

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
COUNTY OF RICHLAND)

BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

IN THE MATTERS OF:)

Complaints C2024-089)

Nicholas Duncan,)
Complainant.)

CONSENT ORDER

Charles "Chuck" Wright,)
Respondent.)

This matter comes before the State Ethics Commission (Commission) by way of a November 18, 2024 complaint which alleged that Charles "Chuck" Wright (Respondent) was improperly using Spartanburg County (County) funds for personal purchases. Pursuant to Section 8-13-320(10)(i) of the South Carolina Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act (Ethics Act), the Complaint was considered by the Commission and probable cause was found to warrant an evidentiary hearing.¹ Prior to the call of the case, Respondent agreed to the following:

STATEMENTS OF FACT

1. Respondent served as Sheriff of Spartanburg County (County) from 2004 until his resignation on May 23, 2025.
2. At all times relevant, Respondent possessed a County credit card issued by First Citizens Bank bearing the name "Chuck Wright, Spartanburg Cty Sheriff."
3. Following the filing of the Complaint, Commission Investigator William B. White subpoenaed various records related to Respondent's County credit card use, which revealed that Respondent used the County credit card for personal purchases as follows:

¹ Given the four (4) year statute of limitations set forth in Section 8-13-320(9)(d)(4) of the Ethics Act, the Commission's investigation was limited to actions occurring on or after November 18, 2020.

Apple, Inc.

Date(s)	Description (# of Purchases)	Amount
November 20, 2020-June 13, 2021	Drums, Play Beats and Drum Games Weekly Subscription (23)	\$172.27
November 27, 2020-July 29, 2024	iCloud Storage Monthly Subscription (44)	\$419.58
December 12, 2020-September 10, 2024	Apple Music Monthly Subscription (44)	\$482.18
May 23, 2021-June 13, 2021	Family and Friends Locator Weekly Premium Subscription (4)	\$19.96
February 4, 2022-February 4, 2023	Fretello Guitar Lessons Annual Subscription (2)	\$139.98
April 21, 2022	Huntwise App Annual Subscription (1)	\$49.99
May 23-26, 2022	Royal Match (10)	\$811.82
June 13-15, 2022	8 Ball Pool Weekly Subscription (2)	\$15.98
September 4, 2022	ESPN Annual Subscription (1)	\$106.99
September 20, 2022-February 20, 2023	Tune In Monthly Subscription (6)	\$47.94
January 4, 2023	Race Car Jumping (3)	\$64.97
Total:		\$2,331.66²

Meals

Date(s)	Vendor (# of Purchases)	Amount
December 3, 2020-December 2, 2021	Holmes Hotdogs (3)	\$52.37
December 10, 2020-January 31, 2023	Fuddruckers (10)	\$871.14
December 17, 2020-October 11, 2022	Arby's (3)	\$21.16
January 15, 2021-September 9, 2022	Beacon Drive-In (5)	\$176.31
January 29, 2021	El Poblano Union (1)	\$31.64
February 18, 2021 – March 22, 2022	Apollo's House of Pizza (5)	\$311.49

² Count 5 in the Notice of Hearing (NOH) incorrectly lists the total Respondent spent through the Apple App Store as \$1,350.82, a difference of \$980.84.

March 19, 2021-November 3, 2023	Super King Buffet (5)	\$281.33
April 13, 2021-October 28, 2022	Krispy Kreme (4)	\$69.18
April 14, 2021-December 5, 2022	Wendy's (2)	\$19.15
April 28, 2021-July 26, 2024	Waffle House (4)	\$96.89
May 17, 2021-February 8, 2024	Burger King (9)	\$89.78
May 19, 2021-September 5, 2024	McDonald's (26)	\$268.41
August 24, 2021	Runway Café (1)	\$55.19
September 10, 2021-January 3, 2024	Hardees (13)	\$94.14
September 27, 2021-February 19, 2024	Chick-fil-A (17)	\$345.90
October 11, 2021-December 1, 2022	Strawberry Hill (2)	\$86.32
October 26, 2021	Theo's Family Restaurant(1)	\$10.30
October 29, 2021	Clock of Gaffney (1)	\$33.46
November 10, 2021	Grapevines (1)	\$93.16
November 21, 2021	Tavern Café (1)	\$58.95
November 27, 2021	Big Boy's Country Cooking (2)	\$44.48
December 16, 2021-February 20, 2023	Outback Steakhouse (2)	\$206.45
December 17, 2021	Huddle House (1)	\$37.48
December 19, 2021-September 26, 2023	Bojangles (3)	\$36.64
January 4, 2022	Monterrey Mexican Restaurant (1)	\$69.07
January 19, 2022	Ruths Chris Steakhouse (1)	\$68.30
January 25, 2022-April 18, 2022	Peach Blossom (4)	\$162.65
January 27, 2022	La Paz Mexican Restaurant (1)	\$54.71
February 11, 2022-November 9, 2023	Substation II (3)	\$145.23
February 24, 2022	Boots and Sonny's (1)	\$7.64
March 14, 2022	Big Daddy's Restaurant (1)	\$32.85
April 4, 2022	Taste of Thai (1)	\$58.32
July 11, 2022	Jersey Mikes (1)	\$27.15
August 11-October 19, 2022	City Range (2)	\$171.20
September 12, 2022-August 27, 2024	Clear Skies Café (10)	\$260.40

