

STATE OF WISCONSIN	CIRCUIT COURT	GREEN LAKE COUNTY
STATE OF WISCONSIN	Plaintiff,	DA Case No.: 2025FL003032 Assigned DA/ADA: Joan M. Korb Agency Case No.: 25-8899 Court Case No.: ATN:
vs.		
MICHAEL D BENNETT 574 SW Ceresco St. Berlin, WI 54923 DOB: 01/19/1988 Sex/Race: M/W Alias:		CRIMINAL COMPLAINT
Defendant.		<i>For Official Use</i>

The undersigned law enforcement officer with Ripon Police Department being first duly sworn, states that:

Count 1: MISCONDUCT/OFFICE-ACT/EXCESS AUTHORITY

The above-named defendant Between 05/10/2025 and 07/21/2025, in the City of Green Lake, Green Lake County, Wisconsin, the Defendant was a public employee and in his capacity as a public employee, did acts which the employee knew was in excess of the employees lawful authority and which act is a theft forbidden by law, contrary to sec. 946.12(2) Wis. Stats, a Class I Felony, and upon conviction, contrary to sec. 946.12(2), 939.50(3)(i) Wis. Stats., a Class I Felony, and upon conviction may be fined not more than Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000), or imprisoned not more than three (3) years and six (6) months, or both.

Count 2: MISDEMEANOR THEFT

The above-named defendant Between 05/10/2025 and 07/21/2025, in the City of Green Lake, Green Lake County, Wisconsin, by virtue of his employment, having possession of money of another, did retain possession of such money without the owner's consent, contrary to the defendant's authority, and with intent to convert said property to his own use, contrary to sec. 943.20(1)(b) and (3)(a), 939.51(3)(a) Wis. Stats., a Class A Misdemeanor, and upon conviction may be fined not more than Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000), or imprisoned not more than nine (9) months, or both.

PROBABLE CAUSE:

Complainant bases the allegations of this complaint upon the report and investigation of officer(s) Danielle Laluzerne, of the Ripon Police Department and Sgt. Jessica Schroeder of the City of Green Lake Police Department. Complainant and the officer(s) are reliable as sworn law enforcement officials.

On Friday 07/25/2025 Sergeant LaLuzerne, of the city of Ripon Police Department, received an email from Sergeant Investigator Jessica Schroeder regarding a City of Green Lake, Green Lake County, Wisconsin, theft complaint. Sergeant LaLuzerne was tasked with assisting the City of Green Lake police department in a criminal investigation of one of their officers and had been advised they had conducted a theft investigation and once they determined it involved an employee of theirs, they conducted an internal investigation and requested City of Ripon's assistance in the criminal investigation.

- The email Sergeant LaLuzerne received contained:
- a theft report completed by Sgt. Schroeder titled, 25GPD0380 theft report.
 - a statement from WITNESS 1-Deputy Clerk/Treasurer
 - an email communication from WITNESS 2 along with the receipt for the daily boat launch permit/seasonal pass #33076 dated 5/14/25 at 1:45 P.M. for \$41
 - a receipt for the daily boat launch permit/seasonal pass #32984 dated 8/10/25 at 6:15 for \$41 titled, Bella receipt

SERGEANT INVESTIGATOR SCHROEDER REPORT REVIEW:

The report contained a cover sheet with the location being City of Green Lake, the offense listed was theft, and all persons involved were listed. The suspect listed was Michael D. Bennett DOB 01/19/1988 with an address and contact information.

The first narrative is written by Sgt. Schroeder. This is a summary of the report: On July 10th, 2025 Sergeant Schroeder received an email from City of Green Lake Deputy Clerk WITNESS 1 regarding concern pertaining to missing boat launch funds. A community member reported placing \$41 in a sealed boat launch envelope into the boat launch drop at the Canal St. boat launch on June 28th and he had yet to receive his annual boat launch pass. WITNESS 1 was concerned as this was the 4th or 5th person reporting they placed money in the Canal St. launch drop box [who had not received their launch pass].

The report further stated "On July 11th, 2025" Chief Jason Reysen of the City of Green Lake PD placed a digital camera near the Canal St. boat launch deposit box. Further, the report stated "On July 18th Sgt. Schroeder tabled 10 boat launch payment envelopes. By doing this she created the "decoy" envelopes. She utilized different names, writing tools, hand writing, and denominations of the bills. The report stated the total amount of money placed in the "decoy" envelopes was \$128 and all were dusted with anti-theft powder. The envelopes are described as follows:

- City of Green Lake boat launch envelope #35528 contained \$41
- City of Green Lake boat launch envelope #35529 contained \$31
- City of Green Lake boat launch envelope #35520, 35521, 35522, 35523, 35524, 35525, 35526, and 35527 contained \$7 each.

