



Justin P. Wilson, Comptroller

August 16, 2017

Selmer Fire Chief Falsified Invoices and Altered Bids

An investigation by the Tennessee Comptroller's Office, working in conjunction with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, has revealed several issues of impropriety connected to the fire chief of the Town of Selmer. The chief also assisted McNairy County with bids for fire equipment.

Investigators determined the fire chief falsified two invoices for training equipment. The equipment cost \$7,500; however, the fire chief invoiced McNairy County for \$20,000. The fire chief had the equipment fabricated by a local machine shop and had the machine shop send the bill totaling \$7,500 to a Kentucky fire equipment supplier. The Kentucky fire equipment supplier paid the machine shop \$7,500 and received the \$20,000 payment from McNairy County via the fire chief. The fire chief told investigators that he purchased other equipment from the Kentucky supplier with the \$12,500 difference; however, investigators were unable to identify the additional equipment purportedly purchased.

The fire chief also admitted to falsifying a \$200 invoice after he used the town's credit card to make an undetermined purchase.

Investigators also discovered the fire chief altered bids for two fire trucks. The lowest bid price for the vehicles was \$178,622.60 and was awarded to the Kentucky fire equipment supplier. The bid specifications were developed by the fire chief who intentionally omitted some equipment. After the bid was awarded, the fire chief added other equipment totaling \$31,180 without going through a second bid process. The fire chief admitted that he and the Kentucky supplier developed the add-on equipment at inflated prices.

The investigation also found the fire chief improperly disposed of the town's fire pumper when he negotiated a \$52,878.30 credit with the Kentucky fire equipment supplier in exchange for the pumper. Investigators were not able to determine how those credits were used.

The results of this investigation have been reviewed with the district attorney general for the Twenty-Fifth Judicial District.

"The Town of Selmer and McNairy County should take immediate steps to determine the propriety of these transactions," said Comptroller Justin P. Wilson. "If overpayments were made, officials should seek recovery. Taxpayer resources must be safeguarded."

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

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Media contact: John Dunn, Public Information Officer, (615) 401-7755 or john.dunn@cot.tn.gov

