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MADIGAN: FORMER GRUNDY COUNTY OFFICIAL PLEADS GUILTY TO THEFT

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced a former Grundy County official pleaded guilty to theft for stealing \$42,000 in county funds to spend on personal shopping trips, meals at restaurants and visits to hair and nail salons.

Renaë Chronister, 47, of Morris, was sentenced earlier today after pleading guilty before Judge Robert Marsaglia in Grundy County Criminal Court. Chronister was sentenced to 24 months of probation and 480 hours of community service and ordered to pay \$42,000 in restitution.

While Chronister was working as bookkeeper for the Grundy County Health Department, she stole the funds by pocketing cash paid to the health department by area residents and businesses for county services, including immunizations, mental health counseling and public health inspections.

An investigation by Madigan's office, based on a referral from the Grundy County State's Attorney's office, found a pattern of repeated cash deposits into Chronister's bank accounts from 2009 to 2013. Madigan's investigation revealed Chronister used the funds for personal purchases, including dining out daily at restaurants, multiple shopping trips for clothing and numerous hair and nail salon visits.

"The defendant was ordered to pay back the taxpayer money that she used to pay for her lifestyle," Madigan said.

As bookkeeper, Chronister was tasked with keeping track of money received within the health department and its three different divisions: environmental, mental health and nursing. The county detected in 2012 that cash was not being consistently deposited with the county treasurer's office from the health department and ordered an audit, which revealed the missing funds. The county terminated Chronister from her position in February 2013.

Bureau Chief David Navarro, Assistant Attorney General Jonas Harger and Associate Director Louis Dolce handled the case for Madigan's Public Integrity Bureau with assistance from the Grundy County Sheriff's office.

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