

County Officials Indicted on Federal P-Card Fraud Charges!!! It's about Time!!

Report provided by Robert A. Williams

For those Cleveland County Schools employees, like Jada Brown and others, who thought they have gotten off scott-free with their widespread use of CCS issued P-Cards (Credit Cards) for personal use; I wouldn't be so sure. The US Department of Justice, US District Prosecutors for the Western District of North Carolina, which includes Cleveland County, issued a Press Release yesterday that a Former County Manager and others have been indicted on Federal Felony Charges of P-Card fraud.

The DOJ the indictments include such items as noted below that directly correspond to allegation of misuse of CCS P-Cards that the NC SBI investigated several years ago and former Cleveland County District Attorney Rick Shaffer sat on and would not prosecute. Or even disclose what the SBI investigative report actually said. Something that present Cleveland County District Attorney Mike Miller has continued to do.

According to the DOJ Press Release certain high level County Officials allegedly carried out a conspiracy to embezzle public funds, by misusing their government credit cards, also known as PCards, issued to them and others to make approximately \$200,000 worth of improper purchases.

The Federal indictment alleges that, on multiple occasions the County Officials improperly used their government issued

PCards to purchase multiple gift cards totaling \$21,760 from various retailers and restaurants, including Walmart, Target, Olive Garden, and Cracker Barrel. For example County Officials used two different PCards to purchase 10 separate \$500 Walmart gift cards totaling \$5,000. The indictment alleges that County Officials split the purchase of the gift cards onto two different PCards, to avoid exceeding the County's policy spending limit of \$5,000. Then the County Officials used the gift cards to buy personal items for themselves and others, including groceries, personal hygiene products, clothing, wine and make-up. The County Officials gave some of the gift cards to other individuals who also used them to make improper purchases.

In addition to using the County's credit cards to purchase gift cards, the County Officials also made personal purchases on their P-Cards at various retail stores, including purchases totaling \$18,256 at Best Buy, \$10,718 at Target, and \$6,479.03 at TJ Maxx, among others. Furthermore, the indictment alleges that the County Officials used their PCards to pay a total of \$15,308 for electronic devices and for service from telecommunications carriers that were personal use items and services.

The County Officials have been ordered to appear on a summons. The conspiracy charge carries a maximum prison terms of five years and a \$250,000 fine, the federal program fraud charges carry a maximum prison term of 10 years per count and a \$250,000 fine, and the wire fraud charges carry a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison per count and a \$250,000 fine.

These are serious penalties for serious crimes. Except for here in Cleveland County where the insider crimes are protected by a School Board and County Commissioners that won't turn in the crooks and District Attorneys who refuse to prosecute. One has to wonder, why not shut down the Courthouse? Why not shut down the jails too? Let the homeowners use their firearms to protect their own property!!

Let the rest of us serve on a jury that will turn loose anybody charged with protecting their own property.

Let's just call Speaker of the House Tim Moore and have Tim bring in Federal law enforcement investigators, Federal Attorneys and Federal prosecutors who will do their job.

Folks, here is the link to the Department of Justice Press Release that shows what can and will be done to County Officials that commit crimes when there is a will to do so. Read for yourself what happens to crooks in government when citizens require it. It could happen here because

1. N.C. Gen. Stat. 15-1 says there is NO statute of Limitations for felony criminal fraud prosecution.
2. Federal Statutes of Limitations are 5 years to 10 years depending on the charges. Either way the Cleveland County Schools P-Card fraud could still be investigated and prosecuted.

Link to yesterdays Press Release from the Federal District Courts in the Western District of North Carolina is shown below. Remember this Western District of NC includes Cleveland County?

[Link to Press Release.](#)