



State of Tennessee

Justin P. Wilson, State Comptroller

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Former Clerk in Friendsville Stole \$15,000 in Ten Months

A former part-time clerk in the small Blount County town of Friendsville stole more than \$15,000 over a 10-month span, an investigation by the state Comptroller's office has found.

Machella Meaghan Gilliam took cash payments from utility customers and falsified records to conceal the thefts.

The Comptroller's investigators shared that information with the local district attorney's office. Gilliam pled guilty this month on one count of theft over \$10,000.

Investigators determined that there was a lack of adequate oversight over Gilliam's work by the town's mayor and board of commissioners. She was allowed to oversee all aspects of financial transactions involving utility payments. Best practices in accounting call for those duties to be separated so people can check each other's work.

"This case illustrates why it is so important for government officials to have adequate safeguards in place to help deter fraud, waste or abuse of public funds," Comptroller Justin P. Wilson said. "I commend our investigators and local law enforcement officials for their work on this case."

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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