



# Department of Justice

## United States Attorney Anne M. Tompkins Western District of North Carolina

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CONTACT: Lia Bantavani  
704-338-3140  
[Lia.Bantavani@usdoj.gov](mailto:Lia.Bantavani@usdoj.gov)

### **FORMER MINT HILL FIRE CHIEF AGREES TO PLEAD GUILTY TO PUBLIC CORRUPTION**

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – The former Fire Chief of the Mint Hill Volunteer Fire Department has agreed to plead guilty to embezzling more than \$225,000 from the Town of Mint Hill and the Fire Department, announced Anne M. Tompkins, U.S. Attorney for the Western District of North Carolina.

U.S. Attorney Tompkins is joined in making today's announcement by Roger A. Coe, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Charlotte Division.

According to a one-count felony charge filed today in U.S. District Court in Charlotte, Jeremy K. Russell, 38, of Mint Hill, N.C., used his position as Fire Chief to steal and embezzle from the Town of Mint Hill, the Mint Hill Volunteer Fire Department, and the taxpayers who supported those institutions. The filed criminal bill of information alleges that Russell carried out the embezzlement from May 2010 to April 2012, primarily by setting up a sham corporation, "Regional Medic & First Responder Supply Connection" ("Regional Medic"), with a corresponding bank account in Regional Medic's name that Russell personally controlled. Russell also arranged for a mail drop in Regional Medic's name. According to the court document, Russell submitted bogus invoices from Regional Medic for equipment and services never provided to the Fire Department. Russell generally kept the invoices to amounts under \$5,000 and got the corresponding checks signed off by those at the Town and Fire Department with payment authority. According to the charging document, Russell picked up the checks at the mail drop and then deposited them into the bank account in Regional Medic's name. Russell embezzled in this manner more than \$225,000 in less than two years from the Town and the Mint Hill Volunteer Fire Department, which is a public organization receiving benefits in excess of \$10,000 in federal assistance. According to the bill of information, Russell used the money to fund his personal lifestyle and a gambling habit.

According to the plea agreement also filed today, Russell has agreed to plead guilty to the embezzlement charge. As part of the plea agreement, which will be subject to court approval, Russell has also agreed to pay restitution to all victims directly or indirectly harmed by the defendant's relevant conduct.

The embezzlement offense carries a maximum term of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. The defendant's initial appearance and plea hearing will be scheduled by the U.S. District Court at a time to be determined.

The investigation was handled by the FBI. The prosecution for the government is being handled by Assistant United States Attorney Kurt W. Meyers of the U.S. Attorney's Office in Charlotte.

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