

**From:** [Vermont Municipal Government Discussion Network](#) on behalf of [CopelandHanzas, Sarah](#)  
**To:** [MUNINET@LIST.UVM.EDU](mailto:MUNINET@LIST.UVM.EDU)  
**Subject:** JP officiant scam alert  
**Date:** Friday, July 26, 2024 1:00:51 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)

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Hello Vermont Municipal Officials,

I want to spread awareness of a recent incident that took place in Vermont. We are highlighting an e-mail scam that everyone should be aware of so we ask that you share this with all local officials.

Recently, a scammer e-mailed a Justice of the Peace in Waterbury asking him to officiate a wedding. The e-mail exchange began as expected, with a sharing of a wedding date and ceremony time. The JP responded with a quote for performing the ceremony, and the scammer responded to the quote with an offer of over four times the quoted price.

In following e-mails, the scammer informed the JP that their “boss” who had signed the check, had mistakenly made the check out to cover the cost of the officiant fee *and* the much larger photographer fee, resulting in a check in the mail sent to the JP for \$2,250. The scammer informed the JP that the photographer would be in touch with him as soon as the check cleared into the JP’s account.

What followed was an attempt to have the JP deposit a likely fraudulent Cashier’s Check in the amount of \$2,250 and pay the photographer a fee of \$2,100 out of the JP’s personal account. In cases like this, typically original check fails to clear, but not until after the target has been pressured to make a speedy transfer of \$2,100 to someone posing as the photographer.

This incident has been discussed with the Vermont State Police, the Attorney General’s Office, and the Secretary of State’s Office. Please share this broadly and beware of how creative and deceptive fraudsters can be. If something seems off, assume it is. Slow down. Look for more information.

Thank you for your service.

Sarah

**Sarah L Copeland Hanzas (She/her)**

Vermont Secretary of State

**Phone** 802-828-3361 **Mobile** 802-636-7290

**Web** [sos.vermont.gov](https://sos.vermont.gov)

**Email** [sarah.copelandhanzas@vermont.gov](mailto:sarah.copelandhanzas@vermont.gov)

128 State Street Montpelier, VT 05633

