

# 'Where is all the money going inside the city?'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

They spent thousands more at convenience stores, fueling up vehicles, washing vehicles and shopping online.

Humphrey declined to comment on this report.

A review of the credit card statements reveals:

■ \$12,957.17 was spent at grocery, department stores and thrift stores.

■ \$6,627.54 was spent dining out.

■ \$11,376.15 was spent shopping on eBay and Amazon.

■ \$10,584.61 was spent on gas.

That means a total of \$41,545.47 was spent on food, groceries, shopping, gas and Amazon alone.

And taxpayers unknowingly footed the bill.

## Perks of the post?

Free gas, free groceries and free meals out seems like a pretty generous perk — given that Kendleton has a population of just 342 souls, one convenience store, a small pharmacy and a single RV park.

Kendleton's sales tax revenue is, well, almost nonexistent. The \$3,000 or so that comes in each month doesn't stay in the city's bank account long given the spending habits of Humphrey and Flores.

Because the city is one-square mile in area (one mile across by one mile across), property tax revenue is also nothing much to boast about.

Members of the city council and townsfolk are unaware of the duo's spending habits because city finances are not discussed at city council meetings, at least not much if Humphrey has anything to say about it.

City council members said they haven't seen detailed financial reports in the last several months and haven't seen credit card statements and checking account statements in years.

Some city council members have repeatedly asked to review the monthly financial reports — including the roster of checks and credit card statements — but to no avail.

"We want to see exactly what we're spending our money on," said council member Carolyn Jenkins.

One reason for the secrecy: Humphrey may have a hard time explaining away the thousands of dollars worth of online purchases when the credit card statements also reflect purchases at nearby Target, HEB, Walmart, Sam's Club and Office Depot.

Besides Humphrey and Flores, city staff includes an office assistant and three workers who fix potholes, read water meters, and keep the town tidied up.

City hall is so small that city council meetings are held at the local church fellowship hall down the street, so there's no need to buy vast amounts of paper, stationary, ink, paper clips, staples, office furniture, light bulbs, trashbags or other office supplies.

## Can't swipe everything!

Perhaps the mayor's post and city secretary's post comes with perks, such as being able to swipe the city credit card whenever they please.

If so, council members are unaware of such generosity.

They say they were shocked and

dismayed to find out about Humphrey's and Flores' spending practices.

The Herald reached out to council members who have been vocally adamant about seeing the financial reports and asked them whether the mayor and city secretary got such perks.

Sherrie Schulze and Carolyn Jenkins responded with a resounding "no."

They shudder to think what Humphrey is buying with city checks.

Schulze and Jenkins believe the council should be approving all payments by checks. They're demanding to see the monthly check roster.

## Open Records Request

The Fort Bend Herald requested 10 years worth of credit card statements from the city of Kendleton in March after the city's ex-accountant told council members by email that he had been fired after raising concerns about possible misuse of the city credit cards and checking account.

"I have seen several things that made me feel uncomfortable working at Kendleton's city hall," Ayan Merchant told the council in an email sent Feb. 8. "These things consist of large deposits being held in the city secretary's drawer, large amounts of checks written without the consent of council knowing, excessive use of credit card purchases without council consent, purchasing items for personal use with city credit cards, and missing receipts."

Merchant said her duties as ac-

countant were to reconcile bank accounts, credit card expenditures and prepare monthly financial reports for council review.

She said she often had to resolve "discrepancies" in the reports before she could provide documents to the council. "As far as discrepancies (in the financial reports), yes, you would have discrepancies when you have been asking for credit cards, bank statements and receipts as well as other documentation," Merchant told the council last month.

"For those of you who don't know, I've come up to the city hall multiple times and could not get the information I needed."

The city of Kendleton, through the city attorney's office, told The Herald that the city only had credit card statements between September 2019 and February 2023.

Merchant told The Herald that the city keeps credit card statements all the way back to 2015.

"I've seen them, they're kept in boxes at city hall," she said.

Besides, she noted, the new city accountant told the council in March he would have to review documents, receipts and credit card statements going back to 2015 to clear up any discrepancies before he could provide them detailed financial reports.

The Herald sought the credit card statements through the Texas Public Information Act.

Mayor Humphrey was criminally indicted last December after he was accused of failing or refusing to turn over public records under the TPIA.

Humphrey's next trial date is set for 9 a.m. May 4.

