

ROE#12 Superintendent Monte Newlin comes out with admissions and contradictions



HUTSONVILLE, IL. (ECWd) –

After [our article](#) highlighting one of the deficiencies in the Regional Office of Education #12's most recent audit, Monte Newlin, Regional Superintendent, took to his facebook page and to the Robinson Daily News to publish his glaringly contradictory excuses for using public credit for his own personal use.

From his lengthy facebook post: He starts out saying he wants to set the record straight, as if the record wasn't already set straight in the article, and continues to pen one of the more confusing and contradictory admissions I have read in quite some time.

"The charges leveled against me stem from one audit finding on an annual audit performed two years ago (FY15) on the ROE by auditors working under contract to the Office of the Auditor General for the State of Illinois."

The audit in question was released to the public in June of 2016 – a mere 7 months ago, not the two years he might want you to believe, which is probably why he chose the phrase "performed" two years ago instead of the more recent release of its findings only 7 months ago.

". . . our Business Manager is a licensed CPA"

If that is true, then the business manager should have known a public credit card cannot be used for personal purchases.

Maybe they need a new business manager?

"With that said, I am human and I do from time to time, make mistakes. As reported in the audit finding, I did use two ROE credit cards for personal expenses. However, it is important for you to know that AT NO TIME DID I EVER USE PUBLIC FUNDS FOR PERSONAL USE OR GAIN. When the monthly credit card statement was received in the office, I paid in full any charges that I made that were personal in nature. I wrote the checks from my personal account made payable directly to the credit card company. These payments were mailed with the ROE check in a timely fashion (as we do with all bills), and NO INTEREST WAS EVER INCURRED BY THE TAXPAYERS. "

He admitted using two ROE credit cards for personal expenses – he then immediately tries to deny it by saying at no time did he ever use public funds for personal use. WOW! Did he just say that? Can you spot the contradictory statement? ROE credit cards are public funds, public credit and public property. Using them for personal purchases is a violation of the Illinois Constitution, Article VIII, Section 1(a), which states that *"Public funds, property or credit shall only be used for public purpose."* Personal use of public credit is not a public purpose.

Section 1(b) is even more damning by further qualifying use of funds to mandate that *"units of local government and school districts shall incur obligations (which is what a credit card charge is – an obligation) for payment or make payments from public funds only as authorized by law or ordinance."* Is there a law or ordinance which authorizes a public official to use public credit cards for personal purchases? No.

Next, he says he didn't know, like the subject never came up in all his years as a teacher, guidance counselor, principal, and town board member. The problem is that the constitution does not say "knowingly" – but he is probably claiming

ignorance in an effort to avoid the harsh realities of [People v, Howard](#) and 720 ILCS 5/33-3(a)(2) and (3).

“Because your faith in my integrity means so much, at my own expense, I will be placing for public inspection, copies of the credit card statements and copies of the corresponding checks written monthly by me to pay for those charges. My staff is working on preparing those records this week, and it is my goal to have them ready for review in all of the ROE 12 county offices by early next week. “

OK, can you spot the contradiction in the above paragraph? He talks about doing something “*at my own expense*” and then says his staff is working on preparing those records this week. Which is it? Is he doing this or is his staff doing this? If it is at his expense does that mean he is going to pay the wages and benefits of his staff who is doing the work?

Additionally, he wants you to think that because of your faith in his integrity he is placing these documents online. He failed to mention that I submitted an FOIA request for all of them on Saturday, January 28, 2017. That is the real reason his staff is working on preparing those documents.

“If there had been any crime committed, I would have been indicted and prosecuted.”

To that, I will say, not necessarily...and don't hold your breath. Using public credit cards for personal purchases **IS** a crime. Any indictment or prosecutions start with the right people having knowledge of the act in order to effectuate an investigation into the allegations and then turning their findings over to the proper prosecuting authority. The Auditor General's auditors are not obligated to recommend any findings to law enforcement for possible investigation/prosecution. There are other avenues to use for that purpose.

