

West Manchester officer charged with child porn

Gordon Rago , grago@ydr.com

ydr.com

2017 Cop Pedophile Chad Howell

A West Manchester Township Police officer was charged Thursday with possessing child pornography, according to the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General.

Early Thursday, agents with the AG's office spoke with Chad Howell as he was getting off duty at the police station. Agents also went to his Dillsburg home to execute a search warrant and to seize electronic devices.

Howell, 36, is facing 50 felony counts of child pornography along with criminal use of a communication facility. The police department declined to comment, pointing questions to the AG's office.

Kelly Kelch, West Manchester Township manager, said the investigation is ongoing, deferring questions to the AG's office.

Howell has been placed on unpaid administrative leave, pending the investigation, according to Kelch.

In an emailed statement, Attorney General Josh Shapiro said his office would prosecute the case to the "fullest extent of the law."

"The fact that the defendant is in a position of public trust is especially concerning," Shapiro said.

According to charging documents, the AG's office received reports from the social media site Pinterest that one of its users had uploaded explicit images of minors. The images were uploaded between October and November of 2016.

The usernames included "chad7262" and "howellycpd" and were linked to email addresses that also included Howell's last name. There were a total of 11 images.

The AG's office said three other images were uploaded in 2013, which they confirmed were of child pornography and were uploaded by a user "howell103," documents state.

On Feb. 6, agents received back information from a subpoena on two Internet Protocol numbers from Verizon linked to the images uploaded to Pinterest. Verizon gave a home address listed for Howell, documents state. An IP address is used by computers or devices to identify hosts and networks connected to the Internet.

The images uploaded by Howell's Pinterest account are explicit in nature and depict girls between the ages of 8 and 15, according to documents.

Interview at police station

As agents were executing the search warrant of Howell's home, the office was also interviewing him at the West Manchester Township police station on East Berlin Road.

The office met with the department's chief, Arthur Smith Jr., to "facilitate a meeting with Howell as he was getting off duty," according to documents.

Two investigators spoke with Howell in a separate room in the station around 5:50 a.m.

Howell agreed to speak with them. He told the AG's office that there are four laptops and three tablets at his home, along with his cellphone. Howell gave consent for agents to search his cellphone and his personal laptop, which he had brought with him to the police department.

In viewing his phone, an agent found that there were 50 images of apparent child pornography, documents state.

Howell also confirmed that he used three of four usernames listed in charging documents as the ones linked to the Pinterest account.

The AG's office told Howell about the reports they received from Pinterest and agents asked him if they would retrieve images of child pornography on his computer or phone.

His response, agents wrote in documents, was: "I would like to say no, but I really don't know."

Howell had bail set on his case at \$25,000. He was taken to York County Prison after an initial arraignment. An attorney was not listed on his online court record case.

A preliminary hearing has been scheduled for April 24 at District Judge Keith Albright's office.