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Nitro treasurer takes stand on police souvenir purchases

By [Rusty Marks](#)

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- Nitro Treasurer John Young is refusing to pay the expenses of a city police officer who traveled to England and bought souvenirs with a state-issued credit card.

Last month, Nitro officer Don Scurlock and an officer from Charleston flew to England, carrying evidence for a new forensic test that prosecutors hope will help solve a pair of murders.

Kanawha County prosecutor Mark Plants said the officers also carried evidence from several cold cases.

Young said the city gave Scurlock a state-issued purchasing card for the trip. Travel expenses of about \$1,500 were paid with a purchasing card issued to the police department.

Young said Scurlock charged about \$500 for meals and hotel rooms on the card, but also bought about \$60 worth of souvenirs when his own credit card was declined.

"You're not allowed to use the card for personal expenses," Young said. "Period."

Nitro Mayor Rusty Casto said Scurlock offered to reimburse the town for the souvenirs, but Young said that isn't the point.

"He made a personal purchase on the card, which is a super no-no," Young said.

Scurlock then asked town officials to pay him a daily allowance, and asked the city to let him pay the state back for the bills, Young said. He said the arrangement would have given the officer \$720, more than the amount of the expenses.

"We've already paid the expenses," Young said. "It's really not a lot of money; it's the principle of the thing."

Young said he won't pay the bill unless ordered by city council.

"I refused to pay it," he said. "The mayor is angry with me and the police chief is angry with me because I wouldn't pay it."

The travel bill is expected to come up at a regular meeting of Nitro City Council tonight.

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