



BOROUGH OF HATBORO

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For Immediate Release – Thursday, May 17, 2012

Former Hatboro Police Sergeant John C. Becker was arrested on May 17, 2012 and charged with Theft and related charges, as contained in a Criminal Complaint filed by the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office.

Sergeant Becker joined the Hatboro Police Department in 1994 and was promoted to Corporal in 2000 and Sergeant in 2003. Sergeant Becker served on the Montgomery County Drug Task Force and the Emergency Response Team and received numerous commendations for outstanding police work. He resigned from the force in June 2011.

Summary of Events:

- January 2011 – Hatboro Chief of Police James Gardner was notified by Bucks County Detectives that Sergeant Becker had attempted to purchase Controlled Substances in Warminster Township. The attempt to purchase Controlled Substances occurred off duty and was not authorized as part of a police investigation.
- Sergeant Becker was interviewed by the Bucks County Detectives in March 2011, and admitted to the attempted purchase of drugs and also admitted taking drugs from the Hatboro Police Department evidence room. Sergeant Becker was the department evidence custodian and had full access to all evidence.
- Sergeant Becker was immediately suspended without pay by Mayor Norman Hawkes. Borough Council upheld the indefinite suspension on March 14, 2011.
- The Hatboro Police Department, with the assistance of the Montgomery County Detectives, conducted a complete inventory and audit of the police evidence room following Sergeant Becker's admission, and determined the following evidence missing:
 - Over \$18,000 in United States currency.
 - Various amounts of Controlled Substances.
 - Jewelry - one watch valued at \$2,700.
 - Ten (10) Firearms.
- Montgomery County Detectives began the criminal investigation into the theft from the evidence room following Sergeant Becker's admission, and then referred the investigation to the PA Attorney General's Office.

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We are confident that no amount of planning could have predicted the actions which Sergeant Becker undertook to compromise the integrity of the Police Department evidence room, or his oath of office. Once discovered, the Borough moved swiftly to revise our evidence room policies, to tighten controls and to model our evidence room policy to state accreditation standards.

Due to the continuing criminal investigation into this incident which began in January 2011, the Borough of Hatboro was unable to disclose details of this incident to the public until the investigation was complete and criminal charges were filed.

We are saddened and outraged that Sergeant Becker violated the public trust and tarnished the badge worn by the dedicated and professional members of our Police Department.

Moving forward, our citizens should know that Mayor Hawkes and Borough Council have complete confidence in our Chief of Police and the officers who serve our Borough and keep our community safe every day.

Any and all inquiries or requests for further information regarding this incident should be directed to Hatboro Borough Manager Steven Plaugher at 215-443-9100; Email: splaugher@hatborogov.org