Press Release

Attorney General Kane announces charges against Exeter Township officials

5/15/2015

HARRISBURG – Attorney General Kathleen G. Kane today announced charges against four Exeter Township officials: supervisors John E. Coolbaugh, Richard E. Overman, James W. Douse, and current secretary and former supervisor Mary F. Martin.

The case was referred to the Office of Attorney General by the Luzerne County District Attorney due to lack of resources.

According to the criminal complaint, Exeter Township applied for and received a grant of $50,400 from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) towards the cost of erecting a prefabricated EMS building in 2006.

The investigation revealed that the Defendants spent nearly $17,000 on contractors with whom they had personal relationships, and who had significantly inflated their bills and billed for services and materials unrelated to the project. The Defendants then cancelled the project with only a stone pad area constructed.

Defendants Dowse and Overman reported hours of labor at the EMS building site in 2007 which evidence shows they did not actually perform.

In 2008, the Defendants are alleged to have signed a letter to DCED containing false statements to conceal the misuse of the DCED grant.

Additional evidence was developed indicating that in 2014, Defendant Coolbaugh manipulated the bidding process for the township purchase of a leaf vacuum by providing confidential information about other bids to a favored vendor.

John E. Coolbaugh

Coolbaugh was arrested on Friday, May 15, 2015 and charged with one count each of tampering with public records, conspiracy to commit tampering with public records, unsworn falsification to authorities, failure to report required information on multiple Statements of Financial Interests and bid rigging.

Richard E. Overman

Overman was arrested on Friday, May 15, 2015 and charged with one count each of tampering with public records, conspiracy to commit tampering with public records, unsworn falsification to authorities, failure to report required information on multiple Statements of Financial Interests and bid rigging.
records, conspiracy to commit tampering with public records, unsworn falsification to authorities and theft by deception.

**James W. Dowse**

Dowse was arrested on Friday, May 15, 2015 and charged with one count each of tampering with public records, conspiracy to commit tampering with public records, unsworn falsification to authorities, failure to report required information on multiple Statements of Financial Interests and theft by deception.

**Mary F. Martin**

Martin was arrested on Friday, May 15, 2015 and charged with tampering with public records, conspiracy to commit tampering with public records and unsworn falsification to authorities.

The case will be prosecuted by Senior Deputy Attorney General Barony Anderson of the Office of Attorney General's Criminal Prosecutions Section.

(A person charged with a crime is presumed innocent until proven guilty.)