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Police records clerk sentenced for growing pot in Putnam Township home

Valerie Olander / The Detroit News

HOWELL -- A former civilian records clerk for the Ann Arbor Police Department was sentenced today in Livingston Circuit Court to three years probation for having a marijuana-growing operation in her home.

Dawn Marie Hamell, 47, of Putnam Township, pleaded guilty to one count of delivery or manufacturing 5-45 kilograms of marijuana or about 12.5 pounds to 99 pounds. A second count was dropped in the plea deal with prosecutors. She faced seven years in prison.

Her husband, William Russell Hamell, 59, was sentenced in October to three years probation and ordered to wear an electronic tether for 90 days after he pleaded guilty to both charges.

Her attorney David Goldstein said Dawn Hamell assisted her husband in the growing operation "for their own personal use and were not selling it for profit. Some (marijuana) was given to people to relieve their suffering."

An informant tipped off police to the growing operation in their Wynns Road home and a heat-detecting helicopter from the Oakland County Sheriff's Department found a heat signature compatible with a growing operation.

Oakland County sheriff's officers, Hamburg Township police and undercover narcotics officers raided the couple's home in May seizing 44 plants about 30 pounds of packaged marijuana. The street value was about \$200,000.

Police said the Hamells were experts at indoor cultivation with 44 marijuana plants, 400 pounds of potting soil and growing-operation equipment, such as lights, transformers, fans and timers.

Police also seized \$28,170 in cash and are attempting to seize the Hammels home, worth about \$300,000 under drug forfeiture laws.

"I would like to apologize for my behavior," Hamell told Judge Stanley Latreille.

She said she has not used alcohol or marijuana for the past six months and is trying to make

a positive change in her life. The room where the marijuana was being grown has been renovated into a bedroom, she said.

Hamell said she was fired from the job she held at the Ann Arbor Police Department since 1991.

You can reach Valerie Olander at (734) 462-2203 or volander@detnews.com.

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