The Herald filed another Texas Public Information Request with the city of Kendleton for the receipts that accompany the credit card statements.

## 'I've seen this before'

Rachel White said this isn't the first time she's seen such spending by Humphrey, who is in his 15th year as mayor of the hamlet 30 minutes west of Rosenberg.

She said she served on the city council back in 2013-14 and questioned the credit card expenses.

The mayor appointed her to fill an unexpired term but came to regret it, she said.

"I guess he thought I'd be a 'yes' man on the council, but I asked a lot of questions."

Among those questions: Why was the city spending so much money each month washing vehicles at a car wash in Rosenberg when two of the city's vehicles were always broken down?

"Why is the city spending so much money at Bluewave?" she recalled asking.

Debit card statements provided to The Herald show that Humphrey spent almost \$1,600 on car washes over the last three-year-period, most of them at \$29.99 a pop at Bluewave.

The Herald shared its findings with White, one of the few people in Kendleton willing to stand up to the mayor and ask serious questions.

"I've seen this before," she said. "This is disheartening. Very disheartening," she said.

She said she also raised concerns about the number of times the credit cards were being used to purchase meals, fuel and groceries.

"Why are we spending so much money on gas when half the city's vehicles don't run?" she recalled asking.

White said Humphrey got rid of her in November 2018 by declaring her appointment to the council to be invalid.

White ran for council last election but lost. She is running for city council this May because she doesn't like the way the government is being run.

At the council meeting earlier this month, she said that Kendleton should be growing commercially like nearby Beasley or East Bernard — perhaps not by leaps and bounds but at least slowly and steadily.

Kendleton used to be a thriving community decades ago, she noted. Why not now?

Why doesn't Kendleton have a Dollar General or other kind of thrift store, she asked. What is being done to attract business to town?

She also wanted to know why the city hasn't resurfaced streets, including the one in front of her home.

Most importantly, she asked the council: "Where is all the money going inside the city?"

*Next issue: Humphrey heads to the gas station again and again and again — even though the city has a contract with the county to use its low-cost fueling station. Oh, and the county has charged the city for fuel.*

# Humphrey, Flores spend thousands on groceries

Here's a look at exactly what the mayor and city secretaries purchased at grocery stores, department stores, thrift stores over the past 42 months. The city only provided three months of credit card statements for the year 2019 and only a month and a half of credit card receipts for 2023.

DH = Darryl Humphrey Sr.

CF = Christina Flores

VH = Veronica Harris

NC = Nameless Card

## 2019 credit card statements

■ 9/20/2019 Walmart Super Center (Wharton) — \$132.64 (DH)

■ 10/09/2019 Sam's Club (Sugar Land) — \$120.32 (VH)

■ 10/17/2019 Sam's Club (Sugar Land) — \$37.92 (DH)

■ 10/17/2019 HEB (Wharton) — \$40.98 (DH)

■ 11/14/2019 Dollar General (East Bernard) — \$9.66 (VH)

■ 11/19/2019 Sam's Club (Sugar Land) — \$187.85 (VH)

■ 11/19/2019 Sam's Club (Sugar Land) — \$94.07 (DH)

■ 11/22/2019 Walmart Super Center (Richmond) — \$20.00 (DH)

■ 11/22/2019 Walmart Super Center (Richmond) — \$20.00 (DH)

■ 11/22/2019 Walmart Super Center (Richmond) — \$20.00 (DH)

■ 11/25/2019 Sam's Club (Sugar Land) — \$148.00 (VH)

■ 11/26/2019 Walmart Super Center (Richmond) — \$12.80 (VH)

■ 12/12/2019 Lowe's Market (East Bernard) — \$10.77 (VH)

■ 12/16/2019 Sam's Club (Sugar Land) — \$11.34 (VH)

■ 12/16/2019 Sam's Club (Sugar Land) — \$80.38 (VH)

■ 12/19/2019 Walmart Super Center (Richmond) — \$200.00 (DH)

■ 12/24/2019 Walmart Super Center (Richmond) — \$16.79 (VH)

**TOTAL \$1,163.52**

(DH) \$565.61

(VH) \$597.91

## 2020 credit card statements

■ 3/27/2020 Kroger's (Richmond) — \$17.63 (VH)

■ 3/27/2020 Sam's Club (Sugar Land) — \$80.35 (DH)

■ 4/13/2020 Food Town (East Bernard) — \$17.41 (DH)