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Monte Newlin, ROE#12, caught using ROE credit cards for personal purchases –

HUTSONVILLE, IL. (ECWd) –

To start off with, Mr. Monte Newlin, Superintendent of the Regional Office of Education #12, fresh off of a Chapter 7 bankruptcy only a few short years ago, and since then has been caught using the ROE credit card for personal purchases.

Previous to his position as Superintendent of ROE#12 he was the High School Principal in Hutsonville, IL.

The significance of this will be discussed below.

The Illinois Auditor General conducted an audit on ROE#12, released in June of 2016, for the year ending June 30, 2015 ([here](#)), which is the most recent audit available on the Auditor General's website.

On page 12 of its audit findings, the IAG found improper use of public credit cards for personal purchases of Mr. Newlin. He apparently had possession of two ROE credit cards and decided to use them for personal purchases (which he reimbursed later).

"The ROE has six (6) credit cards, two (2) of which are used by the Regional Superintendent. During our testing of ROE credit card expenditures, we found personal

expenses of the Regional Superintendent charged to both cards at various times throughout the year. These expenses were paid in full by the Regional Superintendent with personal checks written to the credit card companies. The ROE maintained copies of the personal checks and the related charge receipts with the credit card statements. Personal expenses charged to each of the cards in fiscal year 2015 amounted to \$1,562 and \$669, for a total of \$2,231. "

The auditor found improper use of ROE credit cards, and then asked the ROE for a response, which (unsurprisingly) was:

"The Regional Office of Education No. 12 did not realize that this was not an acceptable practice as the Regional Superintendent paid all personal expenses when the credit card payment was due."

He claims didn't know he couldn't use the ROE credit cards for personal purchases and pay it back later. Does anyone actually believe this response?

As a former High School principal, teacher, guidance counselor, community college teacher, and village trustee, he had to have known thru experience that use of public credit and public money for personal reasons was a violation of law. He had to have known that thru his previous employment. But now when it is convenient for him – he claims ignorance of the law and Illinois Constitution – and the auditor bought it?

This is why auditors for a public body must be made mandatory reporters for suspected criminal activity such as this. Public auditors should be mandated to turn this information over to the prosecutor for potential prosecution. All the years he worked in the school system and other public offices and he claims to not know he can't use a public credit card for his personal purchases? What a joke.

His history of the recent bankruptcy was probably the

real reason he used the public credit card instead of a personal one (if he could even obtain one that soon after bankruptcy).

A good prosecutor, wanting to keep public officials honest, and wanting to lower the tax burden on taxpayers, would prosecute this for the alleged felonies they appear to be, and since they would have been committed during the course of his employment, claw back any retirement payments and cancel his retirement package. Do this a couple times around this state and people will start paying attention to how their selfish actions could impact their retirements.

See page 12 for the findings:

[Download \(PDF, 1.23MB\)](#)

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[Olney Council Rescinds Vote For Country Club Work –](#)

OLNEY, IL. ([ECWd](#)) –

During this week's (Oct 14th) Olney City Council meeting, the council voted to rescind [their Sep. vote approving](#) the use of public equipment, personnel, and funds to perform work on the private country club.

Their attorney basically recited Article VIII of the Illinois Constitution and other items. From the audio of the meeting,

is appears they will try and do the work under some “economic development” purpose. It isn’t clear if that is possible since the Richland Country Club is not in any designated area such as TIF District, or even within the city limits.

At least the council listened to the messages they received on the subject (for now), and I don’t think this subject will come up again in the near future, since the attorney stated he will request an opinion from the Attorney General – and we know how fast they work...

Listen to the discussion here, I think it starts at around the 9 minute mark in the [audio](#)...

UPDATE #2: Olney City Council Violated the Constitution and OMA?

OLNEY, IL. ([ECWd](#)) –

Updates at the bottom...

