

TROUBLE WITH ADP HINTED AT IN LEAKED AUGUSTA MEMO



The city of Augusta is preparing to outsource its human resources functions to a company called Automatic Data Processing. Before the outsourcing takes place, an internal memo has been leaked to the public that shows problems with the city's existing relationship with the outsourcing company it has hired. City Administrator Fred Russell said that the release of the memo could also signal trouble for the person who leaked it to the media. Deputy Administrator Bill Shanahan authored the memo, which is a formal list of issues brought by city employees, including staff from the human resource department. The issues listed in the memo include existing and foreseen problems between the city, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Georgia and ADP. ADP began overseeing the payment and eligibility of benefits last year. One of the main issues raised in the memo is that ADP has caused employees or their family members to be dropped inadvertently from insurance coverage. This complaint has been filed multiple times by employees of the city within the past year. "We have had cancellation in every vendor group, without explanation," the memo says. "The only common denominator is ADP." Other issues in the memo include problems employees of Augusta are having when using ADP's service. According to the memo, a phone tree must be dumbed down because some employees are confused by it. Shanahan said that the memo is pretty much the notes he took during ongoing discussions with ADP while also saying that quite a few problems have been fixed. "Some were their fault; some were our fault," he said. There has not been a price or contract set with ADP yet but Russell says the implementation costs for the city would hit \$1.3 million. Russell said the memo is, "an ill-conceived document that never should have seen the light of day." "I have no idea how it got out," said Human Resources Manager Robby Burns. When Rod Powell retired in August, the department has not had a permanent head since. Since that time, several employees have been fired or have retired over the past couple of months as well. Mayor Pro Tem Joe Bowles, who is a proponent of outsourcing human resources and a customer of ADP, said that the company has encountered problems in seeking information from city employees when developing a proposal. "I'm sure a lot of people are trying to sabotage that process," Bowles said, including "some of our upper-level management that believe in bigger government."

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