■ 6/04/2020 Dollar General (East Bernard) — \$12.01 (DH)

■ 6/10/2020 Walmart Super Store (Wharton) — \$48.67 (DH)

■ 6/11/2020 Dollar General (East Bernard) — \$17.21 (DH)

■ 6/16/2020 Sam's Club (Sugar Land) — \$211.05 (DH)

■ 6/17/2020 La Michoacana Super Market (Rosenberg) — \$186.26 (DH)

■ 6/18/2020 La Michoacana Super Market (Rosenberg) — \$115.19 (DH)

■ 7/01/2020 Target (Rosenberg) — \$5.40 (CF)

■ 7/07/2020 Target (Rosenberg) — \$5.40 (CF)

■ 7/09/2020 Lowe's Market (East Bernard) — \$7.99 (NC)

■ 7/20/2020 Dollar General (East Bernard) — \$12.94 (CF)

■ 7/24/2020 Dollar General (Beasley) — \$56.17 (CF)

■ 8/12/2020 Dollar General (East Bernard) — \$9.90 (CF)

■ 1 1 / 2 3 / 2 0 2 0 Walmart Super Center (Sugar Land) — \$18.91 (NC)

■ 11/23/2020 Sam's Club (Sugar Land) — \$164.34 (NC)

■ 11/23/2020 Sam's Club (Sugar Land) — \$100.00 (NC)

■ 11/25/2020 Food Town (East Bernard) — \$35.86 (DH)

■ 1 2 / 0 1 / 2 0 2 0 Walmart Super Center (Richmond) — \$118.19 (DH)

■ 1 2 / 0 5 / 2 0 2 0 Walmart Super Center (Richmond) — \$205.99 (CF)

■ 12/06/2020 Dollar General — \$64.13 (CF)

■ 12/12/2020 Five Below (Rosenberg) — \$43.90 (NC)

■ 12/15/2020 Walmart Super Center (Richmond) — \$678.67 (NC)

■ 12/16/2020 Fiesta Mart (Rosenberg) — \$29.30 (NC)

■ 12/16/2020 Dollar General (Beasley) — \$38.28 (NC)

■ 12/16/2020 Dollar General (Beasley) — \$3.79 (NC)

■ 12/21/2021 Sam's Club (Sugar Land) — \$86.10 (NC)

**TOTAL \$2,391.04**

(DH) \$842.20

(CF) \$359.93

(NC) \$1,171.28

(VH) \$17.63

## 2021 credit card statements

■ 1/11/2021 Walmart.com — \$238.40 (CF)

■ 1/25/2021 The Flower Shop — \$46.01 (CF)

■ 1/26/2021 HEB (Wharton) — \$60.91 (DH)

■ 2/17/2021 Lowe's Market (East Bernard) — \$29.55 (DH)

■ 2/18/2021 Lowe's Market (East Bernard) — \$17.29 (CF)

■ 2/21/2021 Target (Rosenberg) — \$11.36 (CF)

■ 2/28/2021 Walmart Super Center (Wharton) — \$22.22 (CF)

■ 3/20/2021 Dollar General (San Marcos) — \$22.46 (CF)

■ 3/28/2021 Target (Rosenberg) — \$19.36 (CF)

■ 4/13/2021 Target (Rosenberg) — \$8.65 (CF)

■ 3/25/2021 Food Town (East Bernard) — \$52.50 (NC)

■ 4/01/2021 Sam's Club (Sugar Land) — \$191.12 (NC)

■ 05/13/2021 HEB (Richmond) — \$32.34 (CF)

■ 5/13/2021 Dollar Tree (Rosenberg) — \$10.83 (CF)

■ 5/13/2021 Jack's Party Supplies (Rosenberg) — \$13.60 (CF)

■ 4/30/2021 HEB (Richmond) — \$252.49 (DH)

■ 4/29/2021 Walmart Super Center (Sugar Land) — \$30.66 (NC)

■ 4/29/2021 Sam's Club (Sugar Land) — \$265.40 (NC)

■ 4/30/2021 Walmart Super Center (Wharton) — \$30.62 (NC)

■ 5/14/2021 Walmart Super Center (Richmond) — \$14.90 (NC)

■ 5/14/2021 Sam's Club (Richmond) — \$6.78 (NC)

■ 6/12/2021 Bath & Body Works (Rosenberg) — \$52.50 (CF)

