

# Former Middletown worker pleads in theft case

## Woman repays money police say she stole from city

By JESSICA BROWN  
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**HAMILTON** — A former Middletown finance department worker pleaded guilty Tuesday to a reduced theft charge and repaid nearly \$1,500 police said she stole from the city.

Bessie Sloan, 55, of 1613 Bonita Drive, entered into the

unannounced plea bargain Tuesday afternoon in Butler County Common Pleas Court. Judge Matthew Crehan suspended a six months jail sentence, instead sentencing the 28-year city employee immediately to probation and community service.

The original charge had been theft in office, a fifth-degree felony punishable by up to 12 months in prison. It was reduced in the plea deal to petty theft, a first-degree misdemeanor punishable by up to six months in jail.

Sloan's attorney, Clyde Ben-

nett, said his client agreed to the plea bargain to avoid the possibility of having a felony conviction on her record.

"(A misdemeanor) doesn't prohibit her occupation or her rights as a citizen," Bennett said.

Assistant prosecutor Lee Oldendick said the prosecution and the city of Middletown agreed to reduce the charge to a misdemeanor based on Sloan paying the full restitution up front.

Sloan was arrested in December 2004 after admitting she had stolen money from the city's

retired employees' life insurance accounts, police said. She told police she needed the money to pay for an auto transmission repair, according to testimony at a January preliminary hearing in Middletown Municipal Court.

On Dec. 17, 2004, Sloan gave notice of her intent to retire effective Dec. 31, personnel records showed. A warrant against Sloan was signed Dec. 27. She turned herself in to detectives Dec. 28.

Middletown Municipal Court Judge Mark Wall bound Sloan's case over to the grand jury.

However, on Tuesday Sloan waived her right to have the grand jury hear her case. Instead, she entered into the negotiated plea deal. Crehan suspended a six-month jail sentence against Sloan and sentenced her instead to one year probation, 120 hours of community service and fined her \$250.

Sloan is not prohibited from gaining other employment in the financial field.

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