

Farmington Observer & Eccentric

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Farmington Hills police embezzlement investigation shakes up department

By DAN MCCOSH

The Farmington Hills police department has been shaken by an investigation on an alleged embezzlement of an estimated \$1,900 in funds handled by the department.

As of Friday, Lt. William Kelly, the officer who originally discovered the money missing, was appealing a 12 day suspension given by Public Safety Director Ronald Holko, who charged Kelly with "breaking department rules" during the investigation.

Kelly's attorney, Robert C. Zack, who represents the Sergeant's and Lieutenants Assn., said Kelly "felt his report was being suppressed." As of Thursday, the day following his suspension, Zack said Kelly told him he "didn't know what was being done to investigate the matter."

THE MISSING money was a shortage in the receipts turned over to the city finance department.

The police department takes in approximately \$8,000 per year in fees, mainly from charges for copies of police reports going to insurance companies.

The money is taken in at the records bureau and is eventually transferred to the city treasurer's office.

Kelly was assigned to the records bureau in mid-February by Holko, from his former position as head of patrol.

There are three top administrative posts in the department, and Holko said it has been his policy to rotate the assignments to train his lieutenants in all phases of the operation.

Lt. Thomas Schriber took over Kelly's job on patrol.

ACCORDING TO ZACK, Kelly received a tip Friday, Feb. 22, that there was "money missing" from the records bureau receipts.

The following Monday, Kelly tallied the receipts in his department record book, and he felt the total did not agree with receipts turned into Finance Director Charles Rosch.

City Manager George Majors said at this point, he was informed of the discrepancy, and he and Rosch began an investigation to determine if deliberate alterations to the records had been made.

The finance department determined approximately \$1,900 was missing over a 14-month period, Majors said.

They discovered evidence the shortage was apparently deliberate on Tuesday, Majors said, and initiated an investigation.

"THERE IS REALLY no question a crime had been committed," Majors said.

He said Lt. Russell Cogway was directed to begin an internal investigation of the department. "Cogway was interviewing department employees when Kelly filed his report," Majors said.

The report referred to was an effort by Kelly to file a routine felony report on the case and enter it on the police log, a public record.

The reports and logs are normally handled in the records department, the same one which, according to Majors, was being investigated at that time.

Kelly's attorney said Kelly returned that evening and had found his report had been removed from a cadet's typewriter by the director, and the log entry removed. Holko said the log entry had been changed to "confidential," not removed.

"Kelly's primary motivation (in filing the official report) was he felt the matter was being suppressed," Zack said.

Kelly was suspended the following day by Holko for alleged violation of department rules. Holko said he would not comment on the charges, because an investigation and a probable grievance hearing was coming up.

He said Kelly had "released confidential information on an investigation," and for as the department was concerned there was no interference between an internal and a regular criminal investigation.

MAYOR ROBERT MCCONNELL confirmed council had been informed of the matter as early as Monday, and there was an immediate effort to investigate, not suppress, the embezzlement.

"We were attempting to act in a way to protect the public interest," he said.

The embezzlement investigation is proceeding, Holko said.

Two employees in the department have recently resigned, but there is no indication the resignations were connected with the embezzlement charges.

After Kelly came to Zack following his suspension, Zack, Kelly and fellow members of the police association filed a report on the matter with the state police department.

State police have assigned an investigation team to the case. Holko said the county prosecutor, the state police and the Hills department are now "cooperating" on the investigation.

Sources within the police department indicate a long-standing feud between the director and Kelly.

Holko acknowledged some disagreement, but added, "I don't have to like someone to work with him, as long as he does his job. That's the way I run the department."



How downtown Farmington looked in 1870

Grand River Ave. looked like this in 1870, two years before a fire leveled most of the buildings in the picture. The folks pictured are hanging about in front of Power's general store. Note the young man with the rifle as long as he is at the far left.

Complete sesquicentennial calendar is on 3A

Community center luncheon kicks off annual fund drive

The annual fund-raising drive for the Farmington Community Center, kicked off Monday, will be headed by Delos Hamlin and Mrs. Grace Richardson.

