

# Charges: Former MN police chief used \$65K in city funds on personal items

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Published 4/9/2022

<https://www.fox9.com/news/charges-minnesota-police-chief-used-city-credit-card-buy-65k-personal-items.amp>

**(FOX 9)** - The former chief of the Alexandria Police Department is accused of using his city-issued credit card to buy more than \$65,000 of personal items.

Richard Wyffels, 57, was charged Friday with theft by swindle after a year-long investigation into his alleged financial crimes, the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) said in a news release Friday.

According to the criminal complaint, Wyffels used his city-issued credit card to make \$65,724.04 in personal purchases from Dec. 16, 2014, through July 7, 2020, while he was police chief. The purchases he made include: computers, computer software, technology equipment, snow shovels and lawn care tools, a Star Tribune subscription, cell phones and services, a Nest smoke/carbon monoxide sensor and surveillance cameras, TVs, rodent control products, a car battery, an iPad, a spotting scope, and gas, among other items.

Court documents say "numerous items" Wyffels "unlawfully purchased" with his city credit card haven't been recovered nor have been located at the Alexandria Police Department, while some items were discovered at Wyffels' home and others were liquidated for monetary gain.

Court documents allege Wyffels bought a Swarovski Spotting Scope and several accessories on Dec. 1, 2015, for \$4,920.85 using his city credit card. The BCA learned Wyffels sold the scope on eBay for \$3,710, and he deposited the money into his bank account.

Wyffels' PayPal account includes at least 10 other items totaling about \$12,388.47 that he had sold with descriptions that matched items Wyffels had purchased with his city credit card and that were missing from the police department, charges said.

Court records allege on April 5, 2020, Wyffels bought a car battery for \$149.99 at Fleet Farm in Alexandria, which he used in his Toyota Corolla and then sold the car.

In his home on April 8, 2021, the BCA executed a search warrant on Wyffels' home in Alexandria, where authorities found several items Wyffels bought with his city credit card, including an iHome alarm clock, calculator, WiFi equipment, tools, light switches, door handles, cameras and various other items, charges state.

Wyffels' position with the police department allowed him to authorize his own fraudulent activity on his city card, charges said, adding that his "authority combined with the high number of purchases for smaller value items significantly impedes BCA ability to recover the items."

On April 8, the BCA conducted "an operation" at Wyffels' home in an attempt to recover "additional items unlawfully purchased," at which time Wyffels was taken into custody, charges said. The investigation is ongoing.

Wyffels, who retired from the police department on Sept. 30, 2020, has a bail hearing scheduled for April 11.