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Tuesday after she allegedly stole more than \$850,000 over a 10-year period from a New Glarus, Wisconsin, rehabilitation and nursing home where she was employed.

Jan. 08, 2014

An administrative secretary and bookkeeper was charged with six felony counts Tuesday after she allegedly stole more than \$850,000 over a 10-year period from a New Glarus, Wisconsin, rehabilitation and nursing home where she was employed.

Joyce Ziehli, 55, of Belleville, Wisconsin, was charged with six counts of theft in a business setting after an exhaustive review by a Madison accounting firm claimed that she made hundreds of fraudulent financial transactions to steal from the New Glarus Home, a criminal complaint states.

Ziehli, who worked for the New Glarus Home for 31 years before she was fired last January, is scheduled to make her initial court appearance Jan. 13 at the Green County Justice Center in Monroe, New Glarus police said.

The charges sent shock waves through the Belleville and New Glarus communities where Ziehli and her husband, Andy Ziehli, are well-known. Joyce Ziehli was a former Belleville School Board member and is on the board at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Belleville, according to her Facebook page, which had been taken down Tuesday evening.

"The whole thing surprises me," said Belleville village trustee and former Belleville School Board president Roger Hillebrand.

"Knowing the people, knowing the family, they were normal citizens and she was a real good addition to the school board," he added.

Ziehli also is listed as the publisher of a magazine devoted to arts and music called

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teaches classes in self-defense at Edgewood College.

According to the criminal complaint filed Tuesday in Green County Circuit Court:

New Glarus Home officials first became suspicious of Ziehli's accounting methods last Jan. 25 after bookkeeper Jean Severson discovered discrepancies in the nursing home's "residential account."

New Glarus Home director Roger Goepfert confronted and then fired Ziehli when she returned to work three days later because it appeared she had misappropriated \$1,895 of a \$9,905 insurance payment to make a credit card payment for some entity other than the home.

Michael Yankunus of the Madison accounting firm Wipfli then reviewed financial transactions related to the home's residential account for the previous two months and found 31 separate misappropriations resulting in \$42,776 that was transferred out of the account.

Yankunus' review then went back to January 2003. His report showed that Ziehli issued checks from the account payable to herself or "cash" and deposited them into seven accounts at two New Glarus banks that were held by herself, her husband or Advisory Management and Research Services.

The complaint said that Ziehli admitted during an interview last June with a New Glarus police officer and an agent with the state Division of Criminal Investigation that she took \$91,000 to pay off credit card debt accumulated for her husband's businesses in 2012. It added that she indicated she paid back \$75,000.

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