The drive is an effort to raise \$75,000 for the center, according to Robert Amori, president of the center board.

Hamlin was formerly known as "Mr. Oakland County" because of his long term with the Oakland County Board of Supervisors and the Oakland County DPW.

He served as mayor of the City of Farmington from 1942 to 1951, is a past master of the Masonic Lodge and a member of the Elks and Exchange Club. He has also served on many state committees.

Mrs. Richardson is currently serving as chairman of the Farmington Hills planning commission. She is also well known as a founder and former president of the Farmington Soroptimist Club. She helped incorporate the Farmington Town Hall series.

Brodhead will seek seat

State Rep. William M. Brodhead (D-Detroit) will seek the Democratic nomination for the 17th Congressional District seat currently held by U.S. Rep. Martha Griffiths (D-Farmington).

Mrs. Griffiths recently announced she will not seek reelection to the seat. The district includes northwest Detroit, Redford Township, Farmington, Farmington Hills and Southfield.

Brodhead, 32, was elected to the State House in 1970 as the first Democrat elected from his district and was reelected in 1972. He is chairman of the House committee on city govern-

ment and is a member of the committees on judiciary and labor.

Prior to his election, Brodhead was an attorney for the Detroit Dept. of Street Railways (DSR). He is a graduate of Wayne State University and the University of Michigan Law School.

"For two decades Martha Griffiths has served us admirably in Washington," Brodhead said, announcing his candidacy. "As a member of the House Ways and Means Committee, she has been one of the most influential forces in Congress. She will be deeply missed by all of us."

"The most important role that I perform as a legislator is listening to the suggestions and comments of my constituents and proposing and work-

ing for legislation to meet their needs," he continued. "As a congressman, I will continue my efforts to genuinely represent the interests of all citizens - not special interest groups."

Critical of present federal government policies, Brodhead said, "One only has to look at inflation, fuel shortages, and skyrocketing prices to see the disastrous effects of current economic policies."

"As workers are laid off in increasingly large numbers, as the fixed incomes of retirees dwindle, and as new Watergate-related scandals are revealed, we see more clearly the need to put government in order and focus our attention on the needs and problems of the average citizen."



MRS. GRACE RICHARDSON

are David McCabe, Herbert Shapiro, Earl Billings, Emil Coolidge, Richard Blakeney, and Robert Van Every. Organization section chairman is



DELOS HAMLIN

are Edwin Oglesby, and Mrs. Max Davey will contact churches. Publicity chairman is Richard Pryor.

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Observer & Eccentric has more local news

This is the first edition of the Farmington Observer & Eccentric. The change is more than just a new name for Farmington's local hometown newspaper.

Coming out on Mondays and Thursdays, there will be a bright new format and greatly expanded local news coverage.

We hope to continue the tradition of community news and service set by the Farmington Enterprise and by the Enterprise and Observer - nearly a hundred years of recording the happenings in Farmington.

The Farmington Observer & Eccentric will be published out of a new office currently occupied by the Southfield Observer & Eccentric, at 17388 W. 12 Mile Rd., just east of Southfield Rd., in Southfield.

Within a month, plans are to settle at 22170 W. Nile Mile Rd., near Lahser, a short drive from Farmington.

Our new staff includes Mrs. Lorraine McClish, who will edit the week-

en's pages; Carl Stoddard, and Nancy Stein. News editor is Dan McCosh.

Readers accustomed to our old ties with Wayne County will find a new emphasis on Oakland County affairs and surrounding communities, made possible by our new affiliation with the Eccentric group of newspapers.

The new Monday paper will feature more local personalities, local news and upcoming events for the week in Farmington.

The new editions will be published twice a week, on Mondays and Thursdays, a change from the current Wednesday - Friday publication schedule.

Sports fans will get details and pictures of weekend local prep contests on Monday, three days earlier than now.

"That adds up to an improved newspaper, both in size and quality, for the readers who have come to trust us," said co-publisher Philip H. Power.