



## **Jason E. Mumpower, Comptroller of the Treasury**

*August 8, 2025*

### **Knox County Assessor Indicted Following Investigation into Vehicle Use** *Former Trustee's Office Employee Also Indicted*

An investigation by the Tennessee Comptroller's Office has resulted in the indictment of two people in Knox County, including the current Assessor of Property. Investigators determined the Assessor and other county employees violated vehicle use policies.

The investigation began after Knox County Internal Audit reported questionable disbursements. Investigators determined that former Director of Trustee Operations Jason Dobbins used his official position and county resources for his and his business partner's financial gain totaling at least \$102,153. This included profiting from delinquent tax property transactions and using a county vehicle for personal travel, including a trip to Virginia. Dobbins' employment was terminated in April 2025.

Property Assessor Phil Ballard improperly used a county vehicle approximately 150 times while receiving a \$7,600 annual travel allowance and repaid \$2,776.95 after the improper use was discovered. County vehicles should not be used when an official receives a travel allowance.



The County Trustee also used a county vehicle at least five times to attend training and meetings in Nashville while receiving a travel allowance. The Trustee also authorized \$3,781 in hotel expenses for himself and other employees that exceeded the county's travel policy limits without proper documentation. He reimbursed the county \$3,500 in April 2025.

The investigation also found widespread misuse of county vehicles across multiple departments:

- Multiple employees in the trustee's office used county vehicles for commuting and errands.
- County clerk couriers used county vehicles for personal trips during work hours.
- An employee in the mayor's office was suspended for 10 days after using a county vehicle for personal travel.

Based upon this investigation, in August 2025, the Knox County Grand Jury indicted Jason Dobbins on two counts of official misconduct, and Assessor Phil Ballard on one count of official misconduct.

"This investigation highlights the need for public officials to follow established travel and vehicle use policies," said Comptroller Mumpower. "Government vehicles and resources must be used strictly for public benefit and not personal convenience."

To view the investigative report, go to [tncot.cc/doireports](https://tncot.cc/doireports). To view a map depicting Comptroller investigations, go to [tncot.cc/mappinginvestigations](https://tncot.cc/mappinginvestigations)

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