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June 26, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following indictments of note were handed down by the Ashtabula County Grand Jury on June 24, 2020:

John R. Rose was indicted for the following offenses relating to the death of Paul J. Ruffo.

Aggravated Murder, an Unclassified Felony
Murder, an Unclassified Felony
Murder an Unclassified Felony
Felonious Assault, a Felony of the Second Degree.

In the late night hours of June 2, 2020, 911 dispatchers received a call from a woman screaming for help. In response, Sheriff's deputies were dispatched to a residence on Dunbar Avenue. When they arrived, they found the victim Paul J. Ruffo unresponsive with an obvious stab wound to his side. Medical personnel also responded and eventually pronounced Mr Ruffo dead at the scene. Deputies processed the crime scene looking for evidence. They spoke to witnesses who saw Mr. Ruffo earlier that evening. The evidence eventually led them to the defendant. It is alleged that he stabbed Mr. Ruffo with prior calculation and design. He faces a potential penalty of life in prison. Mr. Rose is in the Ashtabula County Jail awaiting his arraignment.

The Prosecutor's Office extends its deepest sympathy to the family of Paul Ruffo on their loss. No family should have to live through a tragedy like this. I would also like to commend the Ashtabula County Sheriff's Department for their thorough investigation of this matter. Their continued efforts led to the discovery of evidence that allowed us to present additional charges to the grand jury.

Joshua Fleming was indicted for the following offenses that allegedly occurred during his tenure as Rock Creek Village Administrator.

Theft in Office, a Felony of the Third Degree
Misuse of a Credit Card, a Felony of the Fifth Degree
Misuse of a Credit Card, A Felony of the Fifth Degree

It is alleged that while the Defendant served as Village Administrator, he was knowingly overpaid. It is also alleged that he used two Village credit cards and several credit accounts in the Village's name to purchase items for his personal use. Mr. Fleming will be summonsed into Court for his arraignment at a later date.

This investigation was begun by the Ashtabula County Sheriff's Department when they received a report from the Mayor that there may be some irregularities in credit accounts owned by the Village. The Sheriff's Department and the Prosecutor's Office referred the matter to the State Auditor's Office and asked them to complete a thorough audit of the Village's records. That audit took time to complete. Once the audit was turned over to the Sheriff's Department and the Prosecutor's Office, the rest of the investigation could be completed and presented to the grand jury. I want to thank the Village of Rock Creek elected officials for their patience as this process moved forward.

Cecilia M. Cooper
Ashtabula County Prosecutor