

Former Leonard City Administrator Pleads Guilty to 39 Felonies

Fannin County Criminal District Attorney Richard Glaser announced on January 6, 2016, that Allecia Booher, the former Leonard City Administrator, had pleaded guilty to 39 felony offenses. Assistant District Attorney Benjamin I. Kaminar presented the State's case and John Tatum of Dallas represented the Defendant. Under the terms of the agreement, Booher will serve 7 years on probation for two charges of Theft by a Public Servant, serve 9 months in a state jail facility for 37 charges including multiple counts of Tampering with Government Records, Securing Execution of Documents by Deception, Forgery, and Credit Card Abuse, and has already paid \$80,000 restitution to the City of Leonard.

During her tenure as the Leonard City Administrator, Booher made changes to the city's auditing procedures for credit cards that gave her control of both the cards and the billing statements. Over the course of over 15 months, Booher made over 350 unauthorized transactions for personal expenses, including shopping at Victoria's Secret, airline tickets for family members, Christmas shopping, and supplies for her online business, totaling over \$53,000. As the city received the billing statements from the card issuer, Booher altered the statements to conceal her transactions and show additional, fictitious transactions by the police and street departments. Booher also used her position with the Leonard Community Development Corporation to secure a check for \$17,000 for the purchase of a tractor. When city officials and Texas Ranger James Hicks began investigating the tractor purchase, they discovered that Booher had forged her husband's signature on the bill of sale, and that he had never owned a tractor. With the help of a John Deere dealership, they learned that the serial number listed on the bill of sale had been completely made up. After Booher's termination, Ranger Hicks recovered the original credit card statements from her office. The statements had been altered in a kindergarten-style arts-and-crafts project where Booher printed new transactions in the same font as the original statement and then cut-and-taped the new transactions onto the statement before presenting it to the city council for payment.

The \$80,000 restitution is complete repayment of both the \$17,000 check and the amounts charged to the city's credit card. In addition, it covers the interest and late fees which had accrued when the city was unable to pay the full balance of Booher's unauthorized purchases. "We are pleased that Ms. Booher accepted responsibility for her conduct and made full restitution to the City of Leonard, including the considerable finance charges owed to the credit card company," said Glaser. Glaser thanked Ranger Hicks, Leonard city officials, and Kaminar for the detailed investigation. "Ms. Booher's quick acceptance of her responsibility and payment of restitution in full influenced what we recommended as a just resolution of this matter."