



Justin P. Wilson, Comptroller

December 10, 2014

Former Mayor of Gadsden Uses Town Money for Personal Benefit

An investigation by the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury has determined that the former mayor/fire chief of the Town of Gadsden had a pattern of using town funds for his personal benefit. The findings have been reviewed with the district attorney general for the twenty-eighth judicial district.

Investigators examined a period between April 1, 2009 and December 31, 2013 and found the town had a cash shortage of at least \$35,241. The former mayor/fire chief was also responsible for questionable purchases totaling \$39,925.

The cash shortage was largely due to the former mayor/fire chief's purchases of gasoline, food and other items such as cigarettes from a local convenience store which were later billed to and paid for by the town. The former mayor/fire chief admitted to investigators that he bought the gasoline for his personal vehicle, as well as other items, and charged them to the town. Investigators also found the former mayor/fire chief used town funds to make numerous personal purchases from Wal-Mart, Lowe's, and J & W Surplus which included clothing, computers, denture cleaner and a gas trimmer.



The questionable purchases included auto repair parts, oil, and numerous food items purchased by the former mayor/fire chief and charged to the town.

Comptroller investigators have recommended the Town of Gadsden take steps to recover the lost funds and adopt policies and procedures that strengthen financial checks and balances. The town's current mayor and board of aldermen indicate they are taking this situation seriously and are taking steps to prevent future problems.

"It's unfortunate anytime an elected official uses his position of public trust for his own personal benefit," said Comptroller Justin P. Wilson. "I am encouraged to see town leaders establishing policies to prevent the abuse of taxpayer money. Internal controls provide essential accountability in government."

To view the investigation online, go to: <http://www.comptroller.tn.gov/ia/>

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Media contact: John Dunn, Public Information Officer, (615) 401-7755 or john.dunn@cot.tn.gov

Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury
State Capitol Nashville, TN 37243
Phone: (615) 741-2775
Email: comptroller.web@cot.tn.gov