

Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
District of Massachusetts

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Former Boston Police Sergeant Charged With Overtime Fraud Scheme

Defendant is the 12th officer to be charged

BOSTON – A former Boston Police Sergeant has been charged and has agreed to plead guilty in connection with an ongoing investigation of overtime fraud at the Boston Police Department's evidence warehouse.

William Baxter, 61, of Hyde Park, was charged with one count of conspiracy to commit theft concerning programs receiving federal funds and one count of embezzlement from an agency receiving federal funds. Baxter will make an initial appearance in federal court in Boston at a later date.

According to charging documents, members of Boston Police Department's (BPD) Evidence Control Unit (ECU), were responsible for, among other things, storing, cataloging and retrieving evidence at the warehouse. ECU officers were eligible to earn overtime pay of 1.5 times their regular hourly pay rate for overtime assignments. It is alleged that, beginning in at least March 2015, members of the ECU routinely departed overtime shifts two or more hours early, and submitted false and fraudulent overtime slips claiming to have worked the entirety of each shift.

One such shift, called "purge" overtime, was focused on reducing the inventory of the evidence warehouse. The shift was supposed to be performed from 4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. on weekdays. According to charging documents, on days during which Baxter and other members of the ECU claimed to have worked until 8:00 p.m., the warehouse was closed, locked and alarmed well before 8:00 p.m., and often at 6:00 p.m. or earlier. Despite this, Baxter and, allegedly, other members of the ECU routinely submitted false and fraudulent overtime slips, claiming to have worked until 8:00 p.m. It is alleged that supervisors such as Baxter, who also left early from this shift, submitted their own false and fraudulent slips and knowingly endorsed the fraudulent overtime slips of their subordinates.

Another shift, called "kiosk" overtime, occurred once a month on Saturdays and involved collecting materials from kiosks located in each of the city's police districts and transporting it to an incinerator in Saugus. It is alleged that Baxter and other officers routinely submitted overtime slips claiming to have worked eight-and-one-half hours. However, officers frequently completed the necessary work early, often within four hours, and falsely and fraudulently claimed eight-and-one-half hours.

According to charging documents, between March 2015 and June 2016, Baxter personally collected approximately \$9,223 for overtime hours he did not work.

From 2015 through 2019, BPD received annual benefits from the U.S. Department of Transportation and U.S. Department of Justice in excess of \$10,000, which were funded pursuant to numerous federal grants.

Baxter is the 12th officer to be charged in the investigation of overtime fraud at the evidence warehouse. In September 2020, nine current and former officers were arrested and charged. Four defendants, including Baxter, have now pleaded guilty or have agreed to do so.

The charge of embezzlement from an agency receiving federal funds provides for a sentence of up to 10 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss. The charge of conspiracy provides for a sentence of up to five years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

Acting United States Attorney Nathaniel R. Mendell; Russell W. Cunningham, Special Agent in Charge of the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General, Washington Field Office; and Joseph R. Bonavolonta, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division made the announcement today. Assistant U.S. Attorney Mark Grady of Mendell's Public Corruption & Special Prosecutions Unit is prosecuting the case.

The details contained in the charging documents are allegations. The remaining defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.