



Memorandum



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To: The Honorable Carlos A. Gimenez, Mayor, Miami-Dade County
The Honorable Esteban L. Bovo, Jr., Chairman
and Members, Board of County Commissioners, Miami-Dade County

From: Mary T. Cagle, Inspector General 

Date: November 08, 2017

Subject: Arrests Made in Connection with the ISD County Store and Auctions of
Surplus Property, Ref. IG14-47

A former Internal Services Department (ISD) employee along with her paramour, who was a frequent bidder of County auctions, were arrested today pursuant to a joint investigation by the Miami-Dade County Office of the Inspector General (OIG) and the State Attorney's Office. Mirtha Morejon (Morejon), the former manager of the County's Materials Management Unit, and Ruben Lopez, owner of Action Truck and Equipment, were arrested for orchestrating a scheme to defraud the County relating to the auctioning of several vehicles. The County's Internal Services Department (ISD) operates the County Store, located in Hialeah, which sells various types of County surplus property, including vehicles. The OIG initiated the criminal investigation upon a referral from ISD who had, at that point, already suspended and begun termination proceedings against County Store Manager Morejon.

Late in 2014, ISD suspended and then terminated Morejon for various violations of County Personnel Rules related to her administration of the surplus property auctions and the County Store. Several of the violations centered on her improper relationship with Lopez. Morejon and Lopez were in a relationship and had gotten married in Las Vegas, despite Morejon's existing marriage to another County employee. The OIG investigation uncovered that Morejon, who had sole control of the documents once the bids were opened and publicly read aloud, was altering them to favor Lopez. ISD County Store personnel brought the discrepancies to light after the sale of a Lincoln Navigator, rumored to have been the former Mayor's vehicle. The highest bid for the Navigator had drawn comments from the crowd in attendance, yet when Morejon asked her employees to verify her final calculations the price was notably lower.

The OIG investigation found other auctions had similar discrepancies in favor of Lopez. Morejon not only had a personal relationship with Lopez, but assisted Lopez in his private business while on duty with the County. After Morejon was terminated, the County blocked Lopez from participating in on-line auctions for other surplus property. The OIG investigation found an elaborate scheme by Lopez to acquire trucks and other vehicles sold through Public Surplus, the County's third-party administrator for the on-line

auctions. Lopez created fictitious accounts and essentially halted the sale of property by bidding against himself and then defaulting on the items. Lopez ultimately purchased the property through the use of a straw buyer. Morejon and Lopez were jointly charged with one count of Organized Scheme to Defraud (a third degree felony). Lopez was additionally charged with another count of Organized Scheme to Defraud (a 1st degree felony) and a Computer Offense (a 2nd degree felony).

The OIG is grateful for the assistance of the County's ISD employees during the course of this investigation.

cc: Alex Ferro, Chief of Staff, Office of the Mayor
Edward Marquez, Deputy Mayor
Tara C. Smith, Director, Internal Services Department
Cathy Jackson, Interim Commission Auditor and
Director, Audit and Management Services Department