

Callaway County Prosecuting Attorney

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PRESS RELEASE REGARDING RESULTS OF STATE AUDIT AND CRIMINAL CHARGES AGAINST FORMER CALLAWAY COUNTY COLLECTOR

As you are now aware, today there were a number of developments with respect to the allegations of the misappropriation of funds by former Callaway County Collector Pamela Oestreich that came to light on March 15, 2018.

On that date, officials from Central Bank met with the Callaway County Prosecuting Attorney to discuss suspicious activity on a Callaway County checking account maintained by Oestreich in her role as County Collector. In the course of that meeting, it became immediately apparent that Oestreich misappropriated several thousand dollars in taxpayer funds over the previous twelve to fourteen months. At that time, the true magnitude of the problem had not yet been discovered.

Following that meeting, the Prosecuting Attorney contacted Sheriff Clay Chism to make him aware of the bank's concerns. Together, Sheriff Chism and Prosecuting Attorney Wilson immediately contacted the Federal Bureau of Investigation. That joint decision was made by the Sheriff and Prosecuting Attorney for the following reasons:

1. To avoid any conflicts of interest in the county sheriff and county prosecutor investigating, and possibly prosecuting, another elected county official with whom they worked on a daily basis,
2. To rely on the expertise of federal investigators and prosecutors familiar with criminal investigations involving corruption by public officials, and
3. To reassure the citizens of Callaway County that the matter was being taken very seriously and to take all steps necessary to maintain public confidence in the investigation and prosecution of Pamela Oestreich.

Upon the acceptance of Oestreich's resignation by the Callaway County Commission, the County Clerk took charge of all tax records pursuant to Missouri law. The County Commission then requested that the State Auditor conduct a full audit of the County Collector's office to discover any and all discrepancies and to determine the full extent of the loss, as well as the timeframe for that loss.

Since March 15, 2018, all county officials and employees have worked closely with federal investigators, state and federal prosecutors, and the State Auditor's office, to insure a full accounting of misappropriated funds, as well as the criminal prosecution of Pamela Oestreich.

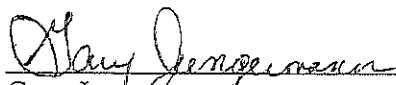
This afternoon, county officials were present in the federal courthouse in Jefferson City when Oestreich pleaded guilty to federal crimes related to the misappropriation of taxpayer funds. Callaway County officials will also be present when Oestreich is sentenced and will continue to cooperate with federal prosecutors to see that justice is done in this case.

County officials have also been made aware of the magnitude of the loss through the State Auditor's report. County officials have full faith in the findings of the State Auditor, including the amount of the loss and the timeframe for when the misappropriation of the funds by Oestreich began in 2016. The Callaway County Commission, working with federal prosecutors and our own county counselor, will make every effort to seek restitution and reimbursement for the losses suffered by Callaway County's citizens at the hands of Pamela Oestreich.

It is important to note that the actions of Pamela Oestreich were intentional, deceptive and criminal. Her actions were not mere negligence that would be discovered by county officials in the normal course of business. Rather, she systematically engaged in deceptive acts with the intent of stealing taxpayer money while she intentionally misled the County Commission, County Assessor, County Auditor and officials from an outside accounting firm who conduct annual audits of Callaway County.

While it may be impossible to detect and stop every criminal act committed by a county official or employee, the County Commission and County Auditor are committed to making the changes suggested by the State Auditor to avoid the possibility of another such incident.

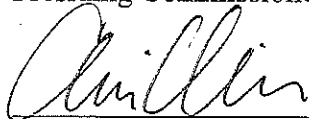
On behalf of all county officials, we would like to thank the citizens of Callaway County for their patience during this dark time. The state audit, federal criminal investigation and federal prosecution have been a long process. Please know that we will continue to work with the State Auditor and federal prosecutors to bring Pamela Oestreich to justice and avoid this happening again.



Gary Jungermann
Presiding Commissioner



Clay Chism
Sheriff



Christopher D. Wilson
Prosecuting Attorney & County Counselor