The Olney City Council met on September 23, 2013, and in a marathon of alleged violations of the [Open Meetings Act](#) and alleged constitutional violations, decided to take action and approve several items [not listed on the agenda](#) as items to be acted upon. Here is a partial list:

– Took action and approved a proposal from the Richland Country Club to use PUBLIC equipment, property, time and personnel to perform work on the Richland Country Club Property (a private organization not located within the Olney City Limits).

- Took action on an Ordinance to authorize the sale of personal property – scrap metal and playground equipment from the City Park to Scrap Daddy, Inc.
- Took action on an Ordinance to restrict motorized vehicles from using East Fork Lake trails.
- Took action on appointment of Library Board member
- Took action on amending the Engineering Agreement for North Street Pump Station Project.

None of the above items were on [the agenda](#), obtained from the [City's website](#), as items to be acted upon.

The [Illinois Open Meetings Act](#) (OMA), in Section 1, requires that the people have a right to be informed as to the conduct of public business, and that they shall be given advanced notice of and the right to attend all meetings in which business of the public body is discussed or acted upon in any way. It further states that it is the general assembly's intent that this Act protects the citizen's right to know. The action taken without proper notice is an alleged violation of the OMA, Section 2.02.

Richland Country Club

The other item worthy of discussion here is the approval of the city to use PUBLIC funds, property, and personnel to perform work at a Private club, the Richland Country Club, of which Mayor Ray Vaughn is admittedly a member. What boggles my mind, is how the [Olney Daily Mail can report on](#) this without questioning the legality of it. Is this what passes for reporting these days?

A few things to note are that Barb Thomas should be commended for voting "NO", and Bob Ferguson not voting (although I consider that a slap in the face to every voting constituent of his) – Mayor Vaughn and the City Manager Larry Taylor, both

being attorneys should both know better and need to resign their positions immediately for incompetence. Jerry McLaughlin and Brad Brown, I don't know what to say to you except that you should also resign for voting to allow this to happen. Mr. Taylor, you have been doing this job for 22 years? – Please find another line of work. Street Department Supervisor Marty Nuss, what were you thinking allowing this to happen on your watch? Do you frequently use city property, funds, and personnel to do work on private property? It is your DUTY to help the elected officials make the right decisions, not to assist them in making the wrong ones!

Constitutional Violation

Let's talk about the [1970 Constitution of the State of Illinois](#) for a second...[Article VIII, Section 1\(a\)](#) to be exact,

SECTION 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

(a) Public funds, property or credit **shall be used only** for public purposes.

CAN IT GET ANY CLEARER THAN THAT?

Constitutional violations can be a predicate for criminal felony charges of official misconduct, as it is the Supreme Law in Illinois. This Illinois Supreme Court precedence was set [in the case against the Mayor of Pekin](#), Illinois a few years back.

Finally, for those of you that are members of the Richland Country Club, you should be ashamed that your club is taking advantage of the good citizens of Olney, and you should demand that the Mayor make a public apology in addition to getting quotes from reputable companies, using prevailing wage rates, and immediately pay that amount over to the treasurer of the City of Olney. Anything short of that and you will have lost all respect from the citizens of Olney.

For the Richland County State's Attorney: You should jump on

this with both feet and charge all of those voting, including the Mayor, with official misconduct.

I grew up in Olney and have to say that this is a sad day for me to have to report about this happening in Olney. Every one of you know it is wrong, but you did it anyway.

UPDATE: Audio of the discussion and vote is here...
<http://edgarcountywatchdogs.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/GolfCourseDiscussionVote-9-23-2013.mp3>

10-10-2013 Update: It is my understanding that an elected township official in Richland County and 2 County Board members have questioned the legality of the work at the Richland Country Club and have asked the City Manager/City Attorney to stop the work until they know for a fact as to whether the city can legally do this work or not.

Richland County Club Votes

<p><u>YES</u></p>  	<p><u>Abstain</u></p>  <p>Vote Goes With The Majority... Effectively Making It a YES Vote</p>	<p><u>NO</u></p>  <p>Thank You!</p>
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