

A cooler stuffed with \$90,000 in cash was found in the parking lot of a local Harris Teeter Thursday morning. The N.C. State Bureau of Investigation is looking into possible drug-related connections to the money.

Security officers at the Harris Teeter at 1800 Airport Road found the cooler at 10 a.m. Thursday morning, according to police Chief Gregg Jarvies.

“The large, red cooler was filled with thick wads of stacked bills, along with some type of two-way radio,” Jarvies said.

The NCSBI has speculated that the money is drug-related. An agent from the Capital District of the NCSBI was scheduled to meet with Chapel Hill police Thursday afternoon to open an investigation. Special Agent in Charge Rick Sims was hesitant to give out information.

“Because of the large amount of money found all in cash, there is a likelihood that it’s drug-related,” Sims said. He added, “We’ll be interviewing supermarket employees and shoppers in the area to try to determine the source of the money.”

The manager of the Airport Road Harris Teeter, Jim Stefanadis, expressed concern regarding the incident. He was shocked by the idea that drug dealing could be occurring in the parking lot of his store.

“We have round-the-clock security in our parking lot, and I can assure our customers that we’ll get to the bottom of this,” Stefanadis said.

Shopper Mark Petty said, “You just never think that drug deals are going down at the grocery store in Chapel Hill, but I guess that’s what happened.”

The money is currently in the hands of police investigators. Anyone who attempts to claim the money will likely have to endure a lengthy conversation with police because of the amount of cash that is involved, according to Jarvies.

The fate of the money in the event that it is not claimed has yet to be determined. Jarvies said that neither the security officers nor the supermarket would be able to keep it.