

S. Tahoe police officer expected to plead guilty

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe police Officer Johnny Poland is expected to plead guilty next week to federal charges.

“They said in court that they needed a week for negotiations,” Lauren Horwood with the U.S. Attorney’s Office told *Lake Tahoe News* after the May 15 hearing in Sacramento. “Another hearing is set for May 22 for entry of a guilty plea.”

Poland was indicted earlier this year on three counts related to tampering with a witness, victim or informant, and one count dealing with obstruction of an official proceeding.



Johnny Poland

He could have been sent to prison for 20 years on each count if the case had gone to trial and he were found guilty. It is not known what the plea agreement is. Horwood said because the two sides are negotiating the terms of the plea, details are not being released.

Sources have told *Lake Tahoe News* that Poland is expected to plead to one felony count and more than one misdemeanor. It’s possible he would not face any prison time, but could be put on probation.

Poland is out on bond, but could not be reached. He remains

active in the Army National Guard.

The FBI, which was heavily involved in the case, said until the case is over, their office has no comment.

Poland is still on the local police force, but he is not getting paid. An internal civil investigation remains open.

“We are hoping it resolves in close time proximity to the criminal case. It could, or it could drag on two or three weeks after that,” Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*. “The biggest reason for trying to resolve it is to get the slot resolved.”

The department cannot fill Poland’s position as long as he has not resigned.