October 10, 2022-February 21, 2023	El Molcajete (2)	\$69.30
November 1, 2022-August 22, 2024	Long Horn Steakhouse (3)	\$252.93
November 30, 2022-October 31, 2023	Pizza Inn (4)	\$222.29
December 22-December 26, 2022	Zaxby's (2)	\$150.42
April 27, 2023	Los Mexicanos (1)	\$11.96
May 14-15, 2023	Souvlaki (3)	\$335.64
May 15, 2023	Coffee Bean (1)	\$46.59
May 16, 2023	Fiesta Mexican Restaurant (1)	\$95.13
May 23, 2023	Eggs-Up Grill (1)	\$73.02
May 24, 2023	Hot Dogs & More (1)	\$8.64
August 18, 2023	Claudio's Bistro (1)	\$37.56
October 23, 2023	Biscuitville (1)	\$6.52
February 15, 2024	KFC (1)	\$7.95
February 23, 2024	Jimmy Johns (1)	\$35.30
March 28, 2024	Stax's Drake House (1)	\$55.00
Total:		\$6,130.09

Car Washes³

Date(s)	Vendor (# of Purchases)	Amount
December 13, 2022	Bob's Car Wash (1)	\$19.80
April 7, 2022-October 6, 2023	Parr's Quality Car Wash (2)	\$40.00
February 28, 2023	Heroes Car Wash (1)	\$25.00
March 3, 2023-June 6, 2023	Whatta Wash (3)	\$69.00
April 4, 2023-October 5, 2024	Shine on 9 (19)	\$855.00
September 23, 2023	Hurricane Express Wash (1)	\$18.00
Total:		\$1,026.80

³ The Spartanburg County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) maintained two (2) locations within the County where members of SCSO could wash their vehicles at no cost.

Sporting Goods/Electronics⁴

Date(s)	Vendor (# of Purchases)	Description	Amount
February 1, 2021	Batteries Plus (1)	2 Rebel Task headlamps	\$67.30
February 9, 2021-August 21, 2024	C and C Ammunition (16)	Personal range time, ammunition for non-agency firearms and accessories	\$1,017.94
May 14, 2021	Spypoint.com Insider's Club (1)	Subscription for cellular trail camera access	\$99.99
July 27, 2021-May 9, 2023	Best Buy (4)	iPad 11 Pro and accessories, cellular phone car mount, drinks, donation to St. Jude	\$946.20
December 17, 2021	Shipper Supply	Packing stretch wrap	\$69.65
August 27-December 7, 2022	Verdins Farms & Gardens (2)	Agricultural products	\$75.09
October 18, 2022	Harrison's Workwear (1)	Dunlop Pioneer Boots	\$187.23
November 3-29, 2022	Academy Sports (2)	2 Redfield Elite Backpacks, 3 packs of Gear Aid Paracord, 1 Trail Camera	\$236.61
February 17, 2023	T&K Outdoors (1)	Shield Arms magazine catch for a non-agency firearm	\$32.09
August 29-November 4, 2023	FitontheRun.com (2)	Fitness Items	\$66.82
September 3, 2023	Tru Fitness Attire (1)	Fitness Apparel and Equipment	\$56.86
September 12, 2023-October 6, 2024	Tru Fitness Online (14)	Monthly Fitness XR Membership	\$279.86
November 2, 2023-	GetPureCleanKeto.co	Diet Supplies	\$169.92

⁴ None of the items listed herein were turned into the SCSO upon Respondent's resignation or found within SCSO's inventory during the Commission's investigation.

