

# **Embezzler Pleads Guilty**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April 11, 2013**

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A long-time supporter of the Springboro Athletics Booster Association, who had served on its board as President and most recently as Treasurer, pled guilty to embezzling over \$400,000 from that organization over a period of eight years.

Thomas Harves, 61, of Springboro, pled guilty to one count of aggravated theft, a felony of the third degree, in the Warren County Common Pleas Court. Judge James Flannery ordered a presentence investigation and set sentencing for a later date.

In the spring of 2012, board members of the Springboro Boosters brought discrepancies in the organization's bank accounts to the attention of the Springboro Police Department. Working in conjunction with a forensic accountant employed by the Ohio Bureau of Identification and Investigation, authorities determined Harves signed, endorsed, and cashed over 300 unauthorized checks from the Springboro Boosters' operating account. The investigation disclosed Harves took \$439,455.73 from the Springboro Boosters between 2004 and 2012.

The investigation also disclosed Harves made periodic payments back to the organization in the total amount of \$281,572.00, including a lump sum payment of \$143,390.43 in June 2012 when he was confronted by board members of the Springboro Boosters.

Harves was regarded as a loyal member of the Springboro Boosters, having been involved with the organization for over two decades. He was given the sole authority to sign checks, entrusted with the duty to reconcile the accounts, and given total control over the financial affairs of the organization. The investigation disclosed he betrayed that trust by falsifying reports to school and board officials and manipulating deposits in an effort to cover his thefts. Investigators discovered no evidence to suggest that any other board members, school officials, or citizens were involved in Harves' plot to embezzle funds from the Springboro Boosters.

Warren County Prosecutor David Fornshell complimented Detective Terry Dunkel of the Springboro Police Department, Leo Fernandez of the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation, and Assistant Prosecutor John Arnold for their work on the case. He was also mindful of the circumstances encountered by the Springboro Boosters. "Out of necessity,

organizations such as non-profits, churches, charities, and similar groups rely almost exclusively on volunteers to conduct their day-to-day financial business transactions,” said Fornshell. “Unfortunately, opportunities exist for those volunteers to misappropriate funds if inadequate accounting systems are in place. This case illustrates why board members of any organization should closely examine their accounting and bookkeeping procedures and implement safeguards to prevent embezzlement from occurring,” he added.



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