

Charges against [REDACTED] dismissed

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ASHTABULA TOWNSHIP — Nearly four months after being indicted, three felony charges against former Buckeye Local Schools IT Coordinator [REDACTED] were dropped.

"When we did a public records request, we were able to use the school district's own public records to disprove the allegations that were made," [REDACTED] said.

[REDACTED] was indicted on charges of extortion, a third-degree felony, unauthorized use of computer cable or telecommunications property, a fourth-degree felony, and attempted grand theft, a fifth-degree felony on April 7. He was served on Tuesday, April 19, and was arraigned on Monday, April 25.

[REDACTED] left Ashtabula Area City Schools for Buckeye in 2017 before taking on additional duties in 2021. The charges stem from the time he left AACCS.

Following a motion by the state of Ohio, the case was dismissed without prejudice on Aug. 9.

"As you know, Ashtabula Area City Schools accused Mr. [REDACTED] of extortion and he was charged with multiple felonies," [REDACTED]'s attorney, Joseph Randy Klammer, said in a statement. "AACCS misrepresented that he illegally accessed the school's property during his employment. A simple call to AACCS human resources would have proven that Mr. [REDACTED]'s last day was nearly six weeks earlier. The agenda for the June 8, 2017, meeting of the AACCS Board of Education and Mr. [REDACTED]'s resignation letter proved as much. Both AACCS and the local FBI agent should be ashamed for not doing any investigation."

[REDACTED] signed a letter of termination with the Buckeye Local Schools Board of Education, ending his employment there, after the charges were filed.

"Because of those misrepresentations, he was indicted," Klammer said in the statement. "Only after we uncovered all of AACCS' own records were all the felonies dismissed. Mr. [REDACTED] agreed to pay a \$250 fine for the lowest level misdemeanor to move on with his life. No one should have had to go through what Mr. [REDACTED] and his wife had to go through. Mr. [REDACTED] is a great person and was a great employee. If AACCS is responsible for teaching our children to be responsible adults, this is the time for AACCS to apologize to Mr. [REDACTED] and his wife."

They believe [REDACTED]'s career in education may be irrevocably harmed as a result of the charges that were brought against him.

"It's been the worst experience of my life," [REDACTED] said. "It's one thing if you do a crime you are accused of and get caught, but to be accused of doing a crime you didn't commit and it cost you your career and public humiliation is an experience I wouldn't wish on anybody."

Despite the charges being dismissed, it is unlikely [REDACTED] will be able to return to his job with Buckeye Local Schools, most likely ending his career in public education. He was just six-and-a-half years away from retirement.

"I signed a separation agreement," [REDACTED] said. "It prohibits me from returning to work for them under any circumstances. Less than four months later and it's done. Nothing would have cost me my job (if the charges had never been filed)."

See [REDACTED] page 19A