

STATE OF INDIANA
COUNTY OF BARTHOLOMEW

IN THE BARTHOLMEW
CAUSE#

vs

Benjamin P. Jackson

PROBABLE CAUSE AFFIDAVIT FOR ARREST

I, Craig Starr, Indiana State Police Officer, being duly sworn upon his oath says that he has probable cause to believe Benjamin P. Jackson has committed the crimes of Theft IC 25-43-4-2, Official Misconduct IC 35-44.1-1-1, Corrupt Business Influence IC 35-45-6-2, Forgery IC 35-42-5-2.

I am a Detective with the Indiana State Police Department. I have been a police officer since 2007. I am a "law enforcement officer" as that term is defined in I.C. 35-31.5-2-185. I am currently an Indiana State Police Detective assigned to the Special Investigations Section.

Benjamin P. Jackson (Jackson) was caucused into office to be the Trustee on July 1, 2013, replacing late Trustee Frederick Barkes. Jackson served as Trustee until November 22, 2024, when he resigned.

On October 15, 2024, the SBOA was notified by an anonymous source that Jackson was misusing the Township credit card for personal expenses. The complainant alleged that Jackson used the Township credit card to purchase first class airline tickets for both him and his spouse, Amy Jackson, on multiple occasions. Furthermore, the complainant also alleged an occasion when Jackson, Amy Jackson, the Deputy Trustee, the Deputy Trustee's spouse, and a case worker flew first class to a conference.

A review was conducted by the SBOA of the Township credit card statements for accounts held with Cardmember Service/Elan Financial Services for the period December 14, 2016, to November 22, 2024 (with the exception of the April 2020 statement). That review identified that \$1,304,265.99 in payments were made by the Township to the credit card companies. Of the \$1,304,265.99, there was \$1,283,772.04 that was for purchases made on a Township credit card issued to Jackson. The SBOA determined that \$1,160,475.73 out of the \$1,283,772.04 in credit card purchases made on the card issued to Jackson did not contain supporting documentation.

The SBOA reviewed each purchase made on Jackson's credit card to determine if it was for a Township function or purpose. Based on this review, the SBOA determined \$1,123,334.27 as personal expenses (88%), \$121,093.58 as Township business expenses (9%), and \$39,344.19 as questionable expenses (3%).

Personal expenses incurred by Jackson of \$1,123,334.27 by year were as follows:

2016 - \$529.64
2017 - \$8,205.83
2018 - \$31,756.00
2019 - \$92,668.48
2020 - \$138,020.63
2021 - \$208,242.30
2022 - \$183,446.13
2023 - \$253,296.05
2024 - \$207,169.21

The SBOA further categorized the \$1,123,334.27 in personal expenses by category as follows:

Travel - \$657,831.46
Retail - \$150,078.95
Tuition/School - \$90,915.97
Utilities - \$39,913.97
Meals - \$31,306.65
Vehicle - \$27,036.76
Grocery - \$23,596.69
Home Improvement - \$18,990.65
Health - \$16,487.08
Entertainment - \$15,002.97
Subscriptions - \$13,689.98
Fuel - \$12,814.45
Personal Services - \$5,164.81
Mailing - \$4,806.47
Gift Cards - \$3,735.00
Conferences - \$1,980.81
Taxes - \$1,969.23
Alcohol - \$1,816.34
Dry Cleaning - \$1,401.23
Cannabis - \$1,124.56
Pet - \$1,119.89
Cosmetic - \$1,079.72
Fees/Interest - \$960.73
Phone - \$509.90

The SBOA determined that \$657,831.46 of the credit card expenditures were for personal travel. These travel expenses were incurred outside of Columbus, Indiana, and were for travel unrelated to Township business. Many of the expenses incurred were for Amy Jackson, the spouse of Jackson, and Jackson's three adult children: Isaac Jackson, Grant Jackson, and Anna Jackson.

The following schedule breaks down the travel expenses of the \$657,831.46 by type:

Hotel/Resort - \$166,894.50
Airfare - \$132,500.90
Entertainment - \$97,917.87
Booking Services - \$69,623.63
Meals - \$47,550.78
Car Rentals - \$34,811.04
Retail - \$31,435.30
Transportation - \$13,180.99
Fuel - \$12,617.58
Travel Insurance - \$11,602.62
Rentals - \$8,780.34
Grocery - \$6,311.20
Sports - \$6,267.54
Spa - \$4,342.40
Subscriptions - \$3,267.05
Parking - \$3,237.00
Fees - \$2,834.88
Alcohol - \$1,319.04
Tolls - \$1,201.16
Services - \$1,144.10
Coffee - \$496.62
Misc. - \$457.29
Tobacco - \$37.63

Digital devices were seized from the Columbus Township Trustee's Office on November 21, 2024, when ISP executed a search warrant. ISP reviewed the media artifacts; 1,661 still images and 815 videos that appeared to be associated with travel outside the United States.

The SBOA documented \$150,078.95 in personal expenditures paid with the Township credit card that were attributed to retail purchases.

