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3800 Municipal Way
Hilliard, Ohio 43026
(P) 614.876.7361
www.hilliardohio.gov

Don Schonhardt
Mayor

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City of Hilliard Media Contact

Anna Subler
614-334-2470
asubler@hilliardohio.gov

Former City Employee Indicted on Numerous Felony Charges

Hilliard (OH) — On Thursday, March 1st, former City employee Heather H. Ernst was indicted on eight felony counts by the Franklin County Grand Jury resulting from the investigation into missing cash deposits from fees collected at the City's two pools.

"Ms. Ernst abused her position of power to manipulate records and deceive the City's Finance Department in order to benefit herself," said Mayor Don Schonhardt. "Any violation of the public trust will result in that individual being prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law."

The investigation determined that the total daily cash proceeds from pool admission fees were not deposited in full by Ernst, and that she provided false information to the City to support the shortened or missing deposits. The investigation established that over a four-year period of time, Ernst stole approximately \$540,000 from the City's pools.

Ms. Ernst was employed by the City of Hilliard for 24 years until her resignation on Nov. 1, most recently serving as the Deputy Director of the Recreation and Parks Department from 2012 to the date of her resignation. In this position, she was responsible for the daily accounting of cash intakes and daily cash deposits for the City's two pools.

Charges against Ms. Ernst include: one count of theft, one count of theft in office, two counts of tampering with records and four counts of filing incomplete, false and fraudulent tax returns. The Hilliard Division of Police was aided in this investigation by the Ohio Auditor of State and the Ohio Department of Taxation.

The case will now move to the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas for prosecution. No further comments will be made by the City of Hilliard at this time.

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