



Department of Justice

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Western District of Michigan

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FORMER OFFICER OF UTILITY WORKERS OF AMERICA AFL-CIO LOCAL 24 CONVICTED OF EMBEZZLEMENT OF LABOR ORGANIZATION ASSETS

GRAND RAPIDS, MICH. – Robert Allen Cole, 44, of Ludington, was convicted of embezzlement of labor organization assets and falsification of financial records, sentenced to serve six months of home confinement, two years of probation, and ordered to pay \$11,605.59 in restitution, U.S. Attorney Donald A. Davis announced today. U.S. District Judge Robert Holmes Bell imposed the sentence.

Cole was the financial secretary of the Utility Workers Union of America AFL-CIO Local 124, which represents employees of Consumers Energy. After Cole resigned his position, the union determined that he had written unauthorized checks to himself. A Labor Department investigation of Cole's activities revealed that, between 2007 and 2009, Cole converted \$11,605.59 of union funds to his personal use by issuing checks to himself and using the union's debit card for unauthorized purchases. Cole attempted to conceal the embezzlement by falsifying the union's financial records and filing a false annual statement. Cole pled guilty to one felony count of embezzlement and two misdemeanor counts of falsifying the financial records of the labor organization.

U.S. Attorney Davis stated: "Mr. Cole abused his position of trust while serving as the financial secretary of Local 24. All labor organization officers should know that we will investigate and prosecute those who steal from the hardworking men and women in their union and who deserve nothing less than the honest services of their leadership."

The case was investigated by the Grand Rapids office of the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Labor-Management Standards (“OLMS”). OLMS is the federal law enforcement agency that administers most provisions of the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act and investigates embezzlement from labor organizations, extortionate picketing, deprivation of union members’ rights by force or violence, and fraud in union officer elections.

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