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\$2.5M bond placed on Nelsonville's former deputy auditor on new thefts

Husband indicted as co-defendant, to be arraigned on later date

ATHENS, Ohio – Stephanie Wilson, 47, of Stewart, was arraigned Thursday in Athens County Common Pleas Court under a \$2.5 million bond from an indictment charging engaging in a pattern of corrupt activity, a second-degree felony, and theft in office, a third-degree felony.

Wilson, who was arrested by the Athens County Sheriff's Office on a warrant in the early Thursday morning, entered a plea of not guilty to the new allegations. She was previously indicted and pleaded guilty to charges of tampering with records, forgery, telecommunications fraud and theft in office — charges related to funds she stole from the city of Nelsonville during her time as deputy auditor.

Wilson has not yet been sentenced on those charges. Athens County Assistant Prosecutor Glenn Jones told Judge George McCarthy that Wilson was not truthful with the prosecution during plea negotiations and that further investigation led to the discovery of an additional \$42,000 in fraudulent tax returns, improperly paying herself overtime and other refunds perpetrated by Wilson. The prosecution's argument for sentencing on the original indictment would have been based on the recovery of more than \$200,000 in restitution owed by Wilson.

According to the new indictment, Wilson filed and processed inaccurate tax returns for Wilson Construction, a business operated by her husband, Richard Wilson. She later created fake businesses to serve as collection accounts for fraudulent tax returns from Nelsonville.

Richard Wilson, 51, of Stewart, is accused of signing the fraudulent tax returns for the business. He is charged with aggravated theft and theft in office, both third-degree felonies and is scheduled to be arraigned on March 24.

The prosecution recommended a \$2.5 million bond for Stephanie Wilson, citing her as a flight risk, the seriousness of the crime and the lengthy prison sentence she already faced, coupled with the addition of the new charges. Judge McCarthy agreed with the recommendation.

The defense reserved argument on bond pending the involvement of new counsel representing Stephanie Wilson. A pretrial on the new indictment is scheduled for April 12; the same day she is scheduled to be sentenced on the previous charges.

"I'm grateful to our investigators and the work from the State Auditor's Office in these cases. I'm looking forward to having them resolved and doing justice for the city of Nelsonville," said Athens County Prosecutor Keller Blackburn.

Blackburn also thanked the Athens County Sheriff's Office for executing the overnight warrant on Stephanie Wilson.

