

POLICE EXPENSE GAFFE DISCUSSED AT NITRO CITY COUNCIL MEETING

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A discussion of whether to pay the expenses for **Nitro** Police Capt. Don Scurlock grew contentious at Tuesday's city council meeting.

Nitro Treasurer John Young said the officer purchased \$60 worth of souvenirs using a state-issued credit card, which he was given to cover expenses for his August trip to London, England.

Scurlock and James Hunt, a detective with the Charleston Criminal Investigations Division, took ballistic evidence to central England's University of Leicester so it could undergo a new technique that could provide a fingerprint analysis.

Young said the officer turned in a per diem expense report and wanted to use that money to pay for the expenses on the card.

"But he can't do that," Young said. "That has to be paid by the city. There was no way I was going to pay this per diem allowance when it was already paid through the card."

Mayor Rusty Casto asked Young to pay the per diem allowance but Young refused.

"The officer let John know immediately when he returned from the trip that he had purchased something that wasn't allowed," Casto said. "I thought the officer was going to have the money taken out of his paycheck, but he apparently didn't do that."

Young said by giving Scurlock the per diem allowance, he would have received \$720 more than the amount of expenses that were already paid by the state-issued credit card.

Councilman Craig Matthews agreed with Young. "I don't think we should pay that (per diem) if his expenses were covered by the state card," he said. "I think this was just an honest mistake by the officer."

Young told council that the officer paid the \$60 by check Tuesday.

At the end of the discussion, Casto told Young that if the officer brings in a receipt for expenses, "we will pay."

In other business, the city received five bids for 218 new street signs. Safety Caution was the high bidder at \$13,911.30 while MD Solutions came in with a bid of \$8,976.13. Casto and AJ Hill, the city's public works director, will meet today to award the bid.

Council members also discussed moving the city's money to the West Virginia Board of Treasury Investments, which is offering a floating rate of 2 percent interest. Young said one of the benefits would be immediate access to funds.

"If I needed to draw out some funds, I could request it today and have it today. And our money is not making any money now and even with a low 2 percent, it would be good for us," Young said.

Council will discuss it at the next meeting, which will be Oct. 5.