



COMPTROLLER'S INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

Central High School of Chattanooga

June 27, 2019

Justin P. Wilson
Comptroller of the Treasury



DIVISION OF INVESTIGATIONS



JUSTIN P. WILSON
Comptroller

JASON E. MUMPOWER
Deputy Comptroller

June 27, 2019

Hamilton County School Officials
and Board Members
5728 Highway 58
Harrison, TN 37341

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Office of the Comptroller of the Treasury conducted an investigation of selected records of the Central High School of Chattanooga, and the results are presented herein.

Copies of this report are being forwarded to Governor Bill Lee, the State Attorney General, the District Attorney General of the 11th Judicial District, certain state legislators, and various other interested parties. A copy is available for public inspection in our office and may be viewed at <http://www.comptroller.tn.gov/ia/>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Justin P. Wilson".

Justin P. Wilson
Comptroller of the Treasury

JPW/MLC

INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL OF CHATTANOOGA

The Office of the Comptroller of the Treasury investigated allegations of malfeasance related to Central High School of Chattanooga (CHS). The investigation was initiated after Hamilton County Department of Education (HCDE) officials identified and reported possible missing facility use payments and the misuse of the CHS football field by the former CHS head football coach. The former CHS head football coach was hired on August 4, 2016 and resigned on March 2, 2018. The results of the investigation were communicated with the Office of the District Attorney General of the 11th Judicial District.



RESULTS OF INVESTIGATION

- **THE FORMER CHS HEAD FOOTBALL COACH COLLECTED FACILITY USE PAYMENTS TOTALING AT LEAST \$2,480 FROM TWO SEMI-PRO FOOTBALL TEAMS AND FAILED TO REMIT THE PAYMENTS TO THE SCHOOL**

The former CHS head football coach collected facility use payments totaling at least \$2,480 from two semi-pro football teams that played their home games at the CHS football field, and the football coach failed to remit the payments to the school. According to HCDE policy, rental income for the use of a school facility must be collected and accounted for by the school principal. The missing facility use payments are detailed in the table and sections A. and B. below:

MISSING FACILITY USE PAYMENTS	
Report Section - Season	Amount
Women's Football Team	
A1 - 2016 Season	\$ 800.00
A2 - 2017 Season	\$ 680.00
Total Missing Women's Team Payments	\$ 1,480.00
Men's Football Team	
B - 2017 Season	\$ 1,000.00
Total Missing Men's Team Payments	\$ 1,000.00
Total Missing Facility Use Payments	\$ 2,480.00

A. A women's semi-pro football team played its home games at the CHS football field during its 2015-2017 seasons. The former CHS head football coach failed to remit facility use payments of at least \$1,480 from the women's team to the school during his tenure at CHS. The missing facility use payments from the women's team are detailed in sections 1. and 2. below:

1. Investigators found no facilities use form specifying agreed upon rental charges and proof of general liability insurance for the women's team use of the football field for its 2015 season. Although investigators found a facilities use form for the 2016 season and proof of general liability insurance; the form did not specify an agreed upon rental charge. However, other records indicated that the school charged the women's team \$2,000 annually. CHS received a \$1,200 check in April 2015 and an \$800 check in May 2015 from the women's team for its 2015 season CHS football field use. CHS received a \$1,200 check in April 2016 from the women's team for its 2016 season CHS football field use. During the summer of 2016, the former CHS head football coach signed a receipt documenting he received \$800 cash from the women's football team. The receipt was not dated, but noted, "Final payment for 2016 game field fees - \$800 cash." The former head football coach did not remit the \$800 to CHS. Women's team officials told investigators that the \$800 cash payment to the former CHS head football coach was for the final 2016 CHS field use payment.
2. Investigators found no facilities use form specifying agreed upon rental charges and proof of general liability insurance for the women's team use of the football field for its 2017 season; rather, the women's team officials stated there was a verbal agreement with the former CHS head football coach regarding the field use and rental payments. On May 11, 2017, the women's football team wrote a check to the former CHS head football coach for \$680. The check's memo line noted, "final field payment." According to football team officials, this payment was the final CHS field use payment for its 2017 season. The former head football coach deposited the \$680 check into his personal bank account on May 12, 2017; however, he did not remit the \$680 payment to CHS. The women's team officials stated that the team made other payments to the

former head football coach during its 2017 season for field use; however, investigators found no documentation to support the other payments. Assuming the women's team owed the same annual payments as it made for its 2015 and 2016 seasons (\$2,000 per season) then another \$1,320 (\$2,000 less \$680) could be due CHS.

- B. A men's semi-pro football team played its home games at the CHS football field during its 2017 season. Investigators found no facilities use form specifying agreed upon rental charges and proof of general liability insurance for the men's team use of the football field for its 2017 season. According to the owner/coach of the men's team, he had a verbal agreement with the former CHS head football coach to pay \$250 for each home game played. The owner/coach told investigators that he paid the former CHS head football coach \$250 in cash from gate collections at each of four 2017 home games (\$1,000 in total). CHS did not receive any facility use revenue from the former CHS head football coach paid by the owner/coach of the men's semi-pro football team.

CHS and HCDE administrations stated they were unaware the two semi-pro football teams played their home games at CHS during 2017; however, they were aware the women's team played during 2015 and 2016. According to HCDE policy, "Any group seeking to use a school building or ground or any portion thereof must complete a school facilities use form and have it approved both by the principal and by the Office of Risk Management prior to use of the facilities." The facilities use form required an applicant to submit proof of general liability insurance. As noted above, neither the women's team nor the men's team submitted a facilities use form and proof of general liability insurance to CHS or HCDE for their 2017 seasons; rather, they stated there was a verbal agreement with the former CHS head football coach regarding the field use and rental payments. Investigators only found a facilities use form and proof of insurance for the women's team 2016 season. The practice of not requesting approval for facilities use by outside groups created a liability risk for CHS and HCDE, as well as increased the risks that rental collections could be unaccounted.

Investigators made numerous attempts to meet with the former CHS head football coach to discuss the issues noted above. The coach initially spoke with investigators by telephone; however, the coach stopped returning investigators' telephone calls when investigators tried to schedule a meeting.

On May 28, 2019, the Hamilton County Grand Jury indicted Cortney Braswell on one count of Theft over \$1,000.

[Central High School of Chattanooga Investigative Exhibit](#)