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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City Commends Milwaukee Police Department for Recovering \$460,866 Lost to Fraud

Milwaukee, WI — The City of Milwaukee is pleased to announce the successful recovery of \$460,866 in public funds that were lost as a result of a sophisticated fraud scheme targeting City government operations. Thanks to the swift and diligent efforts of the Milwaukee Police Department's Financial Crimes Unit, in collaboration with the City Comptroller's Office and financial institutions, the stolen funds have been recovered and returned to the City.

"This is a favorable outcome to a difficult situation for our city and a testament to the professionalism and persistence of the Milwaukee Police Department," said Bill Christianson, Comptroller for the City of Milwaukee. "I would specifically like to recognize Detective Chad Vartanian and Detective Tony Castro of the Financial Crimes Unit who led the investigation. Their work not only restored critical public funds but also reaffirmed our commitment to transparency, accountability, and public trust."

The fraud, which occurred earlier this year, involved a deceptive scheme in which criminals impersonated a legitimate City vendor and redirected a scheduled payment to a fraudulent account. Upon discovering the irregularity, City officials immediately reported the incident and launched a full investigation.

The recovery of the funds was made possible through rapid coordination between the Milwaukee Police Department, the City Comptroller's Office, and banking partners. Detectives with the Milwaukee Police Department's Financial Crimes Unit were able to trace the fraudulent transaction and intervene before the funds were dispersed.

While the City celebrates this recovery, officials are also using this incident as a learning opportunity. "Fraud is an evolving threat, and no organization is immune," Comptroller Christianson stated. "We are taking this seriously and have already implemented stronger internal controls, enhanced verification procedures and additional staff training to reduce the risk of future incidents."

The City urges employees and vendors to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity. "Through this investigation, we learned of a similar but much smaller scale fraud that took place in late 2024. This matter is still under investigation by the Milwaukee Police Department. We want the public to know that we are not only responding to these incidents but also building more secure procedures for the future," Christianson added. "We are confident that the measures we are putting in place will significantly strengthen our defenses against fraud."

Statement from the Milwaukee Police Department:

"The Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) is proud of the diligent work of our members that helped successfully recover \$460,866 from a fraud scheme that targeted the city. MPD continues to seek unknown suspect(s). We believe that the suspect(s) are overseas and MPD continues to investigate to hold these individuals accountable. Anyone with any information is asked to contact Milwaukee Police at (414) 935-7360 or to remain anonymous, contact Crime Stoppers at (414) 224-Tips or P3 Tips."

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