January 1, 2024	m (2)		
December 4, 2023	PureCleanKeto.com	Diet Supplies	\$84.96
Total:			\$3,390.52

Convenience Stores/Pharmacies/Grocery Stores

Date(s)	Vendor (# of Purchases)	Description	Amount
February 17, 2021	Sam's Corner (1)	None	\$10.00
April 21, 2021-January 13, 2024	7Eleven (9)	Soft drinks, candy, anti-diarrheal medication, cigarettes	\$79.77
May 8, 2021-August 22, 2024	Dollar General (92)	Food, drinks, cleaning products, sleep aids, anti-diarrheal medication, ninety-two (92) packs of cigarettes	\$1,596.71
July 28, 2021-July 18, 2023	Walgreen's (2)	None	\$29.18
September 22, 2021-February 15, 2024	EZ Mart (2)	None	\$13.19
October 22, 2021-June 20, 2024	Spinx (10)	Food, drinks, cigarettes, medication, car washes	\$91.27
November 20, 2021-July 13, 2024	QT (30)	Food, drinks, thirty-eight (38) packs of cigarettes	\$466.90 ⁵
January 14, 2022-June 14, 2024	Circle-K (11)	Drinks, snack cakes, cigarettes, and candy	\$153.27
February 18, 2022	Raceway (1)	None	\$2.49
February 18, 2022-May 1, 2024	CVS (4)	At-home drug test kit, sleep aids, drinks	\$71.04
February 24, 2022	Wilson's Corner Store (1)	None	\$24.57
March 15, 2022-December 1, 2023	Walmart (5)	Comfort Go stadium seat, prescription medication, over the counter	\$238.33

⁵ Charge 39 in the Notice of Hearing incorrectly lists the total Respondent spent at QT as \$451.58, a difference of \$15.32.

		medication, batteries	
March 23, 2022-March 30, 2024	H & N Stop and Go (4)	None	\$39.78
May 10, 2022	S & J Mart (1)	None	\$13.10
July 18, 2022-February 4, 2024	BP (5)	Food and drinks	\$41.04
October 11, 2022	Sunoco (1)	Food, drinks, cigarettes	\$28.61
October 11, 2022-March 28, 2024	Petro Point (2)	None	\$19.77
November 22, 2022	Carlisle Crossing (1)	None	\$34.01
December 7, 2022	Corner Stop (1)	None	\$13.15
January 9, 2023-January 29 2024	Quick Purchase Food (2)	None	\$15.19
January 16, 2023	Southern Pride Convenience (1)	None	\$26.88
April 3, 2023	Pauline General Store (1)	None	\$4.29
May 16, 2023	Jenkins Mini Mart (1)	None	\$36.84
June 6, 2023	Club Corner (1)	None	\$38.33
July 6, 2023-June 24, 2024	PJ's QuickPoint (2)	None	\$30.95
July 19, 2023	Kan and Ken (1)	None	\$12.59
August 18, 2023	Market Store (1)	None	\$6.27
August 25, 2023	Circle Food Store – Rutherfordton, NC (1)	None	\$20.30
September 7, 2023	SAI Mart (1)	None	\$1.49
October 6, 2023	So Well LLC (1)	Vending machine items	\$2.10
October 13-19, 2023	Lucky Express (2)	None	\$5.57
October 23-November 15, 2023	Fast Stop (2)	None	\$23.58
November 1, 2023	Pop & Top SC	None	\$21.49
December 19, 2023-January 18, 2024	Family Dollar – SC and Charlotte, NC	None	\$10.74

	(2)		
January 3-August 22, 2024	Ingles (2)	None	\$18.74
February 24, 2024	Food Lion (1)	None	\$15.43
August 29, 2024	Scotchman (1)	None	\$27.69
Total:			\$3,284.64

Miscellaneous

Date(s)	Vendor (# of Purchases)	Description	Amount
December 3, 2020-May 3, 2021 ⁶	Pure Flix (6)	Monthly streaming service (\$11.76 each)	\$70.56
October 19, 2021-August 19, 2024	Sirius XM (35)	Monthly subscription to Sirius XM Radio (\$45.46 each)	\$1,591.10 ⁷
February 1, 2022-October 10, 2024	Amazon (22)	21 months of Amazon Prime membership, 1 Arlo Outdoor Power Adapter for Arlo Camera	\$369.11
December 3, 2022-October 3, 2024	First Citizens (6)	Credit card overdraft fees (\$35.00 each)	\$210.00
Total:			\$2,240.77

4. The Commission's investigation further revealed that Respondent partially reimbursed the County for the personal purchases as follows: (1) a personal check written to the County for \$1,111.00 in October of 2024, and (2) a direct payment to First Citizens Bank for \$1,500.67 in January of 2025.

⁶ Count 38 in the Notice of Hearing indicates Respondent charged a total of \$82.32 for a monthly Pure Flix subscription beginning in November 2020. However, the first monthly charge occurred on November 3, 2020, which falls outside of the Commission's four (4) year statute of limitations. Accordingly, the amount Respondent is responsible for is reduced by one (1) month, resulting in a total of \$70.56.

