



## State of Tennessee

Justin P. Wilson, State Comptroller

For Immediate Release: April 7, 2014

### **Former City Recorder Stole Nearly \$100,000 from Wayne County Town**

In a little over a year's time, the city recorder of Collinwood managed to steal nearly \$100,000 in public funds from the town, an investigation conducted by Comptroller's office in cooperation with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation has concluded.

Melissa Broome, who no longer works for the city near the scenic Natchez Trace Parkway, stole at least \$94,426 by withholding cash collected for utility payments, swimming pool fees and property taxes.

She was indicted by the Wayne County Grand Jury and arrested by the TBI on one count of theft over \$60,000.

The Comptroller's investigation determined that the city created a climate that made the thefts easier by allowing Broome to handle all aspects of financial transactions. Good bookkeeping practices call for multiple people to be involved in money-handling procedures so they can check each other's work and increase accountability.

"This is another example of what can go wrong when local governments don't have good systems of checks and balances when handling money," Comptroller Justin P. Wilson said. "Even small communities need to follow sound practices. Simply trusting employees to do the right thing leaves public money at risk."

To view the investigation online, go to: <http://www.comptroller.tn.gov/ia/>.

If you suspect fraud, waste or abuse of public money in Tennessee, you may call the Comptroller's hot line at 1-800-232-5454 or fill out a report online at <http://www.comptroller.tn.gov/shared/safwa.asp>.

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