



Justin P. Wilson, Comptroller

July 16, 2019

Investigation Reveals \$300,000 Theft from Fairfield Glade Volunteer Fire Department

An investigation by the Tennessee Comptroller's Office, working in conjunction with the Cumberland County Sheriff's Department, has resulted in the conviction of James Botbyl, the former treasurer for the Fairfield Glade Volunteer Fire Department in Cumberland County.

Investigators determined that Botbyl wrote 64 fire department checks totaling \$302,303 payable to one of his two personal businesses and deposited them into this personal business accounts. These checks ranged in amounts from \$1,000 to \$8,600.

These checks were written over a ten-month period from November 2017 through September 2018. Investigators determined that Botbyl's businesses never provided any property or services to the fire department to justify these payments.

Botbyl was able to conceal the theft by controlling and limiting the amount of financial information provided to the fire department's board of directors. In September 2018, after learning of this scheme, the board of directors suspended Botbyl.

The investigation revealed that during the course of his scheme, Botbyl periodically deposited personal funds totaling \$62,743 in the fire department's bank accounts in an apparent effort to repay some of the stolen money. This left a final shortage of \$239,560.

In April 2019, the Cumberland County Grand Jury indicted James Charles Botbyl on one count of theft over \$60,000. Botbyl pleaded guilty to that charge on June 19, 2019.

"Several weaknesses allowed this theft to go undetected for several months," said Comptroller Justin P. Wilson. "Only one signature was required on fire department checks, and the former treasurer was the only person who reviewed the bank statements. I'm pleased to note the fire department and its board of directors have corrected these deficiencies."

To view the investigative report, go to: <https://comptroller.tn.gov/office-functions/investigations/find.html>

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