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#### **(Neb)-Probation And \$500 Fine For Westemeier**

By: John Axtell Posted at: 01/12/2018 03:35 PM

CHADRON - A Chadron woman accused of stealing morphine pills from two residences in Crawford has been sentenced to a year's probation and fined \$500 for misdemeanor Criminal Trespass.

54-year old Traci Westemeier had faced up to a year in jail and a thousand dollar fine after pleading No Contest last month in a plea agreement.

Judge Travis O'Gorman also ordered Westemeier, a former respiratory therapist with Chadron Community Hospital and Health Services, to take a substance abuse course and a victim empathy course.

Westemeier was originally charged with 4 felonies - 2 counts each of possession of a controlled substance and of acquirement of a controlled substance by misrepresentation - and 5 misdemeanors - one count of criminal trespass and 2 each of criminal impersonation and theft.

Westemeier was accused of going into 2 Crawford homes and taking pills, allegedly telling individuals at each that she was there in connection with her job.

Special prosecutor Aaron Conn said in entering the plea agreement that since the original charges had been filed, witnesses had become unavailable for trial.

At sentencing this week, he told Judge O'Gorman that Westemeier didn't seem to acknowledge the direct and indirect impact her "invasion" of the most-private parts of their homes had on the victims. Conn said one victim spent a weekend in pain after her prescription pain medicine went missing.

He also said Westemeier is in denial that she has a substance abuse problem and that without acknowledging it, the chances of a relapse were high.

Defense attorney Amy Patras who had argued before the plea agreement that the state had failed to prove any crime had occurred, much less that Westemeier was responsible, complained to the judge that Conn was asking him to consider penalties that went well beyond their agreement.

Patras said Westemeier was a perfect candidate for probation who meets all the statutory requirements, had a previously clean criminal history, and was already acting on her own in taking some of the programs mentioned by Conn.