



Justin P. Wilson, Comptroller

May 24, 2018

Investigation Finds Problems at Upper Cumberland Human Resource Agency

Former Executive Director's Travel and Comp Time Noted in Report

The Tennessee Comptroller's Office has released an investigation into the Upper Cumberland Human Resource Agency (UCHRA) based in Cookeville, Tennessee. The UCHRA is a multi-million-dollar operation that administers several programs and provides services to citizens.

Comptroller investigators noted two instances when the former executive director's time sheets indicated he was working; however, social media posts indicated he was on trips out of state. The former executive director told investigators he used compensatory (comp) time for trips. Investigators believe he should have taken annual or sick leave when he was absent from work.

It's important to note that on December 4, 2012, the UCHRA Board's Personnel Committee approved a motion to allow the executive director to use comp time. Investigators reviewed the UCHRA Employee and Policy Handbook which establishes the "exempt" and "non-exempt" classification for all employees. Investigators believe, as an executive level employee, the former executive director was not entitled to earn comp time.



Investigators also found problems related to the former executive director's travel claims. In three instances, the former executive director claimed he attended meetings in Nashville and Washington D.C., but documentation obtained by investigators did not support those claims. As a result, the former executive director was reimbursed \$706.77 and charged \$3,791.31 to his agency credit card for travel expenses when supporting agencies had no record of his attendance.

Additionally, investigators determined the former executive director entered into legally binding agreements on behalf of the UCHRA without prior board approval.

The UCHRA also paid travel expenses in advance for board members, board members' families, employees and employees' families. In some instances, the travel expenses were not related to UCHRA business. Although board members and employees were required to reimburse the agency for personal travel expenses, this practice should be eliminated.

On May 9, 2018, the former executive director was terminated by the UCHRA Board of Directors.

The Comptroller's Office has reviewed its findings and recommendations with the district attorney general for the Thirteenth Judicial District.

“Our investigation found several weaknesses related to time reporting at UCHRA,” said Comptroller Justin P. Wilson. “At a minimum, the Board chairman should sign the executive director’s time sheets as evidence of review and approval, and time and leave policies should be followed.”

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

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