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Jan. 08, 2013

The president of the Canton, North Carolina, Little League softball team and a former longtime sheriff's deputy was recently arrested for allegedly stealing thousands of dollars from the team's account.

Anthony Lee Justice, 42, has been charged with felony embezzlement after about \$4,900 was unaccounted for, said Canton Police Department Det. Shawn Gaddis. This was Justice's first year to serve on the board, and he took on several other responsibilities including concession stand manager and equipment manager.

As part of his duties, Justice was in charge of depositing money collected from the team's main fundraiser — concessions at the games. He was also the only board member in possession of a team debit card.

The investigation revealed that the misappropriations occurred from June through November, with 16 separate ATM withdrawals in October. Board members realized money was dwindling after looking more closely at bank statements, Gaddis said.

After the board approached Justice in early November with questions about missing funds, he failed to answer phone calls and later resigned as president in a letter. That's when the board approached law enforcement, Gaddis said.

"It appears through the investigation that he used the money for himself and for his own benefit," Whitner said. "It's unfortunate that we have these kinds of situations occur because of the hardships it brought the youth league." His first court appearance is scheduled for Jan. 14.

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