



OKLAHOMA
Office of the State Auditor & Inspector

AUDIT UNCOVERS SUSPECTED EMBEZZLEMENT IN TOWN OF BRAMAN

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK (June 5, 2024)

Oklahoma State Auditor & Inspector (SA&I) Cindy Byrd today released her forensic audit report for the Town of Braman in Kay County. Auditor Byrd launched the investigation at the request of District Attorney Brian Hermanson.

SA&I was tasked with investigating the activities of Sandra Barrows, Town Clerk for the Town of Braman. Barrows oversaw the day-to-day operations of the Town from November of 2016 until her resignation on April 17, 2019. The audit uncovered misappropriated funds totaling \$60,289.

“The Board of Trustees bears ultimate responsibility for the financial welfare of the Town,” Auditor Cindy Byrd said. “The Town of Braman has an annual budget of roughly \$670,000 so this represents a significant portion of taxpayer money.”

Findings of note include:

- Barrows issued improper payments to herself in the amount of \$30,300 for undocumented and unsupported mowing, cleaning, travel, medical reimbursements, and the sale of vacation time.
- Three Board of Trustees members allege Barrows forged their signatures on reimbursements.
- Barrows collected \$29,989 in cash from citizens paying utility bills but never deposited the money. In the last six months of her employment, zero cash payments were deposited.
- Barrows gave herself unauthorized raises.

“The Board of Trustees could have easily prevented this situation if the basic safeguards of oversight and accountability had been in place,” explained Auditor Byrd. “Barrows managed the Town’s finances with impunity which is why she was able to misappropriate cash for 18 months without anyone knowing. Our findings were confirmed after Barrows left office and the cash deposits returned to normal.”

The full audit is posted [here](#) on the Oklahoma State Auditor & Inspector’s official website.

To schedule an interview with Cindy Byrd, please contact Andrew Speno at 405-315-5924.