

Athletic agency's files seen deficient

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LITTLE ROCK — The state Athletic Commission has experienced documentation problems ranging from failing to issue receipts to individuals when the commission received funds at events to not maintaining adequate records to support credit-card charges and travel reimbursements, a state auditor told lawmakers Thursday.

The commission also had a laptop stolen in February that contained personal information, such as Social Security numbers, dates of birth and addresses, for more than 5,000 licenseholders, said Deputy Legislative Auditor Jon Moore.

“There have been substantial changes in recordkeeping and even some changes in agency personnel,” Moore told the Legislative Joint Auditing Committee’s Committee on State Agencies.

The commission regulates certain combative sports including professional boxing, professional wrestling, and amateur and professional mixed martial arts, commission Vice Chairman Lydia Robertson of Little Rock said.

The agency is financed with license revenue and 5 percent of the gate receipts from events it regulates, she said. Its revenue totaled \$116,318 in the fiscal year that ended June 30, according to a state audit.

She told lawmakers that the seven-member commission recognizes that the auditors’ findings “are very, very serious.”

“They dovetailed with an internal investigation,” Robertson said, adding that the commission accepted the resignation of its only employee Feb. 9.

Two months ago, commission Secretary Randy Mattingly resigned after the commissioners told him that they weren’t pleased with his speed in providing records and documents. The commission later denied his bid to withdraw his resignation. He had worked for the commission for eight years.

“I think you can tell from the [auditors’] findings that it appears the bookkeeping was held too closely and the commission has addressed that,” Robertson assured lawmakers.

“We now have two staff members there undergoing intensive training with all the various state agencies to make sure that virtually each rule and regulation is complied with,” she said.

Robertson said the commission hired Amber Wooldridge as its secretary and Ashley Hayden as its licensing specialist in February after Mattingly resigned. Information about their salary levels was not immediately available through the state Office of Personnel Management late Thursday.

Robertson said she and commission Chairman Jason Stuart of Little Rock have attended about eight events to provide “supervisory information” during the past two months and met numerous times with state officials “trying to make sure we get everything right.”

In an audit of the commission in the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2011, auditors found the agency didn’t issue receipts to individuals when it received funds at events, he said.

Instead, receipts were issued in total for the event at the commission’s office before making a deposit, Moore said.

For the month tested, 59 percent of the cash receipts were not deposited in a timely manner to the treasury, he said.

In an audit of the commission for the four-year period that ended June 30, 2010, the commission didn’t maintain adequate documents to support credit card charges and travel reimbursements, Moore said.

On one occasion, a commissioner was reimbursed for travel expenses related to other commissioners and visitors of the state, contrary to state regulations, he said.

The commission also paid \$6,299 from an escrow and bond bank account outside the state Treasury and without an appropriation, Moore said.

Auditors found that 63 percent of the commission’s cash receipts that were examined were not deposited in a timely manner during the four-year period, he said.

The composition of the receipts in the form of checks and cash, as noted on the commission’s documents, did not reconcile with the state treasury or bank account deposit record, he said.

In six of the 20 licenses reviewed, adequate documents were not maintained to identify that a receipt had been issued for the license, Moore said.

Robertson said the theft of the laptop containing personal information about more than 5,000 licenseholders was reported to the attorney general’s office and the state Department of Finance and Administration.

“A letter has been drafted and approved to go out to each one of the licensees warning them what they should do, but as of yet the commission has not had any indication that [the personal information in the stolen laptop] has been breached,” Robertson said.

The letter encourages the license-holders to contact the three major credit reporting agencies and their banks to make sure “there is nothing has been suspect in their account workings,” she said.

Robertson said the commission issues licenses to boxers, managers, promoters, judges and others.

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