

Green Bay officer fights to keep his job

He admitted under oath to forging his ex-wife's signature

JONATHAN ANDERSON

USA TODAY NETWORK-WISCONSIN

GREEN BAY - The city's Police and Fire Commission is expected this week to decide whether to fire a Green Bay police officer who has admitted to forgery.

Commissioners met in City Hall for more than three and a half hours on Monday to hear testimony in the case of



Smith

Smith and Brown County District Attorney David Lasee have called Jeanquart's credibility into question after he signed his ex-wife's signature on a car title without her permission.

Smith said Jeanquart should be fired because he can no longer fully perform his duties as a sworn officer and as a trusted witness in

officer Michael Jeanquart, whom Chief Andrew Smith is seeking to fire.

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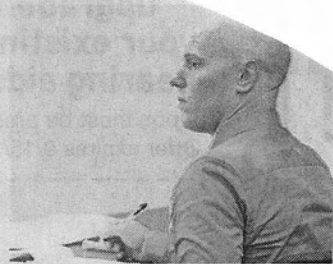
court, which could derail prosecutions in which he is involved.

"The officer's actions were a violation of the public's trust, so much so that I don't think he can continue on as a police officer here," Smith said in an interview.

Jeanquart also faces felony charges in Brown County Circuit Court in connection to the forgery.

Appearing at the hearing without an attorney, Jeanquart admitted under oath that he signed his ex-wife's

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ADAM WESLEY/USA TODAY
NETWORK-WISCONSIN

Michael Jeanquart listens during a Police and Fire Commission meeting Monday at City Hall in Green Bay. Jeanquart is facing felony charges in Brown County Circuit Court for allegedly forging his ex-wife's signature.

Janquart

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signature on the title of the couple's 2010 Kia Forte sedan, even though she said she was uncomfortable with him doing so.

Jeanquart, 34, of Denmark, said he thought that didn't matter because a judge had previously awarded him ownership

of the car in the couple's divorce.

"I signed her name on the title, but there was no intent to defraud," Jeanquart testified.

The Police and Fire Commission is scheduled to issue a decision on Thursday, commission President Rod Goldhahn said. The panel could terminate Jeanquart or render a lighter penalty, such as a suspension or demotion.

Smith alone cannot force Janquart out of the department; state law requires the panel to independently decide whether he should lose his job.

A special prosecutor from outside Brown County is pursuing the criminal case. Lasee, who expressed concerns about Jeanquart's credibility as a police officer, said he didn't feel comfortable handling the prosecution.

Jeanquart has pleaded

not guilty and remains free on a \$500 signature bond. If convicted, he faces up to 12 years in prison and a \$20,000 fine.

Jeanquart has not worked as an officer since June when department officials learned of the allegations, but he is still being paid.

The commission could soon consider a second request from Smith to oust another officer from the department. The unidenti-

fied officer has been placed on leave and has indicated an intent to challenge termination, Green Bay Police Commander Jim Runge testified at Monday's hearing.

Several other officers have left the department under a cloud within the last year. One officer resigned before he could be fired for falsifying a report, while a night-shift lieutenant and a patrolman quit amid allegations

that they harassed co-workers.

Smith said such misconduct cases erode trust between the department and the community, which is why he has sought to aggressively and publicly address them since becoming chief in February 2016.

"The community needs to know that the chief of police is holding his officers accountable for their actions," Smith said.

Jeanquart allegedly sold their car online without waiting for her to sign title

DOUG SCHNEIDER

USA TODAY NETWORK-WISCONSIN

GREEN BAY - A Green Bay police officer is accused of forging his ex-wife's signature to sell a car via Craigslist earlier this year.

Michael C. Jeanquart, 34, of Denmark, is charged with one felony count of forgery. He is due in Brown County Circuit Court this morning for an initial appearance.

A criminal complaint alleges that Jeanquart forged the signature of his ex-wife, Rachel, on the title of the couple's 2010 Kia Forte sedan after she had told him not to do so. The forgery took place while Rachel Jeanquart was out of state, special prosecutor Colleen Nordin alleges.

Michael Jeanquart has not worked as a police officer since department officials learned he was being investigated, Chief Andrew Smith said. Per department rules, he continues to be paid while his case is being resolved.



Jeanquart admitted to a detective from the State Capitol Police that he signed his wife's name on the document after finding a buyer on the Craigslist online classified site, the criminal complaint states.

It says he needed the money from the sale quickly and tried to get the lienholder to mail him the title.

"Knowing he had a buyer, and needing the money from the sale to cover other expenses, Michael attempted to expedite the title being sent from Sun Trust," the complaint reads. "However, Michael (learned) they offered no options for that."

Someone convicted of forgery can be sentenced to up to six years in prison, fined up to \$10,000, or both.

Rachael Jeanquart notified state transportation officials on May 10 and reported the suspected forgery, the complaint says. It says she

Forgery

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did not object to his plans to sell the car, and would have signed the title when she returned from Florida.

"Her complaint was that he took it upon himself to sign her name rather than waiting," the detective wrote, "after she specifically told him not to do that."

The complaint does not say how much money was involved in the sale.

