



NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Inspector General
Catherine Leahy Scott

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 21, 2017
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STATE GROUP HOME WORKER PLEADS GUILTY AND SENTENCED FOR REMOVING BUILDING PARTS FROM FACILITIES WHERE HE WORKED

ROCHESTER – New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott today announced the guilty plea and sentencing of a maintenance assistant for the State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) who removed and sold as scrap some building parts from OPWDD Finger Lakes Region group homes he was charged with maintaining.

Joseph L. Wahl, 39, of Selborne Chase, Fairport, pleaded guilty to Official Misconduct and was sentenced to restitution, eight work weekends, and a one year conditional discharge. Wahl paid restitution of \$1,000 at the time of his plea.

An investigation by Inspector General Leahy Scott found that between January of 2014 and June of 2016, Wahl, an OPWDD maintenance assistant, on numerous occasions removed various building parts, including copper piping, steel and electric wiring, from OPWDD group homes. Wahl, while on State time and using a State van, transported and sold the materials to a recycling business as if they were scrap. In some instances, the investigation found, Wahl went so far as to replace copper pipe plumbing he removed and sold as scrap with far less expensive PVC plastic pipes that he installed himself.

“This defendant’s methodical abuse of State time and resources violated the public trust, and he will now be paying for his crime,” said Inspector General Leahy Scott. “I will continue to use my office to pursue anyone who abuses taxpayers’ resources.”

Wahl was assigned to the OPWDD Finger Lakes Regional Office in Brighton. Wahl has worked performing maintenance duties on OPWDD group homes throughout the Finger Lakes Region.

Wahl pleaded guilty and was sentenced in Brighton Town Court.

Inspector General Leahy Scott thanked the New York State Police for their assistance with the arrest and Monroe County District Attorney Sandra Doorley and her office for prosecuting this matter.

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