The Seller stated they do not hang out socially, though the PCA will occasionally drop by where the Seller works on cars to see what project they are working on.

According to the Seller, the PCA obtained information about the Seller's mobile mechanics and automotive audio services and contacted the Seller at the COJ surplus lot, where the PCA asked about audio-related services. The Seller installed a stereo system in the PCA's personal vehicle while the PCA was off work. The Seller stated that the PCA explicitly insisted on paying for the

services and told the Seller he did not want anything done for free. The Seller did not disclose the PCA's payment method, whether in cash or by any other means; however, the Seller emphasized that the PCA paid him the market rate for the services.

The Seller denied providing any monetary compensation, kickbacks, bribes, or other financial benefits to the PCA regarding the Tree Truck's resale, and denied receiving advance notification, insider information, or preferential arrangements from the PCA regarding vehicles before they were listed on GovDeals.

Recommended Corrective Actions

Before the OIG concluded its investigation, the COJ Procurement Division revised SOP Number PD 03-22 by implementing restrictions on the “strike price” option, whereby any request to utilize such features must receive approval from either the Chief or their designated representative, as well as the Director of Administrative Services or their designated representative.

Furthermore, the COJ Procurement Division has undertaken a comprehensive revision of the City Surplus Policy, establishing a Live On-Site Auction methodology as the primary mechanism through which the majority, if not the entirety, of heavy equipment and fleet vehicles are now auctioned. However, there are occasions when the COJ Procurement Division still needs to post a vehicle to GovDeals (i.e., the contracted auctioneer doesn’t want to move it or include it in the Live On-Site Auction).

The OIG recommends that the Chief of Procurement:

1. Implement a framework of segregation of duties ensuring that no individual employee possesses the authority to independently execute the listing, approval, pricing, and finalization of any GovDeals auctioned transaction.
2. Review the contents of this report and take any personnel action deemed appropriate.

Management’s Response

On September 18, 2025, the Office of Administrative Services uncovered a discrepancy in the PCAs listing price for the vehicle in question, when compared to market value of something similar in make, model and condition. After researching the discrepancy internally, it was immediately handed over to the OIG for an external investigation.

Immediately following the hand-off to the OIG the Procurement Division contacted GovDeals and restricted the "Buy Now" strike option preventing the PCA from further use of this feature. The City's Surplus policy was also immediately changed, prohibiting the ability of the PCA from using

such feature in GovDeals, without first seeking Chief of Procurement and Senior Operations Administrator approval.

Furthermore, the Procurement Division contacted GovDeals to establish a workflow in the system for approval of every lot being posted for Online Auctions, allowing for separation of duties. The Procurement manual that was reissued on July 1s, 2026 codifies the change that was initiated back in September of 2025.

The Procurement Division has also executed a contract with a Live Auctioneer to handle all heavy equipment sales on site, tapping into another market and giving the city another method of moving dispositioned items from the surplus yard.

Inspector General Standards

This report/review has been conducted in accordance with the ASSOCIATION OF INSPECTORS GENERAL Principles and Quality Standards for Investigations.

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