



Team of the Quarter Award Nomination Form

Nominee Names: Tara Voisin & Tara Riley

Department(s): Accounting division (Finance dept.)

- Tell us why you would like to nominate this team:
See attached.

- What impact did their actions have on the department and/or overall city?

There are so many ways bad actors can impact a City, and financial fraud has been rampant these last several years. Processes can be put into place, but when success is dependent on a human component, there is inherently more risk involved. Commitment to following all the steps, every single time, and realizing that trust is not a control, sets the City up for success. Tara Voisin's and Tara Riley's understanding of these ideals was clear by their actions, and the City is better for it! Our teams are fortunate to have their knowledge and dedication.

Submitted By: Sara Costlow Date: 06/02/2025

Supervisor/Director Signature: Sara L. Costlow Digitally signed by Sara L. Costlow
Date: 2025.06.03 09:40:05 -05'00'

Tell us why you would like to nominate this team:

On May 29, 2025, 26 fraudulent checks were attempted to be cashed for a total of \$13,920. These checks were not approved to be cashed, due to the City utilizing a common feature known as *Positive Pay*. Positive Pay is a filtering process through the City's banking institution, that requires the City to submit check registers after each payment run so the check number, payee name, and payment amount of each check can be verified before they are approved to be cashed. When checks are attempted to be cashed that result in a discrepancy against the check register, the City is notified of the *exceptions* and is able to either approve or deny the checks attempting to be cashed. When staff received the notification of exceptions on May 29th, they began the normal verification procedures established internally and quickly discovered the 26 checks were not legitimate. Additionally, 25 more fraudulent checks were attempted to be cashed the following day on May 30th in the collective amount of \$19,571, for a total amount of \$33,491 across 51 checks that were attempted to be cashed over the two days.

There are common Positive Pay features that some organizations utilize, such as checks under a certain dollar amount can be set to automatically clear since the risk of monetary loss is theoretically lower; \$500 is a common threshold for this trigger. Another commonly utilized feature is if staff is unable to fact check exceptions by a certain time each business day, the checks in question will automatically be approved to be cashed. The City of Deer Park has very strict protocols, and chooses NOT to utilize these features, meaning any exception (regardless of the dollar amount) MUST be verified, and furthermore, if exceptions are not processed timely they are automatically rejected to be cashed by our banking institution vs. approved. While these measures might seem overly restrictive, it's relevant to note that a significant number of the 51 checks that were attempted to be cashed were each just below \$500, meaning if we'd utilized one of these common features the checks would've processed without any intervention.

Tara Voisin and Tara Riley both played significant roles in discovering these discrepancies, notifying appropriate members of staff, and ultimately rejecting all 51 checks from being approved. They saved the City from losing \$33,491 from fraudulent checks, allowing PD to investigate the attempt(s) that hopefully result in the prevention of future attempts by the same bad actors. Way to go, Tara and Tara!!