

Police department employee, husband accused of running marijuana operation

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A Hamburg Township couple was charged Tuesday with manufacturing and delivering marijuana after police raided their home on May 2 and discovered 30 pounds of marijuana in their garage.

Dawn Hamell, a civilian employee with the Ann Arbor Police Department, and her husband, William Hamell, were arraigned at the 53rd District Court in Howell.

Bond was set for both defendants at \$50,000/personal recognizance, meaning that they were released at no charge but each would forfeit \$50,000 if they fail to appear at court hearings. Their pretrial conference is set for May 22 at 8:30 a.m. William Hamell, 59, is a retired General Motors employee, police said.

Dawn Hamell, 47, was put on leave without pay on May 2, when she was arrested, said Ann Arbor Police Chief Barnett Jones. "In the two years I've worked with her, I've found her to be a caring individual. We're praying for her," Jones said.

Barnett added, "She always took care of Meals on Wheels" on behalf of the department. She's always one of our first people here to help with Special Olympics. And so, for me this was really a shock. But we see in the media everyday, there may be great people but they encounter things like this.

"One can only imagine the weight that was on her, working by day in a police department and then going home to this situation. She's still a great person but she needs to get her personal life in order."

The operation was discovered on May 1 by a helicopter from the Oakland County Sheriff's Office, which overflew the house using an infrared video camera that identified large amounts of heat coming from vents on the garage from the array of grow lights inside, Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard said last week. Oakland County officers, with Hamburg Township police and Livingston County authorities, then raided the house the next day and arrested the woman and her husband.