



# City of Richmond Office of the Inspector General: Investigative Report

OIG CASE #: 25-011-I

INSPECTOR GENERAL FOSTER CURTISS

## Executive Summary

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The City of Richmond (COR) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) initiated an investigation on October 24, 2024, after receiving information from a Department of Public Utilities (DPU) Manager. The complainant alleged that a DPU Power Line Specialist Supervisor John LaBossiere was observed by DPU staff removing copper and aluminum wire from a Traffic Streetlight Division utility vehicle prior to his assigned shift (5:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m.) without proper authorization. The alleged loss to the City of Richmond (COR) is \$17,689.33. The OIG investigated allegations that LaBossiere abused his authority, wasted government resources, and defrauded the COR in violation of COR policies and state law.

- LaBossiere allegedly abused his authority, wasted government resources, and intentionally defrauded the COR by selling government property for personal gain totaling \$17,689.33. The OIG conducted surveillance, interviewed LaBossiere, and reviewed data provided by DPU and a local business, showing LaBossiere removing copper and aluminum wire without authorization and exchanging it for cash before his assigned work shift. Based on the investigative findings, the OIG determined that the allegation that LaBossiere abused his authority by intentionally misusing resources owned by the COR is *substantiated*.

## Background

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The City of Richmond OIG initiated an investigation on October 24, 2024, after receiving information from DPU Manager. The complainant alleged that a DPU Power Line Specialist Supervisor John LaBossiere was observed by DPU staff removing copper and aluminum wire from a Traffic Streetlight Division utility vehicle prior to his assigned shift (5:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m.) without proper authorization. The complainant alleged an employee also operated the utility truck as LaBossiere approached them and stated there was a consistent shortage of the required wire on the utility truck when they began their shift.

After receiving this information, DPU supervision reviewed security footage and witnessed LaBossiere park in a specific location at DPU several days a week, an hour before his assigned evening shift, and waited for day-shift employees to return the utility vehicles. Once the utility truck returned and day-shift employees and supervisors began leaving for the day, the complainant alleged they witnessed LaBossiere on security cameras enter the shop, obtain the vehicle keys, and drive to the back lot outside their security camera view without proper authorization.

The OIG contacted DPU and retrieved copies of the DPU parking lot camera footage, as well as still images that depicted LaBossiere removing wire from a DPU utility truck and placing it into their personal vehicle. Additionally, the OIG interviewed DPU supervision, who provided a map of the DPU parking lot and identified the specific location where LaBossiere allegedly parked his personal vehicle before his shift to wait for day-shift employees and supervisors to exit the area.

On October 25, 2024, the OIG visited several recycling facilities in the area and located the facility that the LaBossiere had been using for his transactions, at a local recycling business. The owner of the Recycling business confirmed LaBossiere's identity and provided the OIG with a digital copy of tickets for 73 purchases LaBossiere made between June 18, 2024, and October 29, 2024, totaling \$4,371.25, which LaBossiere received (See EXHIBIT 1).<sup>1</sup> In addition, the owner provided the OIG with still images from their security camera footage that depicted LaBossiere selling various amounts of wire.

On October 28, 2024, OIG Investigators conducted surveillance at the DPU. OIG Investigators observed the LaBossiere parked in his personal vehicle in the location provided by DPU supervision lot prior to his assigned shift. OIG Investigators witnessed the LaBossiere drive his personal vehicle and park beside a utility vehicle, enter the DPU shop, return, enter the utility vehicle, and then drive to the back lot of the DPU storage building. The LaBossiere returned with various wires and loaded it into his personal vehicle and exited the parking lot. OIG Investigators followed the LaBossiere to a local recycling business, where he exchanged 40.0 lbs. of EC aluminum wire and 58.0 lbs. of Ins aluminum wire and received \$53.20. (See EXHIBIT 2).<sup>2</sup> This wire was seized by OIG. Photographs and videos were taken of LaBossiere's actions.

On October 29, 2024, OIG Investigators again conducted surveillance at the DPU and observed the LaBossiere repeat his actions from the previous day, where he loaded various wires into his personal vehicle and responded to the local recycling business, where he exchanged 37.0 lbs. of aluminum wire and 60.0 lbs. of EC aluminum wire and received \$59.80 (See EXHIBIT 3).<sup>3</sup>

On October 30, 2024, OIG Investigators responded to the DPU where the LaBossiere was observed again taking various spools of wire from the utility truck and loading them into his personal vehicle. After LaBossiere had loaded the wire from the utility truck into his personal vehicle, OIG Investigators approached LaBossiere and requested he follow Investigators into the DPU Headquarters, where they were advised of the allegations and asked to participate in an interview.

LaBossiere was read his Miranda Rights at 4:12 p.m. and agreed to speak with OIG Investigators.

LaBossiere stated that he had been taking copper and aluminum wire from the DPU facility for approximately six months and scrapping it at two recycling facilities: The first recycling facility was in Richmond, Virginia, and a second facility, in Fredericksburg, Virginia. LaBossiere received \$860.16 from the second facility. (See EXHIBIT 4).<sup>4</sup>

LaBossiere was shown a printed copy of the transactions from the first recycling business and confirmed they made those transactions. At the conclusion of the interview, LaBossiere removed the items, and DPU supervision valued the materials in the truck bed at \$2,376.35.

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Although LaBossiere received a total of \$5,231.41 for the wire sold to the two recycling facilities, the actual value of materials taken by the LaBossiere is \$17,689.33. OIG investigators established this amount by obtaining the lowest-dollar COR purchase price per foot for the materials sold at each recycling center. OIG Investigators then compared the COR purchase price per foot to the weight per pound of the items sold by LaBossiere.

The OIG criminally charged LaBossiere with Va Code § 18.2-95 Grand Larceny <sup>5</sup>and § 18.2-112.1 Misuse of Public Assets. <sup>6</sup> LaBossiere accepted a plea agreement to pay restitution to the City of Richmond.

## Observations

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The investigation identified vulnerabilities in the manner in which copper wire, aluminum wire, and other high-value materials were secured at the DPU facility. These materials were easily accessible, and vehicle keys were also accessible without sufficient oversight.

DPU has since implemented corrective measures to strengthen facility security. All materials are now secured behind a locked lot gate, with additional security methods in place to restrict and monitor access. Supervision has increased oversight of both materials and vehicle keys to ensure proper control and accountability.

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<sup>5</sup> [§ 18.2-95. Grand larceny defined; how punished](#)

<sup>6</sup> [§ 18.2-112.1. Misuse of public assets; penalty](#)

## Allegations and Findings

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Allegation (COR/OIG): A report or claim of potential fraud, waste, or abuse involving the COR. Allegations may be received by OIG from the public, the COR employees, contractors, or other sources, or initiated by OIG through proactive reviews.

Classification after OIG inquiry/investigation:

- Substantiated: Evidence meets the applicable standard of proof (e.g., preponderance of the evidence) and indicates the alleged conduct likely occurred.
- Unsubstantiated: Evidence does not meet that standard. This classification does not state the claim is false; it reflects insufficient evidence to prove it.

*Note:* “Preponderance of the evidence” means more likely than not. If OIG policy uses additional outcomes (e.g., partially substantiated, inconclusive), those may be applied as appropriate.

Based on the evidence reviewed, surveillance conducted, and LaBossiere’s own admission, OIG concludes that LaBossiere engaged in misconduct that resulted in abuse of authority, waste of government resources, and fraud against the COR, in violation of applicable City policies and state law.

OIG determined the allegation to be *substantiated*.

The actual loss to the COR is \$17,689.33.

*Foster Curtiss*

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Foster Curtiss, Inspector General