

U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
District of Connecticut*

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**FORMER PLYMOUTH FINANCE DIRECTOR
PLEADS GUILTY TO FEDERAL THEFT AND TAX CHARGES**

Deirdre M. Daly, United States Attorney for the District of Connecticut, announced that DAVID J. BERTNAGEL, 41, of Thomaston, waived his right to indictment and pleaded guilty today in Bridgeport federal court to theft and tax charges stemming from his embezzlement of more than \$800,000 from the Town of Plymouth.

According to court documents and statements made in court, from October 2011 through October 2014, BERTNAGEL was employed as the Finance Director for the Town of Plymouth. During that time period, BERTNAGEL issued 207 checks totaling approximately \$808,030 from the Town's payroll account to himself. BERTNAGEL used the embezzled funds to make mortgage payments, pay credit card bills, fund home improvement projects and purchase more than \$100,000 in coins, stamps and other collectibles. He also converted more than \$182,000 of the stolen funds by way of cashed checks, ATM withdrawals and money orders.

In addition, BERTNAGEL's federal tax returns for the 2012 and 2013 tax years failed to report any of his embezzled income, resulting in a tax loss to the government of \$145,564 for those two years. BERTNAGEL also did not file a tax return with the IRS for the 2011 tax year.

Since 2011, Plymouth has received approximately \$450,000 in grant awards from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

BERTNAGEL was arrested on January 20, 2015.

BERTNAGEL pleaded guilty to one count of theft from a local government receiving federal funds, which carries a maximum term of imprisonment of 10 years, and one count making and subscribing a false tax return, which carries a maximum term of imprisonment of three years. He is scheduled to be sentenced by U.S. District Judge Jeffrey Alker Meyer on May 15, 2015.

As part of his plea agreement, BERTNAGEL agreed to make restitution in the amount of \$808,029.94 to the Town of Plymouth, and he must cooperate with the IRS to pay all outstanding taxes, penalties and interest. BERTNAGEL also has agreed to forfeit more than \$45,000 that he

held in bank accounts, and assorted jewelry, stamps, coins and other collectibles that were seized on the date of his arrest.

This matter is being investigated by the Connecticut Public Corruption Task Force, which includes the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Internal Revenue Service – Criminal Investigation Division, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development – Office of Inspector General and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services – Office of Inspector General. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Christopher M. Mattei.

Citizens are encouraged to report corrupt activity to the Connecticut Public Corruption Task Force by calling 1-800-CALL-FBI (1-800-225-5324).

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