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PRESS RELEASE

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**DA MCMAHON ANNOUNCES ARREST OF FORMER RCDA EMPLOYEE
FOR THEFT OF PUBLIC FUNDS OVER 11-YEAR PERIOD**

Staten Island, NY—Today, Staten Island District Attorney Michael E. McMahon announced the arrest of William (Bill) Nelson, the former Procurement Director of the Richmond County District Attorney's Office (RCDA). Nelson was arrested on charges of Grand Larceny in the Second Degree, which charges a theft of RCDA property valued "over \$50,000," from 2006 to 2016. These acts were confirmed following a six-month investigation by the Department of Investigation (DOI) initiated at the request of District Attorney McMahon.

Nelson used these funds to purchase collector's knives, personal travel expenses, PayPal payments to himself, sporting events/memorabilia, comics/collectibles, video games, jewelry, clothing, survival/camping gear, and electronics equipment, the complaint filed against him alleges.

This morning, Nelson was arrested by DOI investigators and arraigned in Richmond County Criminal Court before Judge Raymond Rodriguez. Bail has been set at \$100,000 bond and \$25,000 cash. The case is adjourned to August 3.

"The crimes alleged today against Bill Nelson signify a deep betrayal of the public trust over an extended 11-year time-frame. These are funds that were meant to make Staten Island safer; to fight the opioid crisis, the surge in domestic violence, and the use of illegal guns, to name just a few. Instead they were allegedly used for personal indulgences in extravagant amounts to be disclosed as the investigation and prosecution proceed. There must be accountability for these crimes," said District Attorney Michael E. McMahon.

"After taking office in January 2016, we undertook a significant transition effort that extended over many months. As part of this transition, to make this a 21st century prosecutor's office, several changes were made to the staff and policies of the Administration Bureau, which included the Procurement Unit of which Nelson had been the Director. In the course of implementing these changes, and following Nelson's departure from the office, irregular and previously undetected and unauthorized spending was uncovered from the period beginning in 2006, shortly after Nelson was hired by the prior administration, and stretching through 2016. Immediately upon discovery, this activity was reported to DOI and we have fully cooperated throughout their subsequent six-month investigation."

“It must be said that these actions do not reflect on the integrity and work ethic of the honest employees in this office who work hard every day to make Staten Island safer and stronger. It is because of them and all Staten Islanders, as well as the sacred trust that Nelson breached, that this case must be vigorously prosecuted.”

“I want to express my deep gratitude to Commissioner Mark Peters and his excellent team– First Deputy Commissioner Lesley Brovner, Deputy Commissioner Michael Carroll, Senior Inspector General Andrew Brunsten, Deputy Inspector General Ann Petterson, and Senior Investigative Auditor Sara Leibowitz-- for their very thorough work. The ongoing investigation and prosecution of Nelson will now continue as a joint operation between DOI and a different prosecutorial authority because of inherent conflicts,” concluded McMahon.

Nelson joined the staff of RCDA in 2005 as its Procurement Director, the person responsible for overseeing all purchases of services and goods for the agency. He served in that role until May 2016 when in the course of the Transition of the new McMahon Administration he was removed from that role and placed in his civil service title -- Procurement Analyst. Nelson served as Procurement Analyst until December 15, 2016 when he submitted his resignation amid RCDA’s interviewing of candidates for the Procurement Director position. He has been on terminal leave since that date until this morning when that status was terminated.

Upon first uncovering the alleged misuse of office funds after Nelson’s departure from the office, McMahon immediately notified DOI Commissioner Peters and requested an investigation, which six months later resulted in this arrest. RCDA has fully cooperated with DOI throughout this investigation.

DA McMahon has called Comptroller Scott Stringer to notify him of the situation and has vowed to ensure that an independent audit is completed of the agency’s finances as soon as possible.

After a thorough review of the limited fiscal procedures that were in place as of 2012, RCDA has already implemented and adopted numerous new fiscal procedures, including a series of recommendations made by DOI, to improve its internal controls and increase oversight over its finances. There were no RCDA fiscal procedures in writing prior to 2012. [Enclosed find a copy of RCDA’s recently implemented Internal Control Procedures Manual.]

Throughout his employment at RCDA, Nelson reported to the Chief of Administration, a position held by three different individuals from 2006 to 2016. The Chief Fiscal Officer (CFO), although at the same level as the Procurement Director, was the position responsible for reviewing Nelson’s credit card purchases. One person held the position of CFO from 2006-2016. This individual also served as Chief of Administration simultaneously throughout 2016. As a result of this investigation, this employee has been suspended pending review, until further notice.

The charges contained in the complaint are merely allegations and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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Defendant Information:

William Nelson
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