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White Co. officer in court for sexually abusing minor

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WHITE CO., IL (WFIE) -- A White Co., Illinois corrections officer was in court Monday on charges of aggravated criminal sexual abuse.

39-year-old Phillip Lowery is accused of sexually abusing a four-year-old girl at his Carmi home.

A jury was selected for the trial Monday and the first witnesses were called to the stand.

Lowery has been on unpaid administrative leave from the jail since his arrest in July 2012.

The trial is expected to last through the week.

It was supposed to start in February but was delayed following allegations of inappropriate communication between a defense witness and potential juror.

35-year-old Melissa Kittinger, a dispatcher with the sheriff's office, has since been charged with two counts of unlawful communication with a juror.

She's on paid suspension until further notice.

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