■ 6/16/2021 Sam's Club (Sugar Land) — \$411.29 (DH)

■ 6/16/2021 HEB (Sugar Land) — \$188.24 (DH)

■ 6/16/2021 Sam's Club (Richmond) — \$216.20 (DH)

■ 6/16/2021 Sam's Club (Richmond) — \$5.37 (DH)

■ 6/16/2021 La Michoacana (Rosenberg) — \$208.96 (NC)

■ 6/17/2021 Sam's Club (Sugar Land) — \$122.20 (NC)

■ 6/30/2021 HEB (Wharton) — \$58.10 (CF)

■ 7/14/2021 Food Town (East Bernard) — \$180.00 (NC)

■ 07/24/2021 HEB Online — \$158.48 (NC)

■ 8/19/2021 Lowe's Market (East Bernard) — \$14.27 (NC)

■ 9/02/2021 HEB (Richmond) — \$93.47 (CF)

■ 9/02/2021 Walmart (Wharton) — \$8.66 (DH)

■ 9/09/2021 — HEB (Richmond) — \$45.01 (NC)

■ 10/03/2021 HEB (Richmond) — \$15.67 (CF)

■ 10/11/2021 Walmart.com — 6.88 (CF)

■ 10/23/2021 HEB (Richmond) — \$15.65 (CF)

■ 10/11/2021 Walmart.com — 6.88 (CF)

■ 11/01/2021 Lowe's Market (East Bernard) — \$47.34 (CF)

■ 11/12/2021 HEB (Richmond) — \$55.35 (CF)

■ 11/18/2021 HEB (Richmond) — \$47.96 (CF)

■ 12/08/2021 HEB (Richmond) — \$13.93 (CF)

■ 12/08/2021 Bath & Body Works (Rosenberg) — \$21.60 (CF)

■ 12/17/2021 Target (Rosenberg) — \$80.91 (CF)

■ 12/17/2021 Dollar Tree (Rosenberg) — \$20.30 (CF)

**TOTAL \$3,472.67**

(DH) 1,172.71

(CF) \$979.06

(NC) \$1,320.90

## 2022 credit card statements

■ 1/21/2022 Busy Bee's Flowers (Rosenberg) — \$112.00 (CF)

■ 1/21/2022 Busy Bee's Flowers (Rosenberg) — \$89.31 (CF)

■ 1/28/2022 Walmart.com — \$106.28 (CF)

■ 2/10/2022 Walmart.com — \$12.92 (CF)

■ 2/21/2022 Walmart Super Center (Richmond) — \$8.64 (CF)

■ 3/03/2022 Walmart.com — \$50.51 (CF)

■ 3/18/2022 Walmart.com — \$113.13 (CF)

■ 3/31/2022 Dollar General (Beasley) — \$48.71 (CF)

■ 4/01/2022 HEB (Richmond) — \$81.07 (CF)

■ 4/06/2022 Walmart.com — \$34.68 (CF)

■ 4/06/2022 Walmart.com — \$106.10 (CF)

■ 4/12/2022 Starbucks (Rosenberg) — \$5.14 (CF)

■ 4/16/2022 Walmart Super Center (Richmond) — \$74.69 (DH)

■ 5/01/2022 HEB (Richmond) — \$225.21 (CF)

■ 5/01/2022 HEB (Richmond) — \$9.58 (CF)

■ 5/01/2022 Dollar General (Beasley) — \$65.49 (CF)

■ 5/02/2022 HEB (Richmond) — \$14.96 (CF)

■ 5/11/2022 Sam's Club (Sugar Land) — \$78.65 (CF)

■ 5/17/2022 Dollar General (Rosenberg) — \$55.51 (CF)

■ 6/02/2022 HEB (Wharton) — \$79.87 (CF)

■ 6/08/2022 Dollar General (East Bernard) — \$30.31 (CF)

■ 6/09/2022 Walmart Super Center — \$58.75 (CF)

■ 6/15/2022 HEB Super Center (Wharton) — \$56.20 (DH)

■ 6/15/2022 Academy Sports (Rosenberg) — \$56.25 (DH)

■ 6/16/2022 Novak's Meat Market (El Campo) — \$239.95 (DH)

■ 6/16/2022 Sam's Club (Sugar Land) — \$337.06 (DH)

■ 6/17/2022 Sam's Club (Richmond) — \$381.06 (CF)

■ 6/17/2022 Arne's Party Store (Houston) — \$160