



LOUISIANA LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR
DARYL G. PURPERA, CPA, CFE

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RAPIDES PARISH COLISEUM AUTHORITY

Former Rapides Parish Coliseum Executive Director Kimberly Neal Townley may have violated state law by paying herself excess compensation of \$30,843 for 1,098 of hours she did not work or was not entitled to, and for leave hours she did not earn, between August 12, 2010 and February 19, 2013, according to a report released Monday by Legislative Auditor Daryl Purpera.

The investigative audit said Townley apparently was able to overpay herself because “she was personally responsible for processing and accounting for payroll expenses, and because coliseum authority members sometimes pre-signed blank checks” to pay expenses.

The report said that Townley wrote 14 excess checks to herself totaling \$15,736 for 560 hours not worked or which she was not entitled to be paid. It also said she paid herself \$15,107 for 538 hours of leave she did not earn.

The report has been forwarded to the district attorney for the 9th Judicial District for review.

Auditors also said Ms. Townley increased her pay rate by \$1 an hour without coliseum authority approval and drew an added \$1,911 for 1,911 hours from May 31, 2012 to February 19, 2013. “The coliseum’s poor record-keeping prevented us from determining what portion of the \$1,911 was income from an unauthorized pay raise versus the amount of excessive compensation that Ms. Townley paid herself,” the audit said.

Ms. Townley also may have underpaid state and federal income taxes based on wage and tax statements from 2011, according to the audit. The coliseum’s payroll records showed that she earned \$77,712 in 2011, but her W-2 form reported earnings of \$68,263. “It appears that Ms. Townley’s 2011 income was understated by \$9,449 and may result in additional taxes being owed to the state and federal governments,” the report said.

Ms. Townley was hired as the 48-year-old building’s temporary executive director in May 2010; the coliseum authority made her job permanent in August 2010. The audit said by the end of 2012 Ms. Townley’s job performance had declined, resulting in a “pre-disciplinary hearing” being scheduled for her. She resigned her position 28 minutes before the pre-disciplinary hearing was scheduled to begin on Feb. 19, 2013.

Auditors said that between August 2010 and February 2013, Ms. Townley “paid herself 145 weekly payroll checks over the 131-week period” for \$15,736 in wages she did not earn or was



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not entitled to receive. “It appears that Ms. Townley signed all 145 and deposited them into her personal checking accounts,” according to the state auditor’s report.

The audit said that she earned annual and sick leave in her first year of employment at the coliseum at 2.9 times the amount allowed by the facility’s leave policy, and in subsequent years, at twice the leave policy. “For example, when the coliseum’s leave policy allowed Ms. Townley to earn a total of 1.8 hours of annual and sick leave, in a one-week period, Ms. Townley recorded 5.2 hours of annual and sick leave,” the report said.

Ms. Townley also allowed four other employees she hired to earn leave at rates in excess of the coliseum’s policy, the audit said. Auditors said she should have earned 296 hours of leave – 170 hours of annual leave and 126 hours of sick leave – between August 2010 and February 2013, not the 501 hours of annual and 333 hours of sick leave she claimed.

The audit said she claimed the accounting system would automatically calculate leave balances based on a rate that was established before she was employed at the coliseum “and that she had no knowledge of how leave rates were calculated.”

The report also said that coliseum employees were paid for leave without being absent from work, a practice that did not begin until after Ms. Townley was hired as executive director.

The state auditor recommended that the coliseum authority seek reimbursement of the \$30,843 from its former employee and issue corrected 2011 wage and tax statements and file corrected tax forms with the state and federal governments.

The authority is a nine-member board named by the Rapides Parish Police Jury to oversee the 65,000 square-foot, 5,475-seat arena which is used for sporting events, graduations, monster truck shows, concerts, trade shows and other events.

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On Twitter: Former Rapides Coliseum executive may have violated law by paying herself excess compensation, leave hours.