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INVESTIGATIVE REPORT: \$17K youth football embezzlement scheme

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Prince Frederick, MD – Former Prince Frederick Eagles' Football Coordinator Corey Sollers was indicted, on June 20, 2019 for theft and

embezzlement, allegedly stealing just over \$17K from the youth organization. Sollers is suspected of abusing his powers while overseeing the Eagles' finances in the absence of a treasurer.

The public was given a look into the investigation after former PFE President Antoine White was charged with misdemeanor theft for misusing \$116 of the Eagles' money for personal expenses.

Both White and Sollers were at the forefront of an investigation into the organization, alleging a gross misuse of funds and betrayal by Sollers, all presumably under the nose of the organization's figurehead and leader in White.

The details that follow come from an investigation by the Calvert County Sheriff's Office. The charging documents outline the alleged events that transpired but both Sollers and White are innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. Keep in mind that all actions depicted in this article are allegations, pending a conviction.

November 11, 2018 was the culmination of a month of turmoil in the Eagles' organization. Then PFE President Antoine White struggled to maintain control of a contentious group of parents, criticizing him for abusing his powers and unilaterally removing board members.

Seated next to him was Football Coordinator Corey Sollers who passed out spreadsheets with falsified financial information to the room, according to the CCSO investigation reports.

The report continues to read that the organization's members had been requesting financial statements from White and Sollers for weeks and the impromptu documents didn't satisfy. Discrepancies were immediately found, questioned and answers weren't given.

Two months later, White and Sollers found themselves ostracized from the organization, suspended for "various bylaw offenses."

The board seized control of the PFE bank account and two members, Michael Ebey and Joseph Lembo, presented the information they were able to gather to the sheriff's office, prompting an investigation.

According to the CCSO investigative report, it didn't take long to notice suspicious activities on the account.

Immediately after gaining access to the bank statements, charges from Expedia, Verizon, Xbox, and Amazon stood out to the investigator.

As the investigator continued to dig and gather information through subpoenas and Ebey, a clear picture emerged of what happened.

Problems began for the Eagles on April 20, 2018 when treasurer Sherry Mansfield left the organization, according to the investigation.

When asked during an interview with the CCSO her reason for leaving, Mansfield chuckled and proceeded to describe an organization "not going in the right direction" being led by "headstrong males" who would cause drama if they didn't get their way.

Mansfield's departure relinquished the organization's financial responsibilities to Sollers, with White as the only other board member with access to them.

According to the charges and investigation, everything was above board for three months, until Sollers was given a card connected to the PFE bank account.

Soon after, he purchased what would end up being his most expensive personal charge, a \$1,000 Jamaican trip.

Sollers began "using the PFE card like a personal card... subsidizing his own card with the PFE card," the charging documents read in part.

From August through December, the investigation reports read, Sollers paid phone bills, cable bills, for gas, video games, the Jamaican vacation, home improvement items, and a multitude of other miscellaneous charges.

On several occasions, Sollers went to the bank, withdrew money from the PFE account, turned around, and deposited that money straight into his personal bank account.

The charging documents read in part that Sollers' "financial situation was not

the best,” concluding that it “appears Sollers has an overspending problem,” citing thousands of dollars in overdraft fees on his personal bank account.

The investigator later explained that he “had no idea what [he] was getting into” when he started the case.

While collecting and compiling evidence for the case, both White and Sollers continually questioned the sheriff's office's investigation.

At one point, White reported a fraud on his business account in “an attempt to deceive with the intent to cause an investigation or other action to be taken.”

White also accused the investigator of purposefully stalling the investigation, conspiring with the other board members to harm his public image so he wouldn't be reelected as PFE President.

Around the time of his complaint, the Eagles were getting ready for their 2019 board elections that saw White voted out in favor of Mike Ebey, one of the members that brought the evidence to the CCSO initially.

The investigation that began at the end of January didn't bring Sollers or White in for an interview for months — waiting to collect information and working with the new president in Ebey. In May, the sheriff's office felt they had gathered enough information to sit down with Sollers and White.

In his interview, Sollers explained he had been involved in the organization for seven years total, including three as a commissioner.

Even though Sollers oversaw the Eagles' finances for close to eight months, he stated that he “never once saw any bank statements.”

Sollers began the interview explaining various expenses, even alleging he'd used \$4,000 of his own money for the organization.

After the evidence of his personal spending was presented to him, Sollers threw out a multitude of excuses, according to the CCSO investigation.

He claimed his children used the card, spending over \$400 on Xbox games, but quickly walked back on the statement saying it was his fault for saving the card on the gaming console.

The former coordinator also attempted to use Apple Pay to explain how he could unknowingly use the PFE card.

Apple pay allows one to save credit or debit card information onto your iPhone. Sollers said he saved the card to the app and thought he was using his personal card for the Jamaican trip, charges at convenience stores, gas stations, and those used for home improvement.

The investigator quickly cast doubt on that fact after the interview, to use the function, one must manually select the desired card making his claim he unknowingly used it unlikely.

The investigator was also able to obtain security footage that further delegitimized Sollers' claim, showing him using the PFE card, not Apple Pay, for personal purchases on multiple occasions.

Before the interview finished, Sollers picked up his cell phone to send a message. He reached out to newly elected PFE President Mike Ebey and reiterated what he told the investigator.

He insisted he'd never knowingly use PFE money and pleaded with Ebey to allow him to take out a loan to pay back the organization.

Ebey later realized the irony in his plea, telling the investigator that he recalled a conversation he'd had with Sollers about how "no one accidentally uses the wrong card."

Sollers, the Multimedia Specialist for the U.S. Department of Commerce, told Ebey that he'd had a government credit card for years.

Just a day later, the CCSO had their first interview with White. The charging document states that White was initially very defensive like he'd been throughout the investigation.

However, that all changed when the former president of three years saw the evidence that Sollers was abusing his access to the account.

The document reads in part that White's "whole attitude changed" after. His posture visibly shifted, and he became more open and cooperative.

White expressed that he genuinely thought the investigation was a “witch hunt,” but now he just felt betrayed by his friend.

As the investigation wound down, a search of Sollers’ and White’s correspondence over the phone, email, and other mediums backed up White’s claim he was unaware of Sollers spending.

The investigation was unable to find any evidence that “anyone, including White, knew Sollers was stealing PFE money.”

The investigation finally concluded on June 27, five months after it began.

The investigator concluded that “Sollers has used over \$17,000 (\$17,230.48) from the PFE [bank] account for his own gain.”

It also determined that White used “\$116 for the PFE [bank] account for his personal gain,” and that White “provided a written false statement.”

White admitted during his interview that he used his PFE card for gas and to pay for his coaching certification around August of 2018.

Sollers Jury Trial date is set for October.

TheBayNet will continue to provide updates on the ongoing case.

To read how PFE’s new president, Mike Ebey, is rebuilding the organization and its image, check out our article [here](#).

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