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Official charges have yet to be filed against a Cortez police officer arrested last week under suspicion of sexual contact involving a minor.

Shackled and donning a khaki Montezuma County jail uniform, officer Ryan Carter, 29, kept his head bowed when making his initial court appearance before County Court Judge JenniLynn Lawrence on Monday, July 14.

Carter was arrested on Friday, July 11, and remains in the Montezuma County jail.

Lawrence told Carter he was under investigation on charges of sexual contact of a minor by a person in a position of trust, and set a hearing for filing of charges at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, July 23.

Prosecutors told Lawrence that Carter's alleged sex crimes were "egregious," stating the case involved multiple incidents involving an underage girl.

District Attorney Will Furse said his office is still considering charges.

According to Carter's arrest warrant, a Montezuma County sheriff's deputy learned of the alleged sex crimes after a NEST Child Advocacy Center team meeting on Thursday, July 10. The warrant revealed that the girl, now 15, confided to a friend while on a camping trip last month that she lost her virginity to Carter, stating that they had unprotected, consensual sex on three occasions.

During a forensics interview last week, the girl told a Montezuma County Child Protective Services caseworker that the first sexual encounter occurred on June 19. The warrant revealed the incident occurred while on a nighttime security shift inside Carter's vehicle near Yellow Jacket. The girl reported two additional incidents, the latest in her bedroom on July 7.

The arrest warrant also indicates that Carter and the girl engaged in inappropriate text message conversations, and Carter reportedly told her that she couldn't tell anyone about the sex, because "he would lose his job" and "not be able to see his kids."

When interviewed by a Colorado Bureau of Investigations agent last week, Carter denied the allegations. He consented to a search of his cell phone and County Road 29 residence, the warrant stated.

At Monday's hearing, Lawrence issued a protection order for the teen girl, and instructed Carter not to have contact with any child under the age of 18, including his own. If released, Carter must vacate his residence, cease possession of any firearm or ammunition and undergo sobriety monitoring for alcohol and drugs.

Also on Monday, prosecutors informed the court that Carter had a criminal history, including a

deferred sentence in judgment in a 2007 domestic violence case.

Citing the serious nature of the charges, Lawrence granted a prosecution request not to lower Carter's \$100,000 bond, adding that she was surprised to learn about his background.

With the Cortez Police Department since 2011, Carter was immediately placed on administrative leave, said Cortez Police Lt. Andy Brock.

According to Brock, all potential police officers undergo a criminal background check. After CBI cleared Carter for his law enforcement certification, Brock said the police department "felt he was a viable candidate."

A Class 3 felony carries a maximum 24-year prison sentence and \$750,000 fine.