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May 05, 2014 3:14PM

## Peoria police officer arrested again, now faces child porn charges

PEORIA — A Peoria police officer faces child pornography charges less than two months after a jury acquitted him of sexually assaulting an adult woman.

John McCavitt, 32, 1710 W. Westaire Ave., already has been released from the Peoria County Jail after posting \$5,000 bond on seven counts of aggravated child pornography and three counts of possession of child porn. Illicit images allegedly were found while Peoria police were investigating an alleged sexual assault last July.

The charges were handed down April 23 but sealed until Monday, when McCavitt turned himself in to the Peoria County Sheriff's Office.

Kevin Sullivan, who represents McCavitt, said his client denies the charges.

“My client denies he’s ever downloaded, received or viewed child pornography,” he said.

State’s Attorney Jerry Brady declined to comment, saying the matter was a pending case and a pending investigation.

According to the charges, McCavitt had possession of some or all of the images from April 2011 until January 2013. An affidavit for a search warrant, which was filed in the Peoria County Circuit Clerk’s Office on Monday, indicated two images involved girls ages 6 and 10. In all, the search warrant stated, 53 images allegedly were found to be in McCavitt’s possession.

Investigators also allegedly found evidence of McCavitt using search engines to find child porn as well as him visiting child porn Web sites.

It’s the third time McCavitt, a veteran of the Peoria Police Department since 2007, has faced charges. He initially was charged with sexual assault but was acquitted in March.

In that case, he was accused of assaulting a woman he had been out drinking with last July. The victim told jurors she went to sleep and woke up in restraints. She then told jurors she was assaulted by McCavitt, who said the sex was consensual.

Then, last month, he was accused of unauthorized videotaping for allegedly recording a different woman in March 2013.

Those charges as well as the child pornography counts came about through an internal department investigation which began after McCavitt was acquitted. That’s standard procedure for the Police Department, which waits until a criminal case has concluded before conducting its own internal investigation.

The affidavit also alleged that investigators found images of partially naked women as well as men and women using a bathroom; facts that appear to go with the unauthorized videotaping counts.

A grand jury has not met to hear the allegations against McCavitt on the videotaping charges, which carry a possible three-year prison term.

The child porn charges are more serious and could send McCavitt to prison for up to seven years. He is scheduled to be arraigned on the counts on May 22.

McCavitt was moved from paid to unpaid leave on Monday, pending the outcome of the criminal cases and any subsequent internal investigation, said Sullivan.

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John McCavitt