

PRESS ENTERPRISE

[News](#) [Crime + Public Safety](#)

Former Riverside County School Boards Association president charged with embezzlement



William Clarence Newberry, the former president of the Riverside County School Boards Association, was charged with embezzlement June 19, 2019. (Courtesy of Riverside County School Board Association)

By [Brian Rokos](#) | brokos@scng.com and [Robert Gundran](#) | rgundran@scng.com | The Press-Enterprise

PUBLISHED: June 19, 2019 at 5:18 p.m. | UPDATED: June 20, 2019 at 12:37 p.m.

The former president of the Riverside County School Boards Association was charged Wednesday, June 19, with stealing about \$40,000 from the association and a high school booster club and spending the money on himself.

William Clarence Newberry, a former Corona-Norco Unified School District board member, was charged with two counts of grand theft and one count each of embezzlement of public funds and misappropriation of public funds, the Riverside County District Attorney's Office said.

No court date has been set for Newberry, 59, a Corona resident. He was not in custody Wednesday, according to county jail records.

Newberry could not immediately be reached for comment.

In November, Tom Hunt, the new treasurer of the association, told the DA's office that he spotted what he considered suspicious activity in the association account that primarily holds dues paid by the 23 county school districts that the association represents, a district attorney's news release said.

DA's investigators found that between December 2013 and February 2017, Newberry used an association debit card without authorization to make personal purchases and pay medical bills totaling \$17,000, the release said. Also, Newberry dipped into a checking account belonging to the Climate Booster Club at Eleanor Roosevelt High in Eastvale and stole \$23,000 to pay his bills and make purchases for himself, the release said.

Newberry was elected to the Corona-Norco school board in 2010 and was replaced by Elizabeth "Lisa" Marroquin, who defeated him in the 2018 election. Newberry was then replaced as president of the boards association.

The association is an [organization of school board members](#) from across the county. "Our association promotes cooperation among the various school board members in our county, through which we can speak with a collective voice on educational issues, doing good for kids and legislation," its website says.

"We are very disappointed and upset that a once-trusted member of the community would abuse the privilege of his former title as an elected school trustee to manipulate entities for his own financial gain," CNUUSD spokesman Tom DeLapp said.

Wendy Jonathan, a RCSBA board member, said she kept asking for treasurer's reports before Hunt came to hold the position.

"We weren't getting any reports," Jonathan said. "So I kept saying we needed to see them and approve them because we had no idea what was going on."

Jonathan said she and Hunt, along with two other board members, Sue Scott and Susan Lara, were concerned about the finances, and believed that something unusual was going on.

"Tom (Hunt) was our hope to uncover what has finally been uncovered. He worked diligently," Jonathan said. "I can't tell you how many hours he spent on this."

Lara echoed that the board wasn't getting financial information at meetings.

"We started questioning what was going on," Lara said. "We encouraged Tom to take it to the district attorney. We went to the District Attorney's Office together."

In a phone interview Wednesday night, Hunt said Jonathan's initial questioning prompted him to become treasurer for RCSBA.

“Some of us talked about it and looked closer and knew something wasn’t right,” Hunt said. “I went in on a weekend to look into finances and immediately I was shocked when I found things that have no business being in our financial reports.”

Receipts for travel, lunches, cell phone repairs and sunglasses were among things that Hunt said he found while scouring the board’s finances.

“I tried to get the rest of the executive committee to understand what was happening, but it went nowhere,” Hunt said.

That’s what prompted him to report his findings to the DA’s office.

“I have no ill-will toward Bill (Newberry), but he misused his office,” Hunt said. “This was meant to be an organization where we met up and discussed legislative things, and Bill made it into his own piggy bank.”

“We’re all public officials. I saw corruption and I reported it,” he said.

<https://www.pe.com/2019/06/19/riverside-county-school-board-association-president-charged-with-embezzlement/>