



Justin P. Wilson, Comptroller

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Investigation Finds Numerous Problems at Elizabethton-Carter County Animal Shelter

An investigation by the Tennessee Comptroller's Office has revealed a list of weaknesses and deficiencies in the operations of the Elizabethton-Carter County Animal Shelter.

Investigators determined that a cash shortage of \$9,516 existed within the shelter as of June 2, 2017. This shortage was due to missing adoption fees; rescue fees that were collected by the shelter but later sent to the Friends of the Elizabethton-Carter County Animal Shelter group; fees for shots and microchips that were given to the Friends group; and money donated to the shelter that was deposited to the Friends group bank account.

Comptroller investigators have also detailed a list of 14 separate operational deficiencies in the report. These problems include several accounting and money handling weaknesses, as well as questionable practices such as allowing pet owners to temporarily surrender their pets and then adopt them back after they've taken advantage of the shelter's low cost spay and neuter fees and free vaccines.

Additionally, the investigation determined the animal shelter's Advisory Board did not provide sufficient oversight or establish written policies and procedures for the shelter's operations.

The investigative report includes recommendations for correcting each of the identified problems. Comptroller investigators have also reviewed their findings with the district attorney general for the 1st Judicial District.



"Policies and procedures are critical to the operation of any well-run government organization," said Comptroller Justin P. Wilson. "This shelter was operating without any written policies addressing its financial operations. When this failure exists, employees have no guidance."

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

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