

The Calvert Recorder

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Police say town employee stole for personal use

Chesapeake Beach investigating

By Steve Schuster
Staff Writer

Former Chesapeake Beach Public Works Superintendent Russell William King, 51 was arrested Wednesday for allegedly stealing as much as \$14,000 from the town.

A search warrant was executed at King's Sunderland home last Wednesday, March 22 according to Sgt. Rosemary King with the Calvert Investigative Team, and court documents.

"A couple of items belonging to the [town] were recovered," Sgt. King said.

King resigned from his Chesapeake Beach public works department position on Feb. 23, according to the town administrator Michelle A. Jenkins.

"This is a personnel matter that is being investigated and I cannot comment further," Jenkins said.

According to court documents, earlier this month Jenkins informed police that King was using the town's credit accounts with different merchants to purchase items for his personal use.

According to court documents Jenkins said that on Feb. 6, Wilson Cochran, the assistant public works superintendent, made a comment to Jenkins that hardware store bills charged to the town "were a joke."

According to Jenkins in the documents, Cochran was talking about a charge signed for by King for a digital telephone on Nov. 28, 2005.

Cochran said the telephone was not located at the town garage as it should have been. Jenkins noted there still was a very old cordless phone in the garage.

This prompted Jenkins to review the previous six months of King's receipts.

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She told investigators several items signed for by King were not located in the town garage or on any public property as they should have been, according to court documents.

Jenkins later apprised Chesapeake Beach Mayor Gerald Donovan of the situation and she was instructed by Donovan to look at receipts for the past four years to look for any irregularities. After a thorough review of the receipts, she found \$9,051.93 in discrepancies, according to court documents.

Shortly thereafter, Jenkins personally went down to the town garage and searched all of the town's public buildings, the water park and even checked town car trunks in order to find items that King had allegedly purchased for the town.

After inspecting all of the town's facilities, Jenkins realized that many of the items were not in possession of the town, according to court documents.

"There were several items purchased under the water park category that are not there now and were never there," Jenkins said in court documents.

Several other categories were missing items as well, such as tools, automotive accessories and heaters. According to court documents, Jenkins confronted King with her suspicions on Feb. 23., and he offered explanations all of which were refuted by Jenkins' research. None of the items were located where King said they would be, according to court documents.

Since Feb. 23, Jenkins has discovered several other missing items.

"The list goes on with questionable purchases, to include tire purchases in the amount of \$14,822," according to court records.

According to court documents, King agreed he would resign and repay the town for his disputable charges.

As of March 21, he refused to pay the town for the property that he purchased for his home job because he claims Donovan refused to give him a written agreement stating that he would not pursue further criminal or civil charges, according to court records.

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Donovan could not be reached for comment as of press time Tuesday. Town lawyer Eric Blitz said he couldn't comment on a personnel matter.

King has been charged with theft of more than \$500, and embezzlement, according to charging documents. He was released on his own recognizance. A trial date has been set for May 5.

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