

Pittsburgh officer charged in prostitution case resigns

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By Sadie Gurman, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

A Pittsburgh police officer charged last month with running a prostitution service and helping the women obtain drugs resigned today after 16 years on the force.

Officer Michael Johns, 43, "resigned primarily to focus on his defense," said attorney Phillip DiLucente, who is representing Mr. Johns on charges including promoting prostitution, drug possession and delivery, conspiracy, obstruction of justice, insurance fraud and filing false reports to law enforcement.

Allegheny County police, who filed the charges, said the longtime officer provided prostitutes with transportation for their work and let them use a computer in his Brookline home to post online ads to adult websites. Two women who were charged with prostitution told police Mr. Johns more than once gave them money to buy heroin and let them use it at his house.

Police also set up a sting in which they said they watched him drive two informants in a taxi cab to buy drugs.

A preliminary hearing on the charges is scheduled for Oct. 21.

The police bureau transferred him from the Zone 2 station in the Hill District to the warrant office soon after the county's investigation began, and suspended him with pay after he was charged.

Mr. DiLucente said Mr. Johns remains employed as a cab driver.

"He felt it was in his best interest at this juncture to retire and he did so without a black mark on his record," he said.

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