



Justin P. Wilson, Comptroller

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Former Sullivan County 911 Director Indicted for Theft
Numerous Problems Found Within Emergency Communications District

An investigation by the Tennessee Comptroller's Office has resulted in the indictment of Isaac Lowry, the former director of the Sullivan County Emergency Communications District. The district provides enhanced 911 emergency telephone service for the area. The Comptroller's Office initiated the investigation at the request of the district's board of directors.

Investigators determined that Lowry stole district funds totaling at least \$16,856 when he redeemed a whole life insurance policy which had been paid using district funds. In August 2017, the board passed a motion to have Lowry either surrender the policy or compensate the district for the value of policy. Instead, Lowry told investigators he redeemed the insurance policy for its cash value and placed the proceeds in an investment for himself.



Further investigation revealed that vacation and sick leave balances for three current employees and the former director were improperly inflated. As of October 2017, these balances were inflated by a total of 2,272 hours, or 284 days, of vacation leave and 4,219 hours, or 527 days, of sick leave.

Additional issues are also noted in the report, including the spending of at least \$104,001 between January 2011 and December 2015 for 911 branded pens, rulers, cell phone pockets, hand sanitizer, and other assorted items for public education purposes. Investigators observed a storeroom full of these items that had accumulated over the years and were never distributed to the public.

Investigators also found that prior to 2016, district funds were spent on gifts, meals for board meetings, meals at Tri-City area restaurants, china table settings, silverware, and Christmas decorations. Public officials should ensure that all spending is necessary for the operation of the district, as required by state law.

In November 2018, Isaac Lowry was indicted by the Sullivan County Grand Jury on one count of theft over \$10,000.

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

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