

NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE CITY CONTROLLER

CHRIS HOLLINS, CITY CONTROLLER



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTROLLER CHRIS HOLLINS LAUNCHES INVESTIGATION INTO MAYORAL ADVISOR POSITION

HOUSTON — Questions raised by recent reporting about the mayor’s senior advisor for financial integrity, a taxpayer-funded position within the Whitmire administration, have prompted a formal investigation by the Office of the City Controller, Controller Chris Hollins announced today.

“The questions raised are serious, and bring about significant concerns that demand a full accounting to Houstonians,” said Controller Chris Hollins. **“No one takes any satisfaction in having to examine the actions of a public servant, but public trust depends on responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars, adherence to City policies, and accountability for work funded by the public. This investigation will determine whether those standards were met.”**

The investigation, to be conducted independently by the Controller’s Office, will examine compliance with City policies, the effectiveness of oversight and accountability measures, and whether public resources were used appropriately and provided value to Houston taxpayers. The review follows recent reports raising questions about the role, supervision, attendance records, and work activity of former City Controller Chris Brown in his current role as senior advisor to Mayor John Whitmire.

Investigators will interview all associated parties, including the mayor and Mr. Brown, and will assess whether the City received appropriate value for the taxpayer-funded position. The goal will be to identify whether existing controls are sufficient to prevent similar issues elsewhere in City government.

“As Houston’s taxpayer watchdog, my responsibility is to follow the facts and protect the public’s money,” Hollins said. **“The Mayor has repeatedly said his administration is committed to rooting out waste, fraud, and abuse. Those standards must apply everywhere taxpayer dollars are spent, including inside the mayor’s own office.”**

Hollins emphasized that the investigation is not a conclusion of wrongdoing, but rather an effort to establish the facts, provide transparency to Houston taxpayers, and determine any systemic issues related to the matter that need to be addressed to improve stewardship of City funds.

In addition, Hollins asked for the participation of Mayor Whitmire and called for the mayor to immediately suspend Brown pending the outcome of the investigation.

"Suspension is not a finding of wrongdoing," Hollins said. "It is a reasonable and responsible step to protect the integrity of the investigative process and maintain public confidence. Frankly, I am surprised that action has not already been taken."

Hollins noted that the Office of the City Controller routinely investigates allegations involving the use of public resources and that no employee, department, or administration should be exempt from scrutiny.

"This investigation is not about politics. It is about accountability," Hollins said. "At a time when Houstonians are being asked to shoulder increasing financial burdens, they deserve confidence that every taxpayer dollar is being spent responsibly and that the same rules apply to everyone."

The Controller's Office will provide updates as appropriate while maintaining the independence and integrity of the investigative process.

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ABOUT CITY OF HOUSTON CONTROLLER'S OFFICE: Established in 1903, the City of Houston Controller's Office is the cornerstone of financial oversight and accountability for America's fourth-largest city. With a mission to uphold Houston's fiscal integrity and protect residents' tax dollars, the office oversees a broad spectrum of the City's financial operations, including its budget, investments, and debts. Committed to transparency and fiscal responsibility, the Controller's Office is key to maintaining the economic vitality of Houston, contributing to its status as a thriving metropolis for its diverse community.

ABOUT CONTROLLER CHRIS HOLLINS: Chris Hollins, serving as Houston's City Controller since January 2024, brings a dynamic approach to City governance and financial management. With a rich background in legal practice and management consulting, coupled with innovative leadership as Harris County Clerk, Hollins is dedicated to enhancing the city's fiscal practices and community engagement. Educated at Morehouse College, Yale Law School, and Harvard Business School, Hollins's commitment to accountability and service excellence drives his mission to build a financially resilient Houston. Residing in the Third Ward with his family, his work is deeply informed by his strong community ties