The report continued stating Sgt. Schroeder placed "3 envelopes in the Canal St. boat launch drop box on "7/18, 7/19, and 4 envelopes on 7/20." The deputy clerk was provided the "decoy" envelope numbers and advised to let her know when, if any of those envelopes were collected.

The report stated "On 07/22/2025 at 8:05 AM" Sgt. Schroeder was notified by Deputy Clerk Zamzow only two of the envelopes were present in the collection bag. Sgt. Schroeder had Chief Reysen check the camera and he located Officer Michael Bennett collect the boat launch envelopes on "7/21/2025 at approximately 6:50 PM." Sgt Schroeder spoke with deputy clerk WITNESS 1 after finding this out and WITNESS 1 said when she arrived to work on 07/22/25, the boat launch collection bag was hanging on the clerk's office door. Sgt. Schroeder noted Officer Michael Bennett had worked the night prior and Officer Duane Luker was working day shift that day. Sgt. Schroeder's report stated she interviewed Officer Luker who told her he started at 7:00 AM and he saw the bag hanging on the clerk's front door but did not know what it was. Sgt Schroeder's report states she then investigated the police department squad room for anti-theft powder. She noticed some speckles of the anti-theft powder in various areas in the squad room but no large amounts anywhere specific at that point.

Sgt. Schroeder report states she then investigated the squad Officer Luker brought back to the police department. She states it is also the one Officer Michael Bennett normally uses. Per her report she noted she observed "what appeared to be two finger prints on the top right and left portion of the steering wheel." She then observed Officer Luker's hands and did not observe any visible anti-theft powder on his hands. Anti-theft powder was also located on the cabinet handle that houses the key to the boat launch deposit box and a large amount in the shredder.

Sgt. Schroeder requested a written statement from WITNESS 1 and requested all emails with communication from community members about their missing money/boat launch permits.

Important dates/emails noted were as follows:

- WITNESS 2: e-mailed on 6/4/25 providing his receipt for \$41 he placed in the deposit box on 5/14/25
- WITNESS 3: e-mailed on 6/5/25 providing his receipt for \$41 he placed in the deposit box on 5/10/25
- WITNESS 4: was noted having placed \$41 in the deposit box but had come in person to make the complaint.

Sgt. Schroeder's report stated "**The total amount I could prove that was taken is \$213** (\$41 from all three community members reference above and \$90 from the money I placed in the deposit box. At this point, I had strong reason to believe Officer Michael Bennett was stealing money from the boat launch deposits. We proceeded [with] our investigation as an internal case pertaining to his employment and we requested assistance from Ripon Police Department in Fond du Lac County to assist with taking over the potential criminal matter." The thefts occurred between May 10th 2025 and July 22nd 2025.

Sgt. Schroeder took Sergeant LaLuzerne to the Canal St. boat launch, in the City of Green Lake, Green Lake County, State of Wisconsin and showed Sergeant LaLuzerne the deposit box and where the camera was placed.

The deposit box was secured by a lock underneath the deposit slot. She advised the police department had the only key and officers regularly came to check the deposit box for deposits daily. She said day shift normally did this and would return the bag directly to the clerks where they secured the payments in a vault. Sgt. Schroeder said there was not a policy/procedure written on how the deposit box should be handled but that was how they had always done it. Sergeant LaLuzerne observed the camera was placed on a light pole near the deposit box facing downward, directly at the deposit box. Sgt. Schroeder explained the camera took still photos and stated during the time the camera was placed, when people would place a deposit, the camera would sense the motion and took a single photo. Sgt. Schroeder explained while they reviewed the photos, there were numerous still photographs of Officer Michael D. Bennett DOB 01/19/1988. The numerous photos could be explained due to him having to take more time than the normal person to unlock the deposit box, take the envelopes out, and resecure the deposit box. Sgt. Schroeder was advised after the envelopes and cameras were placed; the clerks only received 2 of the 10 envelopes that were placed in the deposit box. The department then reviewed the photos and observed officer Michael Bennett had been the one to collect the envelopes. There were no other officers on camera, checking the deposit box during the time period the "decoy" envelopes were placed. Sgt. Schroeder stated the clerk advised the deposit bag was left hanging on the clerk's office door and was not handed to them directly.

