

REPORT TO  
THE KNOX COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
REGARDING BREACHES OF PRIVACY  
AT THE KNOX COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
**SECOND ADDENDUM**

Prepared and submitted by:

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September 29, 2025

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This second addendum follows up on the first addendum dated August 29, 2025. The first addendum stated that Donna Hays voluntarily separated from her employment on September 13, 2024. Ms. Hays worked for the Sheriff's office for over a decade and received a statewide award on April 26, 2023.

On April 3, 2025, an unknown person in the Sheriff's office accessed the "Donna Hays" account to view the County Board meeting for one minute. The new information is that the IP address for this unauthorized access was a Knox County personal computer located in the dispatch area of the Sheriff's office on the south side of the room.

This same IP address accessed the County Board room camera on June 12, 2025. There was no County Board meeting at the time, but Knox County department heads frequently used the County Board room to discuss private and confidential matters with employees. The County Board room was used for this purpose as the department heads all believed the room to be private and secure.

The computer audit trail only goes back to March of 2025. Therefore, it is unknown the number of times the "Donna Hays" account was used from September 13, 2024 to late March 2025; a total of over six months.

My conclusion is that an unknown person in the Sheriff's office intentionally used the "Donna Hays" account after her separation in order to hide and mask the identity of the person actually accessing the County Board room video and audio system. We do, however, know the location of the computer that was used and that computer is in the Sheriff's office.

The County's Employee Handbook prohibits the unauthorized use of county property.

The immediate supervisor of Donna Hays had a duty to immediately terminate her computer access credentials on September 13, 2024 in order to maintain security, protect county interests, ensure privacy and keep an accurate audit trail for computer access.

The failure of the immediate supervisor of Donna Hays to terminate her computer access credentials was not business-like nor was it professional. More importantly, it compromised security, trust, and county interests. I conclude that the continued access of the "Donna Hayes" account from a computer in the Sheriff's office was intentional. I also conclude that the failure to terminate the "Donna Hayes" account on September 13, 2024 was either intentional or due to incompetence.

Dated this 29<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2025.

Special Knox County Attorney

By: /s/ David D. Begley