

**NEWS**

# Stearns sheriff's sergeant faces new charges in criminal sexual conduct case

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Four more criminal sexual conduct charges have been filed against a Stearns County sheriff's sergeant accused of providing alcohol to three juveniles and sexually assaulting them.

Phillip Jerome Meemken, 40, now faces 22 felony sex assault charges and three misdemeanors accusing him of providing alcohol to minors and child endangerment.

Meemken has been free since posting bail shortly after his first court appearance on the original 21 charges filed against him. He is scheduled to be in Stearns County District Court today for a hearing on the original charges and for a first appearance on the new charges.

Meemken has been on paid administrative leave from the sheriff's office since December, when the allegations first came to the attention of the sheriff's office.

He remains on paid leave.



Meemken's attorney, Earl Gray, has filed a motion seeking to have separate trials on some of the charges. C.J. Crowell, an assistant Kandiyohi County attorney who is prosecuting the case to avoid a conflict with Stearns County officials, has filed paperwork indicating she intends to seek a sentence above what's called for in state sentencing guidelines if Meemken is convicted.

Meemken was in charge of the Stearns County sheriff's office's Explorer Post, and at least two of the alleged victims were members of that group. The Explorer Post is a program to teach young adults about law enforcement.

The complaint outlines several instances in which Meemken is accused of getting the teenagers drunk and performing various sex acts on them, some when the teens allegedly were incapacitated because of their intoxication.

The new charges came after the mother of one alleged victim contacted a Bureau of Criminal Apprehension investigator with new allegations against Meemken, according to a new court complaint filed Tuesday.

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