Sgt. Schroeder described continuing her investigation and locating the anti-theft powder on officer Michael Bennett's desk, in the police department shredder, and in the squad that had been used by officer Michael Bennett. Sgt. Schroeder advised Michael Bennett had returned his vest and the vest had orange powder on numerous areas of the vest.

Sergeant LaLuzerne asked if there was any other evidence that could be collected and Sergeant Schroeder advised she had the 2 "decoy" envelopes that had not been taken and provided them.

On August 2, 2025 Officer LaLuzerne returned to duty and had an email from Sgt. Schroeder that had been sent to me on 07/30/2025 stating another \$41 boat launch fee had been taken. Sgt. Schroeder sent the emails between WITNESS 5 and WITNESS 6, another City of Green Lake the deputy clerk. Attached was also a photograph of the receipt from WITNESS 5 for his boat launch seasonal pass. This photo was added as evidence to this case. This pass would have been placed when Officer Michael Bennett was still employed for the city of Green Lake.

MICHAEL BENNETT INTERVIEW:

Sergeant LaLuzerne contacted Michael Bennett for an interview on 08/03/2025. He agreed to come in to the Ripon Police department for an interview. At approximately 9:17 AM Sergeant LaLuzerne activated the interview room camera and she walked Michael Bennett into the interview room, introduced herself and he verbally confirmed his information to her for identification. Sergeant LaLuzerne informed him she was contacted by the City of Green Lake police department to do an investigation on a theft where he was a suspect. He confirmed his address and phone number. Michael Bennett advised he started working for the City of Green Lake police department in August of 2023 and had worked previously for the Berlin police department. He confirmed he was employed on July 21st, 2025 as a full-time police officer for the City of Green Lake. Sergeant LaLuzerne asked if he was working July 21st and what shift he would have worked and he stated, "Would've been nights according to my schedule." He was not sure the exact time he started but believed he would have started working between 5 PM-7PM. Sergeant LaLuzerne asked if he would have checked the boat launch box that night and he stated, "Probably." Sergeant LaLuzerne asked if only full-time employees checked the box and he said he wasn't sure because everyone who worked for the police department had access to the key and he said [it was kept] in a cabinet in the Chief's office.

Sergeant LaLuzerne asked how he opened the boat launch deposit box and he explained the process and collected the envelopes. Sergeant LaLuzerne asked if he took the boat launch collection bag with him and he said yes. Sergeant LaLuzerne asked what he did with the mesh bag when he was done and had secured the boat launch deposit box. He said he would normally put it on the city clerk's office door handle because he normally checked it at night and the day shift would give the bag to the city clerk.

Sergeant LaLuzerne asked which squad he normally used and he said the truck. He said the other vehicle they have is an SUV. Bennett said he would have checked the boat launch between May and July, "Maybe like 6-8" times.

Sergeant LaLuzerne advised it was believed that he took the money from the envelopes and he said, "Yea, I admitted that I did." Sergeant LaLuzerne asked did you take the money from the boat launch slips and he said, "Um, yes." Sergeant LaLuzerne asked if he knew how many envelopes he took and he said, "Maybe like 28, I did it 5 separate times." I asked if he knew when those dates would have been and he said, "Between May and July." When asked how he took the envelopes, He said, "I would drive, the envelope slips would be to my right, I would just reach in and grab a handful." He said he wasn't seeking any certain ones out. I asked if he would remember any of the ones he took and he said no. He explained he would put the bags in the center consul of the squad. He said he was in a rough spot and it sucked because he lost his job and his best friends. He explained this year had been hard for his family due to medical stuff that was costly. He said, "Looking back, I would have rather taken out of my 401K." "It was mindless to me; I wasn't hurting anybody." "In my stupid mind, I was going to keep track of how much I've taken, and I'm going to pay it back." When asked how much he took, **Bennett said, "On the low end \$360, I always rounded up higher so I always said \$420."**

Sergeant LaLuzerne asked if anyone gave him permission to take the money and he said, "No absolutely not." "It was the dumbest thing I've ever done in my entire life." He mentioned he had used the money for groceries four times for about \$75 and \$30 for gas twice. Sergeant advised she would be sending it to the DA's office for charges of theft and misconduct in public office.

Officer Michael Bennet was on duty when he stole the money he admitted to stealing and he did not have permission from anyone to take the money. He intended to take the money and used it afterwards. He removed the money from the location it was at and deprived people of their money. Officer Michael Bennett knew this was illegal and was acting in an official capacity while doing so. It was confirmed he was an active employee during the months of May-July, 2025.

Based on the foregoing, the complainant believes this complaint to be true and correct.