



Fairfield Police Department



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PRESS RELEASE

Over the last several weeks the Fairfield Police Department has been conducting both an internal investigation and a separate criminal investigation into the misappropriation of drug evidence by a Police Detective within the organization.

This investigation has culminated in the arrest on a warrant today of Detective Stephen Rilling, age 40, on the charges of Computer Crime 3rd degree, Larceny in the 2nd degree, Forgery in the 2nd degree, Possession of Narcotics, False entry by an officer or agent of a Public Community and Tampering with evidence. He was processed and released after posting a \$5,000 court imposed bond.

The inappropriate actions came to the attention of the department on April 12 of 2017. Det. Rilling was placed on Administrative Leave pending the results of an ongoing internal investigation. A subsequent criminal investigation was initiated in conjunction with the State's Attorney's Office, when it was determined there was evidence of violations of law. The time frame of this misappropriation shows a period from June 2016 to February of 2017.

For over a year the Fairfield Police Detective Bureau has been gathering information and data mining the increased instances of Heroin overdoses. We have also assessed the number of possession arrests that our police department has made, to understand trends, dangers and actions to address the increases. Other agencies have also begun sharing such information with law enforcement agencies, since this trend is affecting all our communities. Significant information can be gained by legitimate follow up and analysis of packaging, quantity, markings, and make up of seized narcotics. We have reviewed our policy as it relates to this access for follow up, and have implemented additional stricter procedures with our evidence officer to ensure safeguards, in order to prevent the misappropriation of evidence by a single officer. These new protocols include

the requirement of supervisory approval, and dual signature for any follow up conducted regardless of assignment.

Additionally, the Chief ordered an audit of our evidence room, and revealed that with the exception of these cases affected by misappropriation, all other evidence was accounted for. No currency or other items of value were ever removed.

At no point was the structural integrity of our evidence room breached. Access to the evidence was through the property officer, who believed the removal was for valid and legitimate Law Enforcement purposes. At no point did anyone other than the property officer have direct access to our evidence room, nor was the chain of custody breached for cases unrelated to those cited.

We are working in close coordination with the States Attorney to determine a legal and proper disposition for those cases that were investigated and possibly affected by the misappropriation.

The Men and Women of the Fairfield Police Dept., both sworn and non-sworn, remain dedicated to serve this community with professionalism, integrity and honesty. This incident has troubled all of us within the organization, as we know it will the community as well. We pride ourselves on our openness and engagement with the community we serve. It was our responsibility to ensure that this incident was immediately addressed and investigated. That has been done. It remains our responsibility that we reaffirm to the Fairfield Community of our commitment to provide professional public safety

Because of the ongoing personnel matter and administrative investigation, we will have no further comments until these matters are adjudicated.

(See photo below)

