



State of Tennessee

Justin P. Wilson, State Comptroller

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Former Pigeon Forge Cheerleading Coach Pockets School Funds

An investigation by the Comptroller's Division of Municipal Audit has revealed that the former cheerleading coach at Pigeon Forge High School and Pigeon Forge Middle School kept thousands of dollars in fees and revenues from fundraising activities that should have been turned over to the schools.

From 2008 through 2010, Pamela Schleif, the former coach, failed to turn over at least \$11,950 in cheerleading fees that were supposed to cover costs such as uniforms, cheer camp expenses and shoes. Team members who paid the fees didn't always receive the equipment they were promised.

Prospective cheerleaders were also required to pay tryout fees between \$20 and \$25 per person. Auditors discovered that Ms. Schleif failed to submit at least \$700 in tryout fees.

Auditors also determined that Ms. Schleif submitted less money from fundraisers to the high school's bookkeeper than parents and cheerleaders said should have been available.

- For instance, parents and cheerleaders said one pancake breakfast should have netted \$1,700, but Ms. Schleif turned in only \$260 – 45 days after the event was held.
- In another case, Ms. Schleif turned over at least \$600 less than expected from a doughnut sale.
- For a car wash and a peanut sale, she did not hand over any money.
- Also, the cheer team sold advertisements to local businesses for t-shirts that were to be worn by team members. Ms. Schleif submitted more than \$4,500 in checks to the bookkeeper, but no cash for advertising – even though at least one business claimed to have made payment in cash. Also, some parents, cheer team members and business owners said the shirts were never distributed to the team.

The investigative report, which was released today, also noted that Ms. Schleif failed to maintain proper documentation of money raised through fundraising activities and the school principals didn't provide adequate oversight of those activities.

“It is important to remember that coaches and others involved in school support organizations are in positions of public trust, so they need to act accordingly,” Comptroller Justin P. Wilson said. “When people give money to fundraisers held by these organizations, there is an expectation that

money will ultimately benefit the students. It is unacceptable for adults to abuse positions of public trust for their own personal gain.”

The findings of the report have been referred to the local district attorney general.

To view the report online, go to:

http://www.comptroller1.state.tn.us/RA_MA_Financial/Report_Investigative.aspx

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