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Ex-College Park Mayor Patrick Wojahn to serve 30 years for child sexual abuse materials

Katharine Wilson · November 20, 2023



Ex-College Park mayor Patrick Wojahn during a city council meeting on Sept. 6, 2022. (Giuseppe LoPiccolo/The Diamondback)

Former College Park Mayor Patrick Wojahn was ordered to serve 30 years in prison Monday for possession and distribution of child sexual abuse materials.

Wojahn was sentenced to 150 years in prison with all but 30 years suspended. He will be eligible for parole after 7.5 years, Prince George's County Circuit Court Judge Karen Mason ruled.

Wojahn pleaded guilty to 40 counts of possession and 100 counts of promotion or distribution of child sexual abuse materials in August. Of the promotion or distribution charges, 60 counts were for distribution and 40 were for possession with the intent to distribute.

Wojahn's plea deal in August stated that he would serve 30 years in prison and be eligible for parole after 7.5 years.

Wojahn will serve his sentence in the Patuxent Institution in Jessup. Wojahn's attorney suggested this facility.

The institution provides assessment, stabilization and transition services to offenders who have "serious mental illness," according to the Maryland public safety and correctional services department's website.

"This was a fair but important sentence," Aisha Braveboy, the state's attorney for Prince George's County, said at a press conference after the sentencing hearing Monday. "In accepting the plea agreement, we are satisfied that Wojahn understood the seriousness of his actions."

According to the plea deal, Wojahn will register as a tier two sex offender, receive mental health treatment and be barred from holding a job or volunteering with children after serving his sentence. He will also serve five years of probation.

[Ex-College Park Mayor Patrick Wojahn pleads guilty to 140 child pornography charges]

Wojahn was arrested on 56 counts of child sexual abuse materials in March. A grand jury indicted him on 80 counts that same month.

Investigators found 1,500 videos and images depicting child sexual abuse on Wojahn's devices, assistant state's attorney and special victims and family violence unit chief Jessica Garth said in August. Investigators also found more than 200 instances of distribution of this material by Wojahn through Kik and Telegram social media accounts, according to Garth. The offenses occurred in January and February.

Prince George's County assistant state's attorney Monica Meyers — whose office identified 52 of the hundreds of children in child sexual abuse material found on Wojahn's devices — said at the sentencing hearing that she sees Wojahn as someone who did terrible things and went to great lengths to hide them.

Child victims in child sexual abuse material cases often receive no support, Meyers said.

“They are well aware that they won’t outlive their images and videos that are on the internet,” Meyers said. “That’s why we take these cases so seriously.”

At the sentencing, Meyers presented stories and victim statements from more than 40 children who were identified in the materials on Wojahn’s cell phone. The victims discussed the paranoia, fear and re-victimization they experienced because of child sexual abuse materials spreading on the internet.

At his sentencing, Wojahn took the stand to apologize to the victims of child sexual abuse and residents of the city of College Park. After his release, he wants to dedicate his life to helping others who face similar problems, he said.

[Ex-College Park Mayor Patrick Wojahn indicted on 80 child pornography charges]

At least 10 people, including Wojahn’s mother and husband, College Park residents and a former College Park city council member, spoke at Monday’s sentencing in support of Wojahn.

The Prince George’s County state’s attorney’s office also received about 40 letters in support of Wojahn, according to Meyers.

Wojahn has been held in jail since he was arrested on March 2.

He resigned from his mayoral position, which he held since 2015, the night before his arrest. Before becoming the city’s mayor, Wojahn was a District 1 city council member from 2007 to 2015.

This case marks a new path forward for Prince George’s County in taking child sexual abuse material cases seriously, Garth said during the sentencing. She said she hopes this sentencing serves as a warning to other perpetrators.

“These are not victimless crimes, even though the victim separated from the person who was using them by a computer screen,” Garth said at a Monday press conference. “They have to live with what happened to them for the rest of their lives and also with the knowledge that other people around the world who will continue to view that abuse will gain personal sexual gratification”

This sentencing is one of the largest ever for a case like this in the county, Garth said after the plea hearing in August.

