

?Former CVFD Property Officer arrested for allegedly misusing department credit cards

Written by Janna Ross

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A former Charlestown Volunteer Fire Department Property Officer/Purchasing Agent was arrested Monday afternoon for the alleged misuse of a credit card and gas card belonging to the department.

Bruce A. Pigman, 35, was arrested after a warrant was issued out of Clark County Superior Court #3.

"We have filed the arrest warrant," Clark County Prosecutor Steve Stewart stated on Monday morning.

Stewart received the information regarding Pigman from the Indiana State Police Detective David Makowsky a few weeks ago.

Makowsky was assigned the investigation after Charlestown Volunteer Fire Department President Charlie Moon contacted the Indiana State Police regarding the possible misuse of the credit and fuel cards. Makowsky's investigation began in early September and was completed by mid-September. His investigation resulted in the arrest warrant issued Monday.

His investigation discovered that Pigman was allegedly using the CVFD credit cards to make personal purchases of gas and food.

According to Moon, he learned of the problem about a month and a half ago.

"It was brought to my attention that the credit card bills were not accurate," Moon stated. "Our secretary questioned the statements."

The statements in question range from November 2007 to August 2008. The total loss for the fire department on one credit card is \$2,978.87 while the other card's loss for the department totals \$3,071.90.

Moon was concerned not only about the loss of actual money to the department but also the loss of equipment.

"We are bonded and the insurance will cover part of it. Unfortunately at this point we don't know how much. There is also an undetermined amount of equipment missing," Moon explained.

Pigman was removed from the Charlestown Volunteer Fire Department, according to Moon, for mismanagement use of credit cards. He was removed from the roster during the August 4 Officers Meeting by Charlestown Volunteer Fire Department Chief Lee Slaughter.

"It is always devastating to a department to lose any amount of money. Any amount is devastating because it could go to fund equipment," Moon stated.

Pigman had access to the credit cards due to the office he held at the department. He was responsible for purchasing equipment for the fire department.

Once officials at the fire department were made aware of the problems with the credit cards, the credit cards deactivated to prevent further charges.

"Unfortunately, we just caught it. They have been shut off to prevent the spending. Now we have three sets of eyes going across all of the bills to prevent this from happening again," Moon explained.

Now the department has a purchase order attached to every purchase. The new property officer, Moon and the Chief Slaughter, now each look over the incoming statements. The bills are paid by the secretary and given to Moon to look over before being given to the Treasurer to sign the check. All these steps are now implemented to help prevent any misuse of credit cards and fuel cards in the future.

According to Moon, the activity on the cards issued to Pigman were steady.

"It did get worse at the end," Moon said.

Moon said some of the equipment was recovered when the fire fighters were able to

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accompany Detective Makowsky to the home where Pigman was allegedly evicted from.

Moon, Andre Heal and Chris Upton met with Makowsky at Station 1 before traveling to Pigman's former residence. Pigman's turnout gear was recovered.

Pigman was arrested in the Evansville area by Indiana State Police. He was charged with one count of Theft, a Class D Felony, and one count of Fraud, a Class D Felony. He is incarcerated in the Vanderburgh County Jail awaiting transport to Clark County.

According to Stewart, the Theft charge comes from Pigman's alleged theft of the fire department's equipment while the fraud charge stems from the \$6,000 in personal credit card expenses.

Stewart said they believed Pigman had family in the Evansville area which led him to that area.

"If convicted Mr. Pigman could face a maximum of three years on each count," Stewart concluded.

According to Sgt. Jerry Goodin of the Indiana State Police Post Sellersburg District, the investigation is continuing.

"It was very surprising to us. This has been going on for awhile and unfortunately we just caught it. Bruce was an outstanding fire fighter. I cannot comment on why he would do this but I can say we are surprised," Moon stated.

He concluded, "The residents of Charlestown do not need to worry. When called upon the fire department will be there to help when needed. We are very professional and qualified. We are ready to help protect the residents of our city."

Pigman was a volunteer fire fighter for the Charlestown Volunteer Fire Department for almost five years. He was the Property Officer/Purchasing Agent for just over a year.