The following shows the breakdown of the \$150,078.95 by type:

E-Commerce - \$62,798.68
Misc. Online - \$33,387.12
Clothing - \$18,547.46
Sports - \$10,718.75
Local - \$7,732.59
Dress Clothes - \$5,772.93
Music - \$2,698.62
Photo - \$2,169.28
Sunglasses - \$1,750.48
Sleep Patches - \$1,094.28
Bedding - \$1,020.82
Coffee - \$1,019.23
Luggage - \$712.94
Furniture - \$655.77

The SBOA attributed \$8,198.33 in expenditures to a backyard deck and landscaping from April 2020 to June 2020.

The SBOA documented \$90,915.97 in personal expenditures paid with the Township credit card that were attributed to tuition or school expenses for Jackson's children.

These expenditures were made to the following institutions:

- DePaul University - Chicago, Illinois
- DePauw University - Greencastle, Indiana
- Indiana University - Bloomington, Indiana (Beginning in September of 2024)
- Long School of Music, Bard College - Cambridge, Massachusetts (Grant Jackson)
- Dancers Studio, Inc. - Columbus, Indiana

The SBOA documented \$39,913.97 in expenditures paid with the Township credit card for Jackson's personal utility bills.

The SBOA documented \$27,310.79 in personal vehicle expenditures paid with the Township credit card.

The SBOA documented \$18,990.65 in personal home improvement expenditures paid with the Township credit card.

The SBOA documented \$16,487.08 in personal health expenditures paid with the Township credit card.

The SBOA documented \$15,002.97 in personal entertainment expenditures paid with the Township credit card. This total does not include entertainment expenses, including the travel or subscription categories.

The SBOA documented \$5,164.81 in personal services expenditures paid with the Township credit card.

The following details the personal services expenses by type:

Massage - \$2,474.72
Debt Recovery - \$1,709.45
Printing - \$474.42
Shoe Repair - \$240.72
Locksmith - \$155.53
Haircut - \$91.12
Misc. - \$18.85
Total - \$5,164.81

The SBOA documented \$1,124.56 in expenditures made to an online cannabis vendor paid with the Township credit card.

Jackson provided scanned credit card statements through his attorney, in which Jackson had identified each purchase as Personal, Business, and Unknown. The SBOA abstracted the expense determinations made by Jackson. The following summarizes Jackson's categorization of the credit card expenses:

Personal - \$1,032,978.08
Business - \$162,646.14
Unknown - \$59,466.59
Nothing Noted - \$28,681.23
Total - \$1,283,772.04

The SBOA was not able to determine a business purpose for \$28,022.62 worth of expenditures made with the Township credit card. These expenditures did not have supporting documentation on file at the Township.

These unsupported expenses were broken down into the following three categories;

Home Improvement - \$12,751.20
Phone - \$9,895.70
Retail - \$5,375.72
Total - \$ 28,022.62

The Home Improvement category includes Lowe's and Home Depot purchases. The Phone category includes Apple.com and Apple iTunes purchases. The Retail category includes purchases from Amazon.com, Amazon Marketplace, Amazon Prime, Transactions in Euro's, Best Buy, and Appliance Repair. [These Amazon purchases were not included in the report provided from the Township's Amazon account.

In addition to the Township credit card, the Township also had a credit card through Sam's Club. The SBOA reviewed \$28,098.08 in expenses made on the Township's Sam's Club credit card and categorized the expenses as personal, township business, and questionable. Of the \$28,098.08, there was \$17,564.98 (63%) that was determined to be personal expenses. The following summarizes the personal expenses on the Sam's Club credit card:

Grocery - \$6,406.27
Retail - \$1,980.11
Medicine - \$1,708.99
Bedding - \$1,652.70
Vehicle - \$1,263.14
Generator - \$999.00
Furniture - \$988.98
Clothing - \$664.38
Electronic - \$628.99
Fuel - \$590.60
Alcohol - \$219.18
Toiletries - \$188.94
Tools - \$143.74
Technology - \$129.96

Benjamin Jackson was interviewed during the investigation and admitted to knowingly and intentionally depriving the township of funds for personal expenses. Benjamin Jackson advised that when the credit card bill came to the office, he would write the check for it to keep the office staff from knowing what was on the credit card. Benjamin Jackson advised that he entered the personal expenses with inaccurate budget codes to cover up what he was spending for personal expenses. Benjamin Jackson advised that he was not sure when he started using the township credit card to make personal expenses. Benjamin Jackson said during the interview that he knew what he was doing was illegal and did not have any idea how much money he had taken.

Benjamin Jackson provided scanned credit card statements through his attorney, in which Jackson had identified each purchase as Personal, Business, and Unknown. The SBOA abstracted the expense determinations made by Jackson. The following summarizes Jackson's categorization of the credit card expenses:

Personal - \$1,032,978.08

Business - \$162,646.14

Unknown - \$59,466.59

Nothing Noted - \$28,681.23

Total - \$1,283,772.04

I affirm under the penalties of perjury that the above stated facts are true and correct to the best of my belief and knowledge.

Dated: 05/19/2025

/s/ Craig Starr
Detective Craig Starr
Indiana State Police