



NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Inspector General
Catherine Leahy Scott

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Dec. 20, 2017
Contact [John Milgrim](#): 518-474-1010

FORMER STATE PARKS EMPLOYEE SENTENCED FOR USING GOVERNMENT CREDIT CARD FOR NEARLY \$4,000 IN PERSONAL EXPENSES INCLUDING RENT, VACATION TRAVEL AND RESTAURANT MEALS

ALBANY – New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott today announced the sentencing of a former State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (“OPRHP”) employee for using her government issued credit card for nearly \$4,000 in improper personal expenses including her rent, for personal vacation travel and for restaurant meals.

Cassie D. Charles, 24, formerly of Albany and now residing in Washington Heights, New York City, was sentenced to three years of probation for her October guilty plea to the crime of Petit Larceny. Charles will also be required to pay \$3,940.81 restitution as a condition of her probation.

An investigation by Inspector General Leahy Scott found that Charles, a park recreation activity specialist, received her State-issued credit card in August 2016. The card was meant for work-related expenses only, but she immediately began using it to pay past and current rent on her former Albany apartments through the Venmo online payment system. The investigation also developed information she used the credit card for improper personal travel and meals in New York City.

“This defendant’s theft of taxpayer funds to pay the rent for her apartment and for vacation travel costs was a brazen violation of the public trust,” said Inspector General Leahy Scott. “I will continue to use all of the powers of my offices to end to any improper use of public resources.”

Charles was sentenced today in Albany City Court.

Inspector General Leahy Scott thanked OPRHP for their assistance with the investigation, the New York State Park Police for their assistance with the arrest, and Albany County District Attorney P. David Soares and his office for prosecuting these cases.

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