

Former police lieutenant pleads guilty to sex assault charge : Wsj

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Dennis Jenks, left, talks with Assistant Public Defender David Klauser during a court appearance in February 2013.

A former Mount Horeb police lieutenant pleaded guilty Monday to repeated sexual assault of a child, for his months-long sexual relationship with a 14-year-old boy who moved into his Madison apartment.

Under a plea agreement, prosecutors will ask for no more than 15 years in prison for Dennis P. Jenks, 45, who was arrested on Feb. 13, 2013, after his

relationship with the boy was discovered during the investigation of another sex assault case also involving the boy.

The plea agreement also called for the dismissal of 32 other felonies, including sexual exploitation and possession of child pornography, but Dane County Circuit Judge Ellen Berz can take those charges into consideration when she sentences Jenks on April 21.

Jenks still faces a federal charge of sexual exploitation of a child. But his lawyer, Nicholas Rifelj, told Berz that under an agreement with federal prosecutors, the federal charge would be dismissed if Jenks receives at least 15 years in prison in the state case.

A 15-year sentence is the mandatory minimum for the federal exploitation charge, but because both the state and federal charges arise from the same actions, Jenks could only be given overlapping sentences, not consecutive state and federal sentences.

Jenks resigned from his job with Mount Horeb police after he was charged with sexual assault.

According to a criminal complaint, the boy, a runaway, moved into Jenks' apartment in October 2012 after meeting on an Internet chat website.

In the meantime, neighbors of James "Alex" Gillespie, a former church music director, complained to police about parties at Gillespie's home in Middleton. During their investigation, police learned that the 14-year-old boy had been having sex with Gillespie, and that the boy was living with Jenks at the time.

That information led to Jenks' arrest.

In October, Gillespie was sentenced to 15 years of probation, with one year in jail as part of his probation. He is still serving the jail portion of his sentence.

Jenks could be sentenced to up to 25 years in prison with 15 years of extended supervision for the repeated sexual assault of a child conviction.