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December 3, 2018

PRESS RELEASE

On December 3, 2018, **John F. Artuso**, the former housing inspector with the City of Ashtabula, entered a plea of **No Contest** to the charge of **Grand Theft, a fourth degree felony**, in the courtroom of Judge Marianne Sezon. In exchange for his plea, the State of Ohio dismissed the charge of Theft in Office, a felony of the third degree.

The charges stem from the theft of money from a vacant residence located at 4306 West Avenue in Ashtabula on or about December 1, 2017. It is alleged that Mr. Artuso, during his tenure as housing inspector, removed a significant sum of money from the residence and allowed others to take and/or receive money and other property therefrom while he was working as housing inspector and preparing the property for a potential demolition. To this date, the exact amount of money removed from the former residence is unknown.

As part of the stipulated sentence agreed to between the parties, Judge Sezon sentenced Mr. Artuso to a two-year term of community control. Mr. Artuso further agreed to waive any and all claims that he may have to any of the monies collected by the Ashtabula Police Department from him and all other persons as part of the investigation in this case.

In this case, the appropriate venue to resolve any issue of restitution owed to the Estate of Antonietta Muto, the City of Ashtabula, and/or the demolition contractor is with and through the civil and not the criminal courts. The funds collected by the Ashtabula Police Department will remain in the possession of the police department until a civil court issues an order of disposition.

As a result of today's plea and sentence, Mr. Artuso is now a convicted thief. The State of Ohio is satisfied with the plea and sentence, and would like to thank the Ashtabula Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation for their work on this case.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

Nicholas A. Iarocci

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