



Jason E. Mumpower, Comptroller of the Treasury

January 8, 2026

Former Cedar Grove Fire Chief Indicted for Misusing Department Funds

Cedar Grove Volunteer Fire Department is in Carroll County

An investigation by the Tennessee Comptroller's Office has resulted in the indictment of Michael Browning Jr., the former chief of the Cedar Grove Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) in Carroll County. The investigation began after county officials discovered the department's bank account had been closed with a negative balance.

Investigators found that Browning misappropriated at least \$10,721.61 between January 2022 and April 2025 by using the department's debit card to make unauthorized ATM withdrawals and personal purchases. These included purchases at gas stations, retailers, liquor stores, restaurants, and a hotel stay, none of which benefited the department.

In addition to the personal spending, Browning's misuse of funds caused the department's account to become overdrawn, resulting in \$216 in overdraft fees.



Browning was terminated from his position as the department's fire chief on April 24, 2025.

Based upon this investigation, on January 5, 2026, the Carroll County Grand Jury indicted Michael Browning Jr. on one count of theft of property over \$10,000, and one count of fraudulent use of a debit card.

"This investigation underscores the need for clear financial oversight and accountability in volunteer fire departments," said Comptroller Mumpower. "Departments must separate financial duties, maintain accurate records, and require documentation for all purchases. I am encouraged that all volunteer fire department funds in Carroll County are now under the control of the Carroll County Mayor's Office, which should greatly strengthen internal oversight."

To view the investigative report, go to tncot.cc/doireports. To view a map depicting Comptroller investigations, go to tncot.cc/mappinginvestigations

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