



COMPTROLLER'S INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

Monroe County Sheriff's Department

June 18, 2026

Jason E. Mumpower
Comptroller of the Treasury



DIVISION OF INVESTIGATIONS



JASON E. MUMPOWER
Comptroller

June 18, 2026

Chairperson Paulette Summey and
Members of the Monroe County Commission
105 College Street South, Suite 1
Madisonville, TN 37354

Monroe County Officials:

The Office of the Comptroller of the Treasury conducted an investigation of selected records of the Monroe County Sheriff's Department, 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 10th Judicial District, certain state legislators, and various other interested parties. A copy of the report is available for public inspection in our Office and may be viewed at <http://www.comptroller.tn.gov/ia/>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jason E. Mumpower", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jason E. Mumpower
Comptroller of the Treasury

JEM/MLC

INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

Monroe County Sheriff's Department

The Office of the Comptroller of the Treasury, in conjunction with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, investigated allegations of malfeasance related to the Monroe County Sheriff's Department. The investigation was limited to selected records for the period January 1, 2025, through June 30, 2025. The results of the investigation were communicated with the Office of the District Attorney General of the 10th Judicial District.

BACKGROUND



The Monroe County Sheriff's Department (department), based in Madisonville, Tennessee, is overseen by an elected sheriff who serves a four-year term. The department has multiple divisions, including corrections, criminal investigations, special operations, auxiliary, court services, patrol, and school resource officers. The department also operated a maintenance garage which serviced department vehicles. During the investigative period, the department assigned the role of fleet manager to Neal Townsend, a

lieutenant deputy, and Townsend oversaw and documented the maintenance of department vehicles. As fleet manager, Townsend supervised a part-time employee, Jamey "Lee" Frank, and an inmate authorized to perform unpaid work for the benefit of the county. During this period, Townsend and Frank also worked at a privately owned watercraft repair business.

The Tennessee Corrections Institute (TCI) sets minimum standards for local jails and performs inspections of local jails, as outlined under Tenn. Code Ann. § 41-4-140. The department may grant an inmate trusty status, which the TCI defines as "An inmate, usually in a minimum-security classification, who is responsible for performing various maintenance tasks under supervision in a jail."

Trusty inmates assigned to the department maintenance garage were allowed to move vehicles in and out of the garage and around the garage impound lot, which is a fenced area enclosed by a gate. Trusty inmates were permitted to work on vehicles and equipment only if the vehicle or equipment needing repairs belonged to the department or another government agency. During the investigative period, one trusty inmate worked at the department maintenance garage and at the

county airport. Each day, a county airport employee signed the trusty inmate out of jail at approximately 7:00 a.m. and transported the trusty inmate to the airport. A department maintenance garage worker picked the inmate up from the airport and transported the inmate to the maintenance garage to perform work, then later returned the trusty inmate to the county airport, where the trusty inmate worked before a county airport employee transported the trusty inmate back to the jail at approximately 10:00 p.m.

Frank was incarcerated at the Monroe County Detention Facility (jail) from August 2019 until he was released and placed on parole on July 18, 2024. While incarcerated, as an inmate on trusty status, Frank worked at the maintenance garage, performing maintenance on department vehicles and equipment. Pursuant to a resolution adopted by the Monroe County Commission on January 24, 2023, county departments were permitted to hire individuals with prior criminal history, at the department's discretion. The department hired Frank on August 19, 2024, as a part-time garage mechanic. Townsend assigned Frank an unmarked black 2004 Chevrolet Silverado and allowed him to drive the vehicle between his home, his work for the department, the privately owned watercraft repair business, and other locations as needed by the department.

RESULTS OF INVESTIGATION

1. MONROE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEE LEE FRANK TOOK CUSTODY OF A TRUSTY INMATE FROM HIS ASSIGNED WORK LOCATION TO PERFORM LABOR ON PRIVATE PROPERTY

A. Fleet manager Neal Townsend and employee Jamey "Lee" Frank, while off duty, took custody of and transported a trusty inmate from his assigned work location to perform work on private property

Tenn. Code Ann. § 4-6-138 states, "It is unlawful for any person having supervision or control of inmates of the department of correction...to allow such inmates to work on private property, except as provided by law."

Frank used a trusty inmate assigned to the department maintenance garage to perform work on private property. Video footage showed Frank working at the privately owned watercraft business with the trusty inmate who was normally assigned to the department maintenance garage. Although neither Frank nor Townsend were on duty at the department on the days reviewed by investigators, Frank picked up the trusty inmate from his assigned work location at the county airport and transported him to the private watercraft business where both Frank and Townsend were working.

Pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 8-8-201(3), which outlines the powers and duties of sheriffs, the sheriff is responsible for the jail and all inmates in custody. Department staff stated that Townsend was responsible for supervising the trusty inmate assigned to the department maintenance garage. Townsend told investigators that he was trained and responsible for overseeing trusty inmates and that Frank did not transport the trusty inmate.

However, video footage showed Frank transporting and working with the trusty inmate at the private watercraft business property, both with and without Townsend present. Additionally, a county airport employee who oversaw the trusty inmate's work at the airport stated that Frank sometimes transported the trusty inmate instead of Townsend.

Video footage showed Frank and the trusty inmate working together on watercraft equipment and vehicles at the private watercraft business. Frank, Townsend, and the trusty inmate told investigators that the inmate was allowed to work on government-owned watercrafts and equipment. However, investigators determined that Frank and the trusty inmate also assisted a nearby marina in raising a sunken boat, which a marina employee stated was not a government-owned watercraft (**Refer to Exhibits 1 and 2**).

Exhibit 1



Video footage of Frank, Townsend, and the trusty inmate at the private watercraft business working on vehicles and equipment not listed as a government asset

Exhibit 2



Video footage from a marina at which Frank and the trusty inmate lifted a sunken boat that was not government property

B. The trusty inmate operated two vehicles without supervision

The trusty inmate operated two vehicles without supervision, including the maintenance garage truck assigned to Frank and a golf cart, at the private watercraft business. Video footage showed the trusty inmate operating the county vehicle assigned to Frank without Frank present. Frank told investigators that the trusty inmate was only allowed to operate vehicles at the department maintenance garage. Allowing trusty inmates to operate vehicles poses a liability to the department and increases the risk of escape.

C. The trusty inmate used tobacco products while working for the private watercraft business

Video footage showed the trusty inmate using tobacco products (smoking cigarettes) while working for the private watercraft repair business, while in Frank's custody. The Monroe County Jail's "Inmate Prohibited Act & Rules" policy identified alcohol and tobacco products as contraband and states, "Contraband is never to be in the possession of, or in the area of an inmate."

D. The department failed to require that Frank receive training on inmate supervision

The TCI's *Minimum Standards for Local Adult Correctional Facilities* states, "All non-facility support staff who have regular or daily inmate contact, shall receive a minimum of four (4) hours continuing annual training..." The department's training officers confirmed to investigators that Frank did not complete the training required to supervise inmates.

On April 1, 2026, the Monroe County Grand Jury indicted Jamey Lee Frank on one count of Official Misconduct and one count of Unlawful Use of Inmates.

On May 6, 2026, the Monroe County Grand Jury indicted Neal Alan Townsend on one count of Official Misconduct and one count of Unlawful Use of Inmates.

The charges and allegations contained in the indictment are merely accusations of criminal conduct, and not evidence. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt and convicted through due process of law.

[Monroe County Sheriff's Department Investigative Exhibit](#)

INTERNAL CONTROL AND COMPLIANCE DEFICIENCIES

Our investigation revealed deficiencies in internal controls and compliance. These deficiencies included:

Deficiency 1: The department did not have a documented process for vehicle assignments or acceptable vehicle use

The department's vehicle policy did not document procedures for vehicle assignment or establish acceptable use requirements for take-home vehicles. This increased the risk of unauthorized use and misuse of resources.

Deficiency 2: The department did not have a documented process for tracking trusty inmate movement between work locations while outside the jail

The department's "Inmate Work Crew" policy establishes procedures for signing inmates out of and back into the jail for outside work duties. The trusty inmate sign-out forms showed that some trusty inmates worked at multiple locations during the same day. However, the policy did not require documentation of all possible trusty inmate work locations or assignments, inmate transfers between work sites, or details of the individual(s) responsible for transporting inmates between locations. As a result, jail staff lacked adequate documentation to monitor trusty inmate movement and supervision throughout the workday, thereby limiting the department's ability to verify that trusty inmates remained at approved work locations or were only transported by trained personnel.

Deficiency 3: The department did not have a policy for assigning, tracking, and terminating physical keycard access

The department's key and lock policy did not address the assigning, tracking, and terminating of keycard access. Failure to revoke access and recover issued items increases the risk of unauthorized entry and compromised security of the justice center.