⁷ Count 44 in the Notice of Hearing incorrectly lists the total Respondent spent on Sirius XM as \$1,586.55, a difference of \$4.55.

5. In September of 2025, the United States Attorney's Office for the District of South Carolina charged Respondent with Conspiracy to Commit Theft Concerning Programs Receiving Federal Funds, Wire Fraud Conspiracy, and Obtaining Controlled Substances by Misrepresentation. Respondent's improper use of the County credit card, as described above, was included in these charges.
6. Respondent subsequently pled guilty and was sentenced to a term of imprisonment of forty-one (41) months. In addition, Respondent was ordered to pay restitution to the Spartanburg County Attorney's Office in the amount of \$17,538.45 his improper use of the County credit card.⁸

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Based upon the Statements of Facts, the Commission concludes, as a matter of law:

1. At all times relevant, Respondent was a public official, as defined by Section 8-13-100(27). Therefore, the Commission has personal and subject matter jurisdiction.
2. By using the County credit card for the aforementioned personal purchases, Respondent violated Section 8-13-700(A), which provides, in relevant part:

No [public official] may knowingly use his official [office] to obtain an economic interest for himself, a family member, an individual with whom he is associated, or a business with which he is associated. This prohibition does not extend to the incidental use of public materials, personnel, or equipment, subject to or available for a [public official's] use that does not result in additional public expense.
3. Respondent had an "economic interest" in his use of the County credit card, as defined in

⁸ Respondent was also ordered to pay \$95,442.39 to the Spartanburg County Foundation and \$349,885.22 to the Spartanburg County Attorney's Office for the charges and conduct unrelated to his improper credit card use. In addition, the Commission notes that the court-ordered restitution did not account for the payments made by Respondent in October of 2024 and January of 2025, which totaled \$2,611.00.

Section 8-13-100(11)(a):

... an interest distinct from that of the general public in a purchase, sale, lease, contract, option, or other transaction or arrangement involving property or services in which a [public official] may gain an economic benefit of fifty dollars or more.

4. Section 8-13-130 allows the Commission to "levy an enforcement or administrative fee on a person who is in violation of any provision of the Ethics Act."
5. Section 8-13-320(10)(l)(i) allows the Commission to require payment of a civil penalty of up to two thousand dollars for each violation of the Ethics Act.
6. Section 8-13-320(10)(l)(ii) allows the Commission to require the forfeiture of the value of any amounts obtained in violation of the Ethics Act.

DISCUSSION

The Commission found probable cause to charge Respondent with sixty-three (63) counts of Section 8-13-700(A) for using a County credit card to make the personal purchases as described herein. Through this Consent Order, Respondent acknowledges that he violated the Ethics Act in this regard. The Commission finds that the total of the personal purchases described is \$18,404.48. After deducting Respondent's \$1,111.00 payment made in October of 2024 and his \$1,500.67 payment made in January of 2025, the total amount of restitution Respondent owes to the County as a result of this Complaint is \$15,792.81.

DISPOSITION

1. The Commission hereby finds Respondent in violation of sixty-three (63) counts of Section 8-13-700(A).
2. The Commission hereby adopts the Statements of Fact, Conclusions of Law, Discussion, and Disposition as agreed upon by the Respondent.

THEREFORE, the Commission hereby issues this Public Reprimand to Respondent for violations of the Ethics Act and orders Respondent, within twelve (12) months following his release from confinement, to pay the County the aforementioned restitution totaling \$15,792.81 and to pay the Commission an administrative fee of \$5,000.00. The Commission declines to assess civil penalties in this matter given the resolution of Respondent's criminal charges, which encompassed the same conduct described herein.

By executing this Consent Order, Respondent understands that he is not only admitting to violations of the Ethics Act but also confessing to a judgment of \$20,792.81 (less any money paid to the Commission) in the event he does not make full and timely payment or action as provided in this Order. In that event, the Commission shall file a Judgment against Respondent in the County of Respondent's last known residence and in any County in which Respondent owns real property. Upon said filing, the Clerk of Court shall enter this Order in the amount of \$20,792.81 (less any money paid to the Commission) in its Judgment Rolls, without cost to the Commission.

AND IT IS ORDERED THIS 12th DAY OF August, 2026.

STATE ETHICS COMMISSION


SARA PARRISH, VICE CHAIR


CHARLES "CHUCK" WRIGHT
RESPONDENT


STEVEN DENTON
RESPONDENT'S ATTORNEY