INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: Anthony Nicks, County Attorney

THROUGH: Dick Anderson, County Manager

FROM: Sallie Wright, CIO

DATE: 6/6/2018

SUBJECT: Management Response to FCIT Review/Audit

I would like to extend my appreciation for the opportunity to respond to the recent follow-up review of the Information Technology (FCIT) Department to determine whether findings reported in prior audits dated December 14, 2014 and March 27, 2015 were adequately addressed. The scope of this audit period also incorporated auditing FCIT from January 1, 2016 through November 2017.

The summary of findings indicates that 92% of the audit findings from both audits have been resolved. I am committed to addressing any issues related to the audit findings. My vision for the Department is to be recognized as a leading local government IT department in the United States and includes only the highest standards for system performance and customer service.

Since the first internal assessment FCIT has implemented best practice technology solutions and procedures that improve stability and processing capacity of Fulton County systems.

The County's Government Center processing facility is functionally replicated to an independent processing node with redundant communications capacity using state-of-the-art technology that keeps the two locations replicated. The two locations have the ability to fully support essential applications independently in the event one location is lost as a result of a system failure. The two locations also provide a backup of the critical data for county applications should one location incur a disaster. They can also share processing loads when demand for computing power is required.

I have worked closely with the County Manager's Office and the Department of Emergency Management to ensure a comprehensive and effective solution is in place to support continued operation of essential government functions. It is my intention to provide sustained information processing capability and access to mission critical applications and information at all times and under any conditions.

Please see the attached response to the Fulton County Information Technology Follow-Up Audit Report dated March 27, 2018.

cc: Sharon Whitmore, CFO

Finding #1 – Lack of Final Disaster Recovery Plan

FCIT is collaborating with the Emergency Management department in the execution of organizational-wide continuity of operations plan which will assist in the efforts of documenting Disaster Recovery plan (DRP).

The DRP is drafted and in review by FCIT. The requirements for DRP have changed as technology architecture has evolved. The DR plan is a combination of documentation and technology that is constantly changing. Fortunately for Fulton County the architecture deployed minimizes risks to the government based on mirrored systems and applications. The County's processing facilities are functionally replicated with a redundant communications capacity using state-of-the-art technology that keeps the two locations duplicated. The two locations have the ability to fully support mission critical applications independently in the event part or all of one location is lost as a result of a system failure. Both facilities provide the needed capabilities for continued access and operation of all essential applications and systems. This capability is tested when a replicated system stops working at a location. The system performs a "hot failover" to the other site with only a minimal interruption of service to county employees or citizens. Systems are regularly moved between locations by the virtualization software to ensure load is equally balanced between the two physically distinct sites.

As an example, beginning on June 5, 2018, due to the potential loss of water to the Fulton County Government Center, the majority of processing is being conducted at the hot site in order to reduce water cooling requirements for the Government Center data center. There is no loss of performance or recognition of change by the staff or citizens as designed and implemented.

The Information Technology operations staff is able to implement repairs on the systems impacted and return to redundant operation while services are continually delivered. This state-of-the-art technology implementation enables stable and resilient operations and ensures availability of systems for continued operations.

A Disaster Recovery Manager position has been posted and interviews will occur in the very near future. The position will be responsible for reviewing, completing and revising the technology disaster recovery plan and coordinating table top exercises.

Finding #2 Lack of Full-Recovery Testing

With the advent of high-speed data connections, virtual devices and cloud computing technologies the traditional forms of system recovery have evolved and traditional methods are disappearing. The ability of systems to detect and in some cases predict failure eliminated the use of structured system recovery procedures and processes. The enhanced monitoring solutions and application redundancies virtually eliminate system downtime. The resilience of our systems, under the current design, greatly minimized outage risks and is incrementally tested with small fail over events as mentioned in finding one response above.

As an example, on June 5, 2018, due to the potential loss of water to the Fulton County Government Center, the majority of processing is being conducted at the hot site in order to reduce water cooling requirements for the primary data center. There is no loss of performance or recognition of change by the staff or citizens as designed and implemented.

Finding #3 Unintended Contract Utilization

While the FCIT reorganization was underway, temporary staff was hired to meet the needs of the County. A gap analysis was conducted as part of the Organizational Study and indicated that FCIT needed to add various skills and capabilities. In order to preserve positions for existing staff, hiring new full-time employees was deferred.

As a result, over the last three years, the department has brought before the Board items for approval utilizing the State Professional Services staff augmentation contract via Covendis. Each of these requests were made to assist the County by providing spending authority.

As the reorganization was taking place, there became a need for Executive Assistants to do the work necessary to support the Executive Staff. Current Administrative staff was tasked with the challenges of procurement, HR, invoicing, training and budgeting. FCIT attempted to utilize in house administrative staff, but they did not have the experience of providing Executive support or the technical expertise required to manage and orchestrate the over 500 candidate interviews to move the organization forward.

The use of the contract for Executive Assistants was not specifically included in the BOC approval agenda documentation because the need was unknown at the time of the original 2016 requests and the department was hopeful the permanent placements would be in place by the time of the 2017 requests.

The Executive Assistants were not included on the 2018 request because permanent staff had been hired by that time.

With ever-changing technical needs, skill sets and requirements, there will probably always be a need for some outsourced technical assistance. FCIT will include wording that provides for those possibilities in all future Board actions.