Manchester police officer charged with felony assault on Cape Cod

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MANCHESTER — A Manchester police officer is on modified desk duty after being charged late last month with assaulting the retired police chief of Falmouth, Mass., according to police officials in the two communities.

Falmouth police arrested Christian Horn, 31, of Chester, NH, on two felony charges stemming from the alleged assault, which took place shortly after midnight on Aug. 24 outside the Sea Crest Beach Resort hotel, Falmouth police Lt. Sean Doyle said.

Horn told police his wife needed to go to a bathroom, and he pushed his way through the alleged victim and three others who were walking outside and in his way, Doyle said.

Because retired Falmouth police chief Anthony Riello, 64, is over the age of 60, the charge is an automatic felony, Doyle said.

Assistant Manchester Police Chief Nick Willard said an internal affairs
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The arrest is the second black eye involving a member of the Manchester department this summer. On Tuesday, the New Hampshire Union Leader reported that police officer Michelle Toepel resigned from the department in July after an internal affairs probe began into whether she was moonlighting as a private investigator, which would be a violation of state law.

“It’s disappointing to have to receive a phone call from an officer saying he had been arrested,” Willard said Tuesday of Horn. “It puts a cloud over the police department. It’s disappointing for (other) officers to have to navigate the feelings of the public.”

Horn joined the Manchester police force in July 2012. He had worked as a police officer in Los Angeles for five years before joining Manchester’s department. Willard said Horn works as a patrol officer; police have had no issues with him since he joined the force.

According to newspaper archives, the department recognized Horn in March for his response to a call about a handgun being fired in the city center.

Doyle said Horn was arrested on two felony charges — assault and battery on a person over 60, and malicious destruction of property. He said Falmouth police were dispatched to the hotel at 12:28 a.m. on Aug. 24.

Initial reports were that Riello and three others were walking and a man came out of nowhere and pushed Riello down. Riello was carrying a glass; when he fell, the glass broke, cutting his hand and ripping his suit.

Because the suit was valued at more than $250, the property destruction charge is a felony, Doyle said.

Riello had been attending a wedding at the hotel. Falmouth police tracked Horn down at a home in Falmouth, Doyle said.

Horn told police he had returned on a bus from a wedding in neighboring Mashpee. The bus stopped at the hotel. He needed to get his wife into the hotel so she could use the restroom, and he ran through a few people.

“His main concern was getting his wife inside,” Doyle said. He told police he pushed a shorter, older person. Horn also told police he had been punched when going through the group.

“That was an allegation by Mr. Horn that was never substantiated,” Doyle said.

Horn and his wife left the hotel and never returned to speak to the group, Doyle said.

Horn was arrested, booked and released on his personal recognizance.
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stuart urie said:

Hate to disappoint folks by not getting on LE on this story, but these charges sound like a crock of ****.....so does that particular law for the over 60 crowd. Sounds like Horn ruffled some feathers and they tilted the playing field...that's it.
(Report Abuse) September 9, 2014 6:44 pm

stuart urie said:

Reminds me of the fight between Rochester police and state police over an accident scene just a few years ago...only these guys were not in uniform....this is the chief pulling rank after the fact.
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