

ing for his home, and purchased a souvenir beer mug from Mickey Mantle's restaurant in New York.

In August 1999, according to police records, Dely got even more brazen — or desperate. He told the payroll clerk to add his name to a bonus list, and got a check for \$4,876.86.

It wasn't until Hodel told the clerk in November that Dely was leaving that the clerk complained about the bonus. Dougherty told Dely to pay it back within 48 hours, or face criminal charges. Dely paid up.

Neither Hodel nor Dougherty told the rest of the board about the payment until January.

"In retrospect, it was a lousy decision" not to report Dely to police and fire him, Dougherty said last week.

"But I didn't know he was a crook."

But he did know in January, when he learned about the debit card charges. Still, he said last week, civil attorneys from the Ann Arbor Dykema Gossett law firm told the board not to pursue criminal charges because it might hamper their ability to get the money back.

Several board members agreed — but Dougherty said last week he fought that approach. Dougherty was called in several years ago to help Washtenaw United Way recover after the agency's president was charged with embezzlement. That board refused to go public with the problem until it had no choice, and the approach cost the agency community goodwill.

But, Dougherty and Hodel said after a special board meeting Wednesday, that police Detective Jerry Tacey persuaded them not to go public with the allegations against Dely until he was charged. Tacey feared Dely would try to hide evidence of the thefts. Later, when police searched his home in March, they found the computer, dishwasher and other items purchased with library money, and confiscated them.

Dely was charged with three felonies in June.

Neither of his attorneys have returned repeated calls from The News.

And library attorneys last month had to resort to posting a notice of the lawsuit on Dely's door.

"Apparently defendant is aware of plaintiff's attempts to serve him ... and is deliberately evading service," attorneys said in a brief to Judge Melinda Morris.

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