Smith said he relieved Jeanquart of his gun, badge and police ID.

Efforts to reach Michael Jeanquart were unsuccessful. There is no telephone listed for his Denmark address.

Nordin, the special prosecutor, also is the Door County district attorney. It's common to appoint a special prosecutor in a criminal case against a police officer so that the local DA's office can avoid the appearance of conflict.

The allegations are the latest black eye for a department that Smith

has vowed to improve since he began work in February 2016.

Since late last year, officer Michael Rahn was fired because of a falsified report, and night shift Lt. Robert Korth and officer R. Casey Masiak resigned amid allegations they harassed fellow night-shift officers.

Also, Masiak and officer Kurt Brester were named in a \$1.5 million lawsuit filed by a man, later convicted of armed robbery, who claims they bloodied his head during a 2016 arrest.

GREEN BAY - A police officer who admitted to forgery has been ousted from the Green Bay Police Department.

The city's Police and Fire Commission on Thursday voted unanimously to fire officer Michael Jeanquart.

The action comes after Jeanquart testified under oath that he signed his ex-wife's signature on the title of the couple's 2010 Kia Forte sedan, even though she said she was uncomfortable with him doing so.

Police Chief Andrew Smith had asked the commission to fire Jeanquart, arguing that he could no longer fulfill his duties as a sworn officer because the forgery raised questions about his credibility.

In a nine-page decision, the commission found Jeanquart's "intentionally dishonest, deceitful conduct constitutes a breach of trust, both with the public and within the department."

"His conduct displays the attitude that he, as a law enforcement officer, is above the requirements of the law, an attitude which erodes the public trust in the integrity and honesty of the department as a whole, not simply Officer Jeanquart," the decision reads.

Jeanquart, 34, of Denmark, has said he didn't think he needed the ex-wife's permission because a judge had previously awarded him ownership of the car in the couple's divorce.

Jeanquart had not worked as an officer since June when department officials learned of the allegations, but he was still being paid up until Thursday.

The commission, which could have suspended or demoted Jeanquart instead of firing him, met for several hours earlier in the week to hear evidence in the case. Community members Rod Goldhahn, Nancy Schopf, the Rev. Marian Boyle Rohloff and Warren Wanezek sit on the panel.

Jeanquart may appeal the termination to a court. He declined to comment after the commission issued its decision Thursday.

Jeanquart also faces felony charges in Brown County Circuit Court in connection to the forgery.



ADAM WESLEY/USA TODAY NETWORK-WISCONSIN

Michael Jeanquart listens during a Police and Fire Commission meeting Monday at City Hall in Green Bay.

Agreement reached in former cop forgery case

PAUL SRUBAS

USA TODAY NETWORK-WISCONSIN

GREEN BAY - A deferred prosecution agreement has been reached with a former Green Bay police officer accused of forging his ex-wife's signature.

The case against Michael Jeanquart, 34, of Denmark, will be dismissed if he stays out of trouble for six months, according to the agreement reached by a special prosecutor in the case.

Jeanquart was accused of a felony charge of forgery alleging he signed his ex-wife's name to the title of a car he was selling on Craigslist. She was out of state and unavailable to sign, and, rather than wait for her return as she wanted him to do, he signed her name to expedite the sale, according to the criminal complaint.

The Green Bay Police Department fired Jeanquart over the incident.

He faced up to six years in prison.

Green Bay police fire officer who faces forgery charge

DOUG SCHNEIDER

USA TODAY NETWORK-WISCONSIN

GREEN BAY - The Green Bay Police Department has fired an officer who faces felony charges in the forgery of his ex-wife's signature.

Michael Jeanquart, 34, of Denmark was dismissed from the force on Wednesday, Chief Andrew Smith said.

Smith said the department was aware that Jeanquart faces felony charges, but a lawyer for the department said he could not discuss the dismissal.

Jeanquart is accused of forging his ex-wife's signature on the title of a car he was selling via the Craigslist website.

Jeanquart, who is free on a \$550 signature bond, was charged in late June with felony forgery. They have since added a felony counterfeit-certificate-of-title charge.

He is due in circuit court on Aug. 2 for a preliminary hearing.

A criminal complaint filed in Brown County Circuit Court alleges Jeanquart forged the signature of his ex-wife on the title of the couple's 2010 Kia Forte sedan after she had told him not to do so. The forgery took place while Rachel Jeanquart was out of state, special prosecutor Colleen Nordin alleges.

Michael Jeanquart had not worked as a police officer since department officials learned he was being investigated, Smith said previously. Per department rules, Jeanquart was paid until he was dismissed.

Jeanquart admitted to a detective from the

State Capitol Police that he signed his wife's name on the document after finding a buyer on Craigslist, the criminal complaint states. It says he needed the money from the sale quickly and tried to get the lien holder to mail him the title.

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Rachael Jeanquart notified state transportation officials on May 10 and reported the suspected forgery, the complaint says. It says she did not object to his plans to sell the car and would have signed the title when she returned from Florida.

"Her complaint was that he took it upon himself to sign her name rather than waiting, after she specifically told him not to do that," the detective wrote.

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