

JUSTICE

Man awaits sentencing in theatrical fraud case

Former employee defrauded separate board

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STAFF WRITER

A 44-year-old Richmond Hill man will be sentenced in September, more than three years after he was charged with defrauding York Region's Catholic school board.

Riesio Pellegrini, the board's former arts director, pleaded guilty to fraud-related charges last December in connection with a musical production that was supposed to raise money for the cash-strapped board.

Pellegrini was charged with fraud and criminal breach of trust in March 1995, following a five-month York Regional Police investigation.

School board officials called police after an auditor discovered irregularities in some board accounts in September 1994.

"I'm becoming increasingly concerned about the number of delays," Justice Ted Minden said.

Pellegrini had organized a production of the Sound of Music at Toronto's Limelight Theatre, expecting to raise about \$50,000 for the board's arts program.

But a forensic accountant discovered the production actually cost the board thousands of dollars.

Pellegrini was to be sentenced Monday, but the proceeding was delayed for a third time at the request of defence lawyer Earl Levy.

Levy asked Justice Ted Minden for time to review new police evidence.

However, Minden warned that Pellegrini will be sentenced Sept. 28 to end a case that has dragged on for nearly four years.

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Pellegrini is expected to receive a conditional two-year sentence through an agreement with the defence and Crown.

However, the amount of money Pellegrini will have to pay back to the school board is expected to be a contentious issue during the hearing.

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