



Former Augusta police officer ordered to lifetime supervision

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AUGUSTA, Kan. -- A former Augusta police officer has been sentenced in connection to a child sex crime.

Last July, Augusta Public Safety Officer Jerry Ballinger was arrested on two counts of Aggravated Indecent Liberties with a Child. The alleged crimes happened in Butler county between April and July of 2013.

He was bound over for trial in August, but pleaded guilty in February to one count of attempted aggravated indecent liberties with a child.

Jerry Ballinger entered a plea agreement in February with the county attorney. Instead of facing two counts of aggravated indecent liberties with a child, Ballinger plead guilty to one count attempted aggravated indent liberties. That left Judge Ricke the option of sentencing Ballinger to probation or prison time. After reading through a psychological evaluation of Ballinger, Ricke ordered him to 5 years probation.

"While Ballinger received a lesser charge and the benefits of sentencing through plea bargaining, the actual circumstance are egregious," said Judge David Ricke in court Monday afternoon.

"His compliment of such treatment will reduce his likelihood of recidivism and the problems that resulted more so than prison," said Ricke.

Prosecutor Cheryl Pierce says her argument that Ballinger was a law enforcement officer and his victim was a middle school student should have been enough for prison time.





"I have nothing but respect for Judge Ricke," said Pierce. "He made a decision what he thought was best for the community and the victim."

The defense argued Ballinger should not have to be under state supervision for the rest of his life if he violates probation, saying the law was unconstitutional. The judge disagreed and ordered it as part of the sentence. Ballinger will also have to register as a lifetime sex offender and go through a treatment program.

He had been an officer